

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood



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GIVING GEELONG CASUAL WORKERS A SICK PAY GUARANTEE

Casual and contract workers in greater Geelong are being encouraged to sign up to the Andrews Labor Government's Sick Pay Guarantee to get the safety net they need for when they become sick and miss work or need to care for a loved one.

Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt today visited Geelong's Eastern Hub Community Centre to meet with disability workers who are eligible for the first phase of the Sick Pay Guarantee.

Workers who sign up to the two-year pilot program will receive up to five days a year of sick and carer's pay at the national minimum wage, fully funded by the Labor Government. So far, more than six per cent of approved applications are from the greater Geelong area.

The \$245.6 million Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee will help eligible workers who are unwell to stay at home and not feel forced to choose between a day's pay and looking after their health. This move is expected to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses and keep businesses healthier and more productive.

Occupations 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, laundry workers and security guards.

More than 150,000 Victorian workers are eligible in this first phase of the pilot. There are approximately 24,000 casual workers in the greater Geelong area – nearly a quarter of the region's total workforce.

Healthcare and social service is the largest employer in the greater Geelong area, followed by retail and accommodation and food services – all of which are eligible industries under phase one of the Sick Pay Guarantee.

Casual and contract workers are encouraged to check their eligibility and apply now at vic.gov.au/sickpayguarantee or use the Service Victoria app.

Quotes 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 so they don't have to make the choice between a day's pay and looking after their health."

"The last thing you want to be doing when you're sick is trying to fill in forms – I encourage all casual workers in the Geelong area to check their eligibility, register now and don't wait till you're not well."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"This scheme will help to keep our community and local businesses safe and healthy. I encourage all eligible casual and contract workers in the greater Geelong area to apply."