

Breaking taboos



It's time we normalise talking about menopause and menstruation and break the taboos and stigma that hold back workers who suffer these symptoms in the workplace.

The Finance Sector Union (FSU) asked finance workers about your experiences of menopause and menstruation in the workplace. Here's what you said:

75%

of you said painful periods have an impact on your ability to do your job.

50%

of you were holding yourselves back from promotional opportunities due to menopausal symptoms.

35%

of you would consider retiring early rather than disclose your menopause status or ask for assistance to manage the impact of symptoms.

Why do we need a menopause and menstrual leave framework?

Our menopause and menstruation leave framework aims to provide vital information about the importance of including paid leave in Enterprise Agreements, as well as providing support to workers who are struggling to balance the symptoms of menopause and menstruation with work.

Menopause and menstruation are regular biological functions, **not illnesses**, and our framework seeks to normalise this experience and remove the stigma and taboo surrounding this topic.

The FSU fundamentally believes that employers should provide conditions that allow all workers to participate equally in the workforce. Paid menopause and menstrual leave allows workers who suffer severe symptoms the support they need to participate in the workforce

on an equal footing to workers who are fortunate enough not to suffer these symptoms.

Find out more
or access our
framework



www.fsunion.org.au

Authorised by Julia Angrisano, FSU National Secretary

Menopause and menstruation are workplace issues

The FSU's menopause and menstrual leave framework has been introduced to guide workers and employers in identifying the best way to manage the symptoms of menopause and menstruation in the workplace without the need to hide it or have any penalty associated with a request for support.

It's important to recognise that the experience of menopause and/or menstruation is different for each worker and that adequate support is provided for workers when they are experiencing symptoms.



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I had major issues with menstruation including extremely heavy, painful periods and bleeding through a pad/ tampon. It really impacted my ability to work and I held myself back from promotion opportunities because I had major concerns about what the impact of my heavy bleeding would have on any new roles. It made my whole life, not just work, very unpleasant.

I was too uncomfortable to actually speak to my manager so if I needed to have a day off, I would just say that I was unwell as we didn't have any type of leave other than sick leave.

My current workplace provides paid menopause and menstrual leave and it helps so much when I need to take time off for my symptoms or even for doctor's appointments. I'm now going through perimenopause, and flexibility and the ability to work from home also plays a big part in helping manage my symptoms.

*Caroline Troup
FSU Delegate, Cbus Super*



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I was at work when my IUD was pushed out because I was bleeding so heavily and I almost passed out.

I then needed more time off to have my ovaries removed due to cysts. That's now put me into early menopause which results in brain fog where I can't concentrate or cope while working in a highly legislated environment.

I've had to take significant amounts of unpaid leave due to my symptoms and my pain, and this has had an impact on my pay and my ability to accrue long service or annual leave.

Every woman deserves the right to live with dignity and to have the option of time off when they need it.

*Sacha Hammersley
FSU Delegate, Westpac*



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Going through menopause is like a walking through a factory of fireworks and explosives - women need a reprieve from it and that means time off work and the flexibility to go through it with dignity in the safety of our own homes.

Too many women are leaving the workforce due to unmanaged menopause and menstrual symptoms. Paid leave will help start an important conversation and remove one barrier for women.

We need to support the bosses and workplaces who are working hard to retain women in the workforce and make sure we have a future.

*Rina Abbott-Jard
FSU Delegate*

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