

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Industrial Relations



Thursday, 17 June 2021

WAGE INSPECTORATE VICTORIA COMMISSIONER APPOINTED

Experienced regulator Robert Hortle has been appointed as the inaugural Commissioner of Wage Inspectorate Victoria, which will become an independent statutory authority on 1 July.

Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas announced Mr Hortle's appointment as head of the newly established agency for a five-year term.

From 1 July, under the Wage Theft Act 2020, it will be a crime for an employer in Victoria to deliberately underpay employees or dishonestly withhold employee entitlements.

As Commissioner, Mr Hortle will lead Wage Inspectorate Victoria's work to protect vulnerable employees from exploitation and hold employers to account if they commit wage theft.

Mr Hortle has more than 20 years of high-level and distinguished experience in workplace regulation at both the Federal and Victorian levels, including 11 years with the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Mr Hortle leads Wage Inspectorate Victoria in its current form as a group within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Inspectorate already promotes and enforces Victorian laws covering child employment, long service leave, and contractors in transport and forestry. It will continue to do this when it becomes an independent body.

Since joining the Inspectorate in 2018, Mr Hortle has pioneered significant reforms within the organisation, leading to an increase in audits, investigations and prosecutions.

Mr Hortle also contributed to the development of the Wage Theft Act 2020 and the criminalisation of wage theft, as well as overseeing the work to establish Wage Inspectorate Victoria as a statutory body.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas

"Robert Hortle brings a great deal of regulatory experience – both state and federal – that will be invaluable in his role as Wage Inspectorate Victoria's inaugural Commissioner."

"Mr Hortle has championed progress and change within Wage Inspectorate Victoria, with a focus on ensuring that regulation contributes to fairer, safer and more cooperative workplaces."

"Our reforms and the work of the Wage Inspectorate will protect workers from unscrupulous employers. Mr Hortle's leadership will ensure employers who do the wrong thing are held to account."