

# Media Release

**The Hon Tim Pallas MP**

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Trade and Investment



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## CLAWING BACK LOST ENTITLEMENTS FOR VICTORIAN WORKERS

The Andrews Labor Government's Wage Inspectorate has helped workers reclaim more than \$1 million in unpaid long service leave entitlements over 12 months, holding unscrupulous employers to account.

Some 1,400 workers received lost entitlements in 2022-23, with one person recovering more than \$20,000.

The Labor Government created the Wage Inspectorate to oversee Victoria's nation-leading wage theft laws along with long service leave obligations and child employment and owner driver laws – educating the community and taking enforcement action where required.

The Inspectorate's work means the vast majority of Victorian employers who do the right thing by their workers are able to compete on a level playing field.

Wage Inspectorate Victoria acts on information received from workers and undertakes its own compliance monitoring to check entitlements are applied according to the law.

In one case, a man working for a finance company wasn't paid the \$15,000 long service leave entitlement he was due when his employment ended. It was only after he contacted the Wage Inspectorate and an investigation was commenced that he was paid the entitlement – 10 months after it was due.

The employer was subsequently fined \$7,500 in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court for failing to pay the long service leave entitlement when it was due.

A hairdresser recovered more than \$7,800 following Wage Inspectorate intervention while an administration worker in a solar panel company recovered \$7,400.

Wage Inspectorate Victoria helped more than 15,000 businesses and workers last financial year and more than 425,000 people accessed the educational tools and resources on its website, a rise of almost 50 per cent.

The Wage Inspectorate had 17 matters before the court including the first criminal wage theft charges laid under the Victorian Wage Theft Act 2020.

Almost 10,000 child employment permits were assessed and issued to employers of children under 15, and child employment officers conducted 395 compliance checks and investigations across the state – from greater Melbourne and Geelong to from Mildura in the north, Portland in the west and Paynesville in the east.

Setting up a new streamlined child employment licence system was a priority for the regulator during the past financial year, with the system successfully implemented on 1 July.

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

*"The Wage Inspectorate helps Victorians navigate workplace laws, ensures workers are supported with information about their rights and acts when businesses do the wrong thing."*

*"The vast majority of businesses are good employers, but the Inspectorate is there to ensure the minority that seek to get an unfair advantage at the expense of their workers are held to account."*

### Quotes attributable to Commissioner of Wage Inspectorate Victoria Robert Hortle

*"We've had an even bigger impact during our second year, with more cases before the courts and more Victorian businesses and workers accessing our resources for help."*

*"These figures show how we're continuing to deliver fairer conditions for workers and a level playing field for businesses."*

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