

Speaking Languages During Break Times



Some Aged Care providers have implemented policies seeking to ban staff from speaking languages other than English in the workplace, including during paid and unpaid break times.

Staff should be free in their break time to relax and talk. Your employer cannot unreasonably restrict what you and your co-workers can or can't talk about.

A blanket ban on speaking languages other than English during break times is unreasonable, unfair and is discriminatory under Australian law.

The WA Equal Opportunity Commission found:

- Blanket bans on speaking languages other than English are high risk for being found as racially discriminatory.

The New South Wales Administrative Tribunal said that:

- The Tribunal regards it as totally acceptable for two employees in the workplace to have a private conversation in a language other than English.

Your employer's obligations:

Discriminatory policies do not support a safe and welcoming workplace, and they damage the ability of aged care employers to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

Rather seeking to ban languages in the workplace, employers should be celebrating diversity and welcoming staff from all backgrounds into the workplace.

What you can do:

- Any UWW members who is threatened with disciplinary action for talking in a language other than English during their break time should contact the UWW Office on 1800 199 890 for support.
- This type of discriminatory policy can be defeated by Aged Care workers standing together as UWW members.

**Join online today at unitedworkers.org.au/joinform/
or phone 1800 199 890.**