

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Monday, 14 March 2022

AUSTRALIAN-FIRST SICK PAY GUARANTEE FOR CASUAL WORKERS

Victorians who work in casual or other insecure jobs will no longer be forced to choose between a day's pay and looking after their health, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's *Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee*.

An Australian-first, the \$245.6 million scheme will transform casual and contract work in Victoria by providing vulnerable workers the safety net they need to take time off when they're sick or need to care for loved ones.

Before the pandemic, many casual and contract workers were forced to choose between a day's pay or their health. Around one in five casual and contract workers work more than one job to earn a living – many without access to sick and carer's pay.

Workers are now able to register for the two-year pilot program, and it is anticipated that more than 150,000 workers will be eligible in this first phase.

Eligible casual and contract workers in certain occupations will receive up to five days a year of sick or carer's pay at the national minimum wage.

Occupations included in the first phase include hospitality workers, food trades workers and preparation assistants such as chefs and kitchen hands, supermarket and supply chain workers, retail and sales assistants, aged and disability care workers, cleaners and laundry workers and security guards.

The Labor Government is fully funding the scheme over the first two years, which is expected to demonstrate a reduction in workplace injuries and illness, general productivity improvements from healthier workers, and lower staff turnover rates.

The Government will also administer the program directly to workers, minimising the impost on businesses so they can focus on economic recovery.

The Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee builds on the temporary measures implemented during the pandemic, including the COVID-19 Worker Support Payment (now the Australian Government's Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment) and the COVID-19 Test Isolation Payment.

To find out more visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/sick-pay-guarantee> and to apply for a payment if you're eligible visit service.vic.gov.au.

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."

"The last two years have shown just how difficult that choice can be for casual workers – so we're doing what we can to make sure it's a choice they don't have to make."

Quote attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

"We need every worker for the recovery of our economy – the best way to do that is through secure work. This scheme will protect more Victorians and give them the support they need when they're sick or caring for a loved one."

Media contact: Jamila Fontana 0409 741 279 | jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au