

# Media Release

**Mr Tim Pallas MP**

Treasurer

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Industrial Relations



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## **CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE SAFE WORKPLACES FOR YOUNG WORKERS**

Wage Inspectorate Victoria has launched a regional campaign to raise awareness of employment laws that protect young workers, ensuring hospitality businesses employing workers under 15 are providing safe workplaces.

The business education campaign will focus on fast-food, restaurant and cafe employers in Phillip Island, Drouin, Warragul, Wonthaggi, Inverloch and surrounds. The workplace regulator has written to employers in these regions to inform them of the campaign and that they may be one of 150 businesses selected for a compliance check.

Child Employment Officers will visit employers over the April school holidays when young workers are more likely to be in businesses, to check relevant permits, hours of work, rest breaks and other requirements.

Research shows businesses in regional areas are more likely to employ younger workers than their metropolitan counterparts (8 per cent regional, compared to 5 per cent metropolitan), and that almost 50 per cent of staff under 15 working in cafes and restaurants are asked to work longer than their allocated shift.

In Victoria, employers need a permit before a worker under 15 years of age can be employed, although there are some exemptions such as for young staff employed in family businesses.

Permits are free, and the online application process to receive one is fast and straightforward. Employers can apply at [wageinspectorate.vic.gov.au](http://wageinspectorate.vic.gov.au).

Wage Inspectorate Victoria was established on 1 July 2021 as part of the Andrews Labor Government's action to criminalise wage theft.

The Wage Inspectorate enforces Victoria's tough wage theft laws that make it a crime to dishonestly underpay employees – as well as child employment, long service leave and owner driver legislation.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas**

*"Young workers can fill important jobs for many businesses and the experience is invaluable for this emerging workforce – provided they are kept safe."*

*"It's a win-win and the Wage Inspectorate is doing its job in giving businesses the support they need to ensure young workers are respected."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale**

*"This is an important campaign because it will help keep local kids safe at work. All workplaces have risks, and these are magnified for an employee who is under 15 and inexperienced."*

### **Quote attributable to Commissioner of Wage Inspectorate Victoria Robert Hortle**

*"These regions have been selected because they will be popular tourist destinations over Easter. Some have also experienced population increases, meaning there could be more children looking for holiday work."*