

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Monday, 13 March 2023

ONE MILLION HOURS OF SICK AND CARER'S PAY FOR CASUALS

The Andrews Labor Government's nation-leading Sick Pay Guarantee has paid more than one million hours of sick and carer's pay to casual and contract workers in its first year.

Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks today announced 60,000 Victorians have signed up to the pilot program which provides a much-needed safety net for vulnerable workers who need to take time off because they are sick or caring for loved ones.

Since the scheme launched on Labour Day last year, over \$22 million has been paid to support more than 93,000 claims for sick and carer's pay.

Marcus Maisano signed up for the Sick Pay Guarantee as soon as he heard about it at the recent Midsumma Carnival and said it has already helped ease the stress when he's been sick or needed to take time off to care for his mother.

The 33-year-old has been working in a casual job as an optical dispenser for the past six months.

Because Marcus works closely with patients, he can't go in to work when he's sick, and having access to carer's pay means he can take his mother to specialist medical appointments at short notice.

Eligible casual and contract workers without sick leave entitlements can access up to 38 hours a year of sick and carer's pay through the program, paid at the national minimum wage.

The Sick Pay Guarantee aims to reduce workplace illnesses and keep businesses safer and more productive – 41 per cent of workers surveyed said they would have gone to work unwell if they had not registered for the scheme.

Workers who are eligible to sign up include casual and contract retail assistants, hospitality workers, aged care and disability care workers, supermarket and supermarket supply chain workers, cleaners, laundry workers, security guards, food preparation workers, bakers, fast food workers, and kitchen hands.

The \$245.7 million pilot is fully funded by the Labor Government until March next year.

Casual and self-employed contract workers can check their eligibility and sign up online at vic.gov.au/sickpayguarantee, in the Service Victoria app, or through a participating Neighbourhood House. Eligible workers can apply for sick and carer's pay from the day they sign up.

Information is available in 19 languages on the Sick Pay Guarantee website. To speak to an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask for the Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee hotline.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks

"Casual and contract workers are telling us that when given a choice – a proper choice – they will choose to stay home and recover when they're sick."

"We've already supported workers when they need it most - with more than one million hours of sick and carer's pay. This scheme is protecting more and more Victorians and giving them the support they need when they're sick or caring for a loved one."

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