




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Public Sector, Entitlements

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.40 am): As the largest employer in Queensland, the Miles government backs our public sector workforce by providing secure employment with fair and decent wages. On Labour Day, together with the Premier, I was proud to announce two new workplace entitlements for Queensland's hardworking public sector workers, benefiting over 200,000 Queenslanders and their families. Once again, the Queensland government is leading the nation by introducing 10 non-cumulative days of reproductive health leave for all public sector workers.

The leave can be used for things like: accessing fertility or IVF treatment; managing chronic symptoms related to endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome and menopause; preventative screening for things like breast and prostate cancer; and other treatments associated with reproductive health like hysterectomies and vasectomies. Work has already begun on the implementation of this new entitlement and it will be in place no later than September this year.

We know the financial challenges that new parents can face, particularly with the national cost-of-living pressures everyone is experiencing at the moment. No mums or dads should look back at their super statements and see big gaps where they had to stop saving for their future retirement dreams because they were taking care of their children, especially women who are disproportionately impacted by this. The 2023 Queensland gender equality report card shows that the average gender superannuation balance gap was 19.8 per cent, and only 13.9 per cent of Queensland women can rely on their superannuation as their main source of retirement income. Therefore, from July this year, superannuation will be paid to Queensland public sector workers for every single week of the entire 52-week period of parental leave, whether the leave is paid or not. This will be in addition to the superannuation changes the Albanese government is making from next year, and builds on other nation-leading policies we have introduced, like the first paid domestic and family violence leave which has since been taken up by other employers around the nation.

These announcements were welcomed. Jess Taylor, CEO of QENDO, said it is 'pivotal in tackling gender imbalances'. Melanie Simpson from Queensland Fertility Group said, 'Paid reproductive health leave will reduce the stress and make it easier for many people to achieve the joy of starting their own families.' Sarah Beaman from QNMU said it is a 'major win for Queensland's largest predominantly female workforce—we applaud the state government for making this groundbreaking announcement to support the state's nurses and midwives.' On a side note, I am so proud of this. I know that when we adopted our child—our adult child who is now 30—there was no adoption leave, so we have come a long way and this takes us to the next step.

The Miles Labor government aims to be the employer of choice in this state and will ensure we do all we can to break down the barriers to achieving pay equity. I hope to see other workplaces follow our lead when it comes to backing Queensland workers as they have done before. It is clear on Labour Day and every day: Queensland workers and their families are better off under a Miles Labor government.