

Hon Jacinta Allan MP – Premier of Victoria

Friday, 14 November 2025

## HARM A WORKER – FACE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

If you abuse a shop assistant, if you punch a fast-food worker, if you threaten your rideshare driver or Uber Eats delivery driver, if you throw a coffee over your waiter – you will face serious consequences.

That's the message the Allan Labor Government is sending to anyone who threatens or assaults workers in shops, restaurants, bars, cafes, shopping centres, taxis and Ubers and who make everyone feel unsafe in the process.

Premier Jacinta Allan joined Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny, a group of retail, hospitality and transport workers – and their union representatives – to announce:

- The *Crimes Amendment (Retail, Fast Food, Hospitality and Transport Worker Harm) Bill 2025* will be introduced to Parliament today – delivering on new offences to crack down on crimes against workers
- Ram-raids will be recognised as aggravated burglary – carrying a higher maximum penalty of 25 years and unlocking the powers of *Adult Time for Violent Crime*
- Victoria will press ahead with Workplace Protection Orders against violent individuals – like a personal safety order but different: instead of protecting one person, it protects a whole workplace

### Crimes against workers are unacceptable

Most retail workers are women, and a third are under the age of 24. Retail crime has a devastating impact on these Victorians and the businesses they work for.

Some 800,000 retail crime incidents were reported across Australia in the last year. The Australian Retail Association said that on top of 70 per cent of retailers reporting an increase in customer theft, more than half of retailers experience physical abuse monthly or more often. Almost 9 in 10 retail workers reported experiencing verbal abuse.

Assaults against taxi drivers and transport workers is also a serious and ongoing problem, and more than half of transport gig workers (such as food or parcel delivery and rideshare) who responded to a Transport Workers Union survey said they experienced threatening or abusive behaviour.

### Protecting retail, fast food, hospitality and passenger transport workers from harm

The *Crimes Amendment (Retail, Fast Food, Hospitality and Transport Worker Harm) Bill 2025* will protect customer-facing workers from assault and abuse.

Under a new indictable offence, assaulting or threatening to assault one of these workers will carry a penalty of up to 5 years in jail.

Separate summary offences for lower-level assaults, and for conduct that threatens and intimidates the worker (such as with profane, obscene or insulting language) will carry a penalty of up to 6 months in jail.

The summary offences will have a substantially lower threshold of conduct than the more serious indictable offence, giving police a range of options to protect workers depending on the circumstances.

You will be protected if you work for a retail or hospitality operator (like a shop or a bar), a shopping centre, a passenger transport service provider (including public transport, taxi, rideshare) – or if you deliver goods to retail customers (e.g. Uber or DoorDash).

It applies front of house and back of house, check out and storeroom, kitchen and bar – you're covered if you work for a workplace that has customers, even if you're a contractor like a cleaner or security.

**Media contact:** Jennifer Aitken 0467 745 963 | [jennifer.aitken@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:jennifer.aitken@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

If you are assaulted or abused in connection with your work- these offences apply. In other words, you are threatened or assaulted because of something you've done (or not done) in your job while you're serving patrons, driving passengers, delivering food, stacking shelves, or even while on break, arriving, or leaving work.

The Bill will be introduced to Parliament today. If it's passed this year, it will be law before Christmas.

### **Longer sentences for ram raids – with *Adult Time for Violent Crime* applying**

Ram raids are a shocking and violent crime where a vehicle is used to force entry into a building. Victims don't just have to deal with theft, but extreme damage – and the life of anyone inside the store at that time is at risk.

The Bill will amend the aggravated burglary offence to include ram raids. It will apply to any building, not just shops.

Aggravated burglary carries a maximum sentence of 25 years. Serious and repeated aggravated burglary will be subject to *Adult Time for Violent Crime* – whatever your age, you'll face serious consequences.

### **Workplace Protection Orders will protect workers, patrons and businesses alike**

Workers, union representatives and businesses – who are all on the frontline of workplace crime – have called for Workplace Protection Orders to force threatening and violent customers out of the store.

That's why we will introduce new laws to establish Workplace Protection Orders as the next step in our response to retail crime. Under such orders, if you are violent to retail workers, you can be banned from that workplace.

Currently, only the ACT has these orders in place, and different types of models are being developed interstate. These models have the same motive: keep a violent or threatening person away from the premises.

Victoria will consult with police, unions and industry and look interstate and overseas to review what models are working – building on the work of our Worker Protection Consultation Group. Legislation will be introduced in April 2026.

Above all, we want the model that can best do the job of protecting the workers who are doing theirs.

### **Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan**

*"There is a difference between the customer from hell and the customer who harms – retail workers know it and these laws nail it."*

*"I worked at a supermarket and I know what it was like. Today, we stand with workers to say it should never be a part of your job, and you'll be protected."*

*"Ram raids are a shockingly violent act with real victims – workers, business owners, neighbours."*

### **Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Sonya Kirkenny**

*"We've listened to workers, industry and unions, and these reforms respond directly to their concerns about rising abuse and violence in workplaces across Victoria."*

*"We're pushing ahead with Workplace Protection Orders – it's the next big step in the fight against retail crime."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for South-Eastern Metropolitan Michael Galea**

*"Every Victorian deserves to feel safe at work – that includes people serving customers, driving trams and buses, or working in restaurants and shops."*