

# MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Services Union  
SA + NT Branch



## Labor's Portable Long Service Leave commitment for Community Services workers 'life changing'

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The Australian Services Union – SA + NT Branch (ASU) says that Premier Jay Weatherill's election commitment that Labor will introduce Portable Long Service Leave for Community Services workers will be 'life changing'.

'Community Services workers support the most vulnerable people in our state. Through no fault of their own, the nature of contract-based funding in their sector means that they can work for decades without ever accruing a single day of Long Service Leave,' says ASU Secretary Joseph Scales.

'ASU members tell us that they are burnt out, cannot always meet family pressures, and are often forced to leave the sector altogether because they cannot access Long Service Leave.'

'Today's announcement from Labor will change the lives of Community Services workers.'

'Portable Long Service Leave will enable quality, well skilled workers to remain in the Community Services sector so as to continue to provide the best support for those in need of it,' adds Mr Scales.

'The vast majority of Community Services workers are women – as a "feminised industry" these workers have not enjoyed the same workplace entitlements as the rest of the Australian workforce. Today's announcement goes a long way to remedying this gender gap.'

ASU members have been campaigning for Portable Long Service Leave for years because:

- Short funding cycles mean people are constantly moving between organisations;
- Community Services is a growing sector. Attracting and retaining workers is already a problem;
- The NDIS requires more workers in the sector. Incentives will be needed to attract suitably skilled workers;
- Long Service Leave benefits workers and employers, enabling workers to refresh and renew their enthusiasm for their work;
- Many Community Services workers are primary caregivers - paid LSL will enable them to take longer periods of parental or carer's leave.

The ASU represents Community Services workers in services such as: youth and family services; homelessness services, including youth refuges and women's refuges; domestic violence support services; disability services; community mental health services; community legal centres; employment services; Aboriginal services; community or neighbourhood centres; home and community care services; disability services; child protection; migrant and settlement services; aid agencies; environmental and advocacy organisations.

**For further comment or interview contact Joseph Scales on 0429 033 210 or 08 8363 1322**