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## State unions push to double public service parental leave

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Unions will press Premier Steven Miles to commit to doubling the combined parental leave for Queensland's 260,000 public servants to 36 weeks ahead of October's state election.

Both parents would be able to access 18 weeks of government-funded paid leave under the pre-election campaign launched by the Queensland Council of Unions on Monday.

The existing entitlement of 14 weeks for the primary caregiver – 95 per cent of whom are women – and one week for their partner was exacerbating the gender pay gap, QCU general secretary Jacqueline King said.

"If we're serious about breaking down gender discrimination, we need updated entitlements that ensure women aren't continually putting their careers on hold and taking a back seat, which we know puts women's careers and financial outlook behind in the short and long term," she said.

The "Share the Care" campaign will also push for leave to be extended to grandparents who become the principal carer of a child, one week pre-natal leave for both parents and premature birth leave.

Mr Miles is open to expanding parental leave requirements, saying he would meet with the QCU about the campaign.

"The one thing that I know is that our government will always deliver better conditions for our public servants," he said.

"It would be very generous but the way progress happens is

organisations like unions put forward proposals; they don't often win everything that they ask for, but they do often make progress."

Ms King said she would seek commitment from Mr Miles on the union's proposal – which has not been costed – before the state entered caretaker period on September 30.

"We have such a skill shortage in trying to attract professional employees to work in Queensland, we think that this will actually go that next step, to be able to get them across the border where we need them," she said.

"We're hopeful that they'll back it in before the election."

A spokeswoman for Liberal National Party leader David Crisafulli said the opposition was yet to see a formal proposal.

"Given the challenges facing Queenslanders, it's critical the state government and private sector ensure productivity continues to improve across all areas of our growing state while also balancing a level of flexibility that ensures we can continue to attract and retain the best," she said.

The QCU push comes after their successful campaign for 10 days' paid annual reproductive leave for the public sector.

From September, Queensland public servants will be able to access an extra 10 days leave for IVF treatment, menstrual pain, vasectomy recovery and prostate or breast cancer screening, costing taxpayers up to \$80m each year.

The ACTU is now pushing the Albanese government to insert reproductive leave entitlements into the National Employment Standards, though the federal government has signalled it would not be backing the union claim.

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