

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for the Coordination of Treasury and Finance – COVID-19

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Industrial Relations



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SUPPORTING THOUSANDS MORE WORKERS DURING CORONAVIRUS

The Victorian Government will support thousands more Victorians who have lost work due to coronavirus and ensure they are redeployed doing jobs our community needs to stay safe and rebuild from the pandemic.

Restrictions to slow the spread of the virus and keep us safe have had a significant impact on businesses and workers, and public sector organisations are not immune – with many employees losing employment overnight.

Under Commonwealth Government guidelines, casual public sector workers such as swimming pool lifeguards or staff at the Melbourne Aquatic Centre, ticket staff at the Melbourne Museum or the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre or park staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens are ineligible for the JobKeeper program.

The Victorian Government will fix this by making sure these workers can access their usual fortnightly payments of up to \$1500 before tax, up until the end of September, provided they are happy to be redeployed to other public sector roles where demand for more resources is high, such as healthcare.

The package will support 3,000 workers and, unlike the Jobkeeper program, it will be available to workers regardless of their age whether they are an Australian Citizen or not. Public sector casual workers will be eligible for the payment regardless of their length of service.

It's part of the government's public sector IR Framework, which was urgently convened to deal with the coronavirus and put together with the help of unions to ensure hard-working public sector staff get the protection they deserve.

While many public sector organisations such as those in cultural and sports sectors have been hit hard, others are dealing with a surge in demand – that's why the Government will extend the *Jobs and Skills Exchange* program to all public sector workers, to match displaced workers with employers who need reinforcements.

The Government has already helped close to 2,600 workers access new opportunities as part of the *Working for Victoria* program, which links workers with vital roles in areas like healthcare and other in-demand sectors.

Those public sector casual workers who participate in the *Jobs and Skills Exchange* will still be able to pick up additional work without jeopardising their fortnightly payments.

The Government is establishing a Specialist Workforce Advisory Group to oversee the implementation of the IR Framework. It will include members of Government and union representatives, and ensure workers are getting the fair deal they deserve throughout the crisis.

The Government has already extended the contracts of fixed-term public service employees who are caught up in the coronavirus crisis.

Quote attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas

"This support will help people who have fallen through the cracks and redeploy them in the roles our community needs right now."

"These workers are not eligible for the Commonwealth's JobKeeper payments so we're stepping in and making sure they get the support they need to make it through to the other side of the crisis."

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