

Our Ref: LP:D16/33626

16 September, 2016

The Hon. Vice President G Watson
Fair Work Commission
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Dear Mr Watson

Re: Matter No. 2015/1 - 4 Yearly Review of Modern Awards- Family and Domestic Violence clause

Further to the above matter I provide the following submission in relation to Surf Coast Shire Council's Family Violence policy.

Surf Coast Shire Council believes that violence in any form is unacceptable. Council is committed to providing a safe, productive and happy workplace.

Surf Coast Shire Council was the first Victorian local government authority to introduce a Family Violence Policy and provide paid leave to support employees experiencing domestic violence.. The policy was developed in 2013 in consultation with the ASU as part of enterprise agreement negotiations.

Council recognises that violence can find its way into the workplace. Workers can receive threatening emails or phone calls, be stopped from leaving home to get to work or have to go different ways to work to ensure they are not followed. This can be very upsetting and affect the employee's ability to perform their work.

The family violence clause outlined in the Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and Family Violence Policy demonstrates our commitment to supporting employees experiencing family violence and includes a framework for how the agreement clause will be applied. The provisions apply to all permanent and temporary employees. Two employees have accessed family violence leave since the introduction of the policy at a cost to Council of \$2324.

Surf Coast Shire Council also provides an Employee Assistance Program through Davidson Trahair. Employees who utilise the services of the EAP remain anonymous and so we are unable to determine if there have been any reports of family violence through this service.

Surf Coast Shire Council has further demonstrated its commitment to eradicating domestic violence through its support of White Ribbon day and by registering to become a White Ribbon accredited workplace. We have held community events for the past two years to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women. CEO Keith Baillie and Councillor Brian McKiterick are both White Ribbon Ambassadors.

Workplace accreditation will recognise that Surf Coast Shire Council is taking steps to prevent and respond to violence against women. The accreditation program will provide a framework through which we will:

- Refine and develop policies and procedures
- Equip managers to appropriately deal with incidents of violence
- Maximise communication and engagement with staff and wider networks on the issue of domestic violence against women
- Measure the impact that these initiatives have on our people and their confidence in Surf Coast Shire Council.

This cost of accreditation and training is estimated to exceed \$10,000.

Council is committed to strengthening the organisation's stance on family violence, violence against women and anti-bullying legislation. We recognise the importance of this position within the organisation. Equally we understand the role Council plays as an example to other workplaces and individuals.

Yours sincerely



LEANNE PERRYMAN
Manager People & Culture