

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**  
Minister for Workplace Safety  
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## NEW REFORMS TO BETTER PROTECT VICTORIANS AT WORK

The Victorian Government is strengthening workplace safety laws with new reforms to expand worker rights and protections, boost employer accountability and streamline enforcement.

The Government introduced the *Occupational Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* to Parliament today to strengthen our laws and make Victorian workplaces safer.

A key change in the Bill will ensure that labour hire workers have all the same rights and safety protections as other workers.

Labour hire workers are employed by a labour hire company or agency and perform work at the worksite of a “host” employer, often supervised by the host or their staff. Under current laws, the host employer does not owe labour hire workers the same health and safety duties as they do their own staff.

The Bill addresses this gap by extending the definition of “employer” and “employee” in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to ensure labour hire workers are considered employees of the host under the Act.

It also requires labour hire providers and host employers to consult and cooperate on their shared responsibility to ensure the safety of labour hire workers – with any breach of this duty punishable by fines of up to \$32,713 for individuals and \$163,566 for businesses.

The Bill will also prevent employers from dodging liability for breaching workplace safety laws by prohibiting contracts that insure or indemnify a person against paying monetary penalties under workplace safety laws.

Such clauses undermine our strong workplace safety laws – including the new workplace manslaughter offence – by shielding employers from tough penalties and reducing their deterrent effect.

Under the proposed laws, entering, offering to enter or holding such a contract will attract penalties of up to \$54,522 for individuals and \$272,610 for businesses.

The Bill also updates powers for health and safety representatives and authorised employee representatives to take photos or videos to record suspected workplace safety breaches in real time, as well as enabling WorkSafe Inspectors to issue notices and reports electronically.

The reforms were developed in consultation with industry and employee groups and deliver on recommendations from key reviews, including the Inquiry into the Labour Hire Industry and Insecure Work and the Boland Review into the Model Work Health and Safety Act.

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

*“We’re making common sense changes to Victoria’s workplace safety laws to make them stronger and more effective in keeping all workers safe on the job.”*

*“These changes mean employers will no longer be able to dodge penalties where they’re responsible for a workplace safety breach – they’ll have to face the consequences.”*

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