

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



Friday, 29 July 2022

30K CASUAL WORKERS BETTER OFF THANKS TO SICK PAY GUARANTEE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping to make life easier for casual and contract workers without sick leave entitlements.

Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford today announced more than 30,000 people have now signed up to the Labor Government's Sick Pay Guarantee program.

Only four months after the Australian-first initiative was launched, more than \$6 million has been paid to thousands of workers in frontline jobs like hospitality, retail and aged care.

One of those to have benefited from the program is casual retail assistant Ava Grimshaw-Hall who recently had to take time off work following a mishap in the kitchen.

While cooking one day Ms Grimshaw-Hall came off second best against a casserole dish – with a piece of the dish severing two tendons in her hand – she needed surgery and time off work.

Having registered to the Sick Pay Guarantee program, Ms Grimshaw-Hall was able to take the time off she needed without worrying how to pay the rent and other bills.

More than 21% of those now registered work in regional Victoria and there has been strong uptake among carers, aides and security workers, as well as hospitality workers and cleaners.

The Government is fully funding the scheme over the first two years, which is expected to reduce workplace injuries and illness, improve productivity and lower staff turnover.

It is estimated that more than 150,000 Victorian workers are eligible in this first phase of the pilot. Eligible workers are covered from the day they sign up to the program and can claim up to 38 hours a year of sick and carer's pay.

Casual and self-employed contract workers who do not have access to any sick and carer's pay are encouraged to check their eligibility and sign up now at vic.gov.au/sickpayguarantee.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford

"Victoria is the only state in Australia that is supporting casual and contract workers in this way – no one should have to choose their health and a day's pay."

"This is about supporting casual workers to take the time they need to get well or care for a loved one."

Quote attributable to Casual Retail Assistant Ava Grimshaw-Hall

"My advice to casual workers is to sign up to the program, get ahead of it, it's there to help so you don't ever have to suffer financially."