

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Trade



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INCREASING FAIRNESS AND SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN GIG WORKERS

Victorian gig economy workers will be protected by new standards and able to call on a dedicated support service under nation-leading reforms announced today by the Andrews Labor Government.

The Fair Conduct and Accountability Standards will promote fairness and transparency in dealings between on-demand platforms and gig workers, on issues including pay and conditions, consultation, the right to representation, dispute resolution and safety.

The Standards will initially be voluntary when introduced in the first quarter of next year, but platforms are expected to put them into practice, with the Labor Government planning to introduce laws in 2023 to ensure compliance with the Standards.

The behaviour of platform companies in adopting the voluntary Standards and modifying work practices will be one of the factors considered in developing the gig economy workers laws.

The Gig Worker Support Service will be launched at the same time as the Standards, providing a website and telephone service for up to 350,000 Victorian gig economy workers to obtain information about conditions they should expect to be offered by platform companies. Translation and interpreter services will ensure wide usability.

The Standards address the key findings of the 2020 report of the *Inquiry into the Victorian On-Demand Workforce*, which was commissioned by the Labor Government. They have been developed following consultation with platforms, unions and other organisations.

The Standards require consideration of the relative bargaining power between platforms and workers, call for the terms and conditions of engagement to be clear and readily understandable and for platforms to provide fair conditions and pay.

This information should be in writing and include the calculation of earnings, typical costs associated with the work and how factors like customer ratings can affect how work is allocated.

The Standards also direct platforms to reduce gender bias in terms of pay and conditions by reviewing algorithms and work practices. They call for platforms to review “women’s and men’s average hourly earnings or earnings per assignment ... to identify if there is a gender pay gap, and if it is found, (to take) steps to close it”.

The principle goes further, calling for public reporting on the gender earnings gap.

The Standards clearly set out the Government’s expectations about the engagement and treatment of gig workers in Victoria. Many platforms expressed a desire during the consultation process to introduce fairer conditions for their workers, and adopting the Standards is an opportunity for them to deliver on that aim.

The Support Service will be a first port of call, in helping workers to resolve disputes, providing comprehensive information and referring workers to federal and state agencies and in some cases, community legal centres.

The website will have information about common issues and materials to help workers to make informed decisions about working for a platform. The Support Service will also maintain a register of platforms that sign up to the Standards.

Media contact: Shaun Phillips 0407 553 763 | shaun.phillips@minstaff.vic.gov.au

The *Victorian Budget 2022-23* allocated \$5.6 million to implement the Government's response to the on-demand workforce inquiry. The measures announced today are the first to be implemented for the on-demand economy by any government in Australia.

The Standards are available at engage.vic.gov.au/inquiry-on-demand-workforce.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas

"The Standards will provide certainty and clarity for workers who lack bargaining power and all too often don't have clear information about their working arrangements or any means to challenge unfair practices."

"We commissioned the initial inquiry and accepted its recommendations, and now the Standards and Support Service will make a real difference for thousands of workers."

"We know platforms want to do the right thing by the people they engage to do their work – we expect an enthusiastic response to these important reforms."