

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**  
Minister for Workplace Safety  
Minister for Early Childhood



Monday, 17 May 2021

## KEEPING WORKERS SAFE FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to strengthen workers' right to a safe place of employment through new regulations to better prevent workplace psychological hazards and injuries.

Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt announced the priority reforms today ahead of her meeting with state, territory and federal counterparts at the Work Health and Safety Ministers' meeting later this week.

The regulations will strengthen the occupational health and safety framework by providing clearer guidance to employers on their obligations to better protect workers from mental injury.

The changes will put psychological hazards on the same footing as physical ones – recognising that they can be just as harmful to workers' safety and wellbeing. WorkCover mental injury claims have grown significantly in recent years and are expected to account for a third of all workers' compensation claims by 2030.

The regulations align with and bolster the Labor Government's broader agenda to prevent and better respond to safety risks in Victorian workplaces, including through the Ministerial Taskforce on Workplace Sexual Harassment.

They follow several recent reviews which recommended strengthening workplace health and safety laws to better address workplace psychological health, including the Review of Model WHS Laws (Boland Review) and the Respect@Work report.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's final report also highlighted the need to improve education and awareness around psychological health to build safe and healthy workplaces and prevent mental injury.

The Government will consult widely with industry, community and workers on the development of the new regulations and engage closely with employers ahead of commencement to ensure they understand these important obligations.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

*"The impact of a mental health injury can often be less obvious – but is no less serious – than a physical one. That's why we're making these changes to protect workers and ensure they are safe when on the job."*

*"We're making it clear to every employer that the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace means one that is free from psychological and physical harm."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

*"We know that workplaces can be a key influence on people's mental health – these reforms recognise that every employer has a responsibility to create mentally healthy workplaces."*