

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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VICTORIA TO TAKE FIRST BIG STEP TO TACKLE INSECURE WORK

This year, the global pandemic has shone a bright light on some of the darkest cracks in our nation's economy and our society – none more so than insecure work.

Too often, workers are being forced to choose between a day's pay and their health – and the health of every Victorian. Over the past eight months, we've seen just how dangerous, and unfair, that can be.

That's why the Andrews Labor Government will do what no other government has – develop a new *Secure Work Pilot Scheme*, to provide up to five days of sick and carer's pay at the national minimum wage for casual or insecure workers in priority industries.

Once up and running, the two-year pilot will afford these workers sick pay when they're unwell, and carer's pay when they need to take time to look after someone they love. Importantly, it will mean Victorians aren't being forced to choose between the safety of their co-workers – and putting food on the table for their family.

We expect the pilot scheme will cover workers in select sectors with high rates of casualisation. These could include cleaners, hospitality staff, security guards, supermarket workers and aged care staff. The pilot will roll out in two phases over two years with the occupations eligible for each phase to be finalised after a consultation process that will include workers, industry and unions.

Casual and insecure workers in eligible sectors will be invited to pre-register for the scheme, providing their contact details and information about their employment so that applications can be fast-tracked if they need to apply for payments. An education campaign will also be rolled out to ensure eligible workers are aware of the support available when they need sick or carer's pay.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will provide \$5 million for consultation on the design of the pilot scheme to work through issues including documentation required to support payment applications and protections for workers who apply to access the scheme.

While any future ongoing scheme would be subject to an industry levy, the pilot scheme will be fully funded by the Victorian Government at no cost to business.

The Victorian Government's COVID-19 Test Isolation Payment and the Commonwealth's Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment for people who are required to isolate after a positive diagnosis or quarantine as a close contact remain available.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"When people have nothing to fall back on, they make a choice between the safety of their workmates and feeding their family. The ultimate decision they make isn't wrong – what's wrong is they're forced to make it at all."

"This isn't going to solve the problem of insecure work overnight but someone has to put their hand up and say we're going to take this out of the too hard basket and do something about it – and that's exactly what we're doing."

Quote attributable to Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas

"Workers staying on the job when they're sick is bad for business – for the rest of your staff and for your customers. We believe this scheme will benefit businesses and workers right across Victoria."

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