

Media Release

The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Attorney General
Minister for Planning



Tuesday, 2 December 2025

TOUGH NEW RETAIL CRIME LAWS PASS PARLIAMENT

Abusing shop assistants, assaulting fast-food workers, threatening rideshare drivers and even throwing coffee at waiters will now mean serious consequences under new laws passed by the Allan Labor Government.

The *Crimes Amendment (Retail, Fast Food, Hospitality and Transport Worker Harm) Act 2025* creates new offences to crack down on abuse, threats and assaults against hardworking Victorians who serve others and keep Victoria moving.

Under the new laws which will be in place ahead of the busy Christmas season, a serious new indictable offence will apply to anyone who assaults or threatens to assault a retail, fast food, hospitality or transport worker. Those charged face up to five years' imprisonment under this offence.

Separate summary offences will also apply for lower-level assaults and threatening or intimidating conduct – including profane, obscene or insulting language – with penalties of up to six months' jail. These offences have a lower threshold to give police a flexible range of options to intervene early and protect workers.

If the conduct occurs in connection with the person's work – while serving customers, transporting passengers, making deliveries, stacking shelves, or even when arriving, leaving or on breaks – the new offences will apply.

The new protections cover all customer-facing workers – from retail and hospitality staff to security, cleaners, delivery riders, taxi and rideshare drivers, public transport operators and even contractors working on-site.

The laws are a major step to address the growing number of incidents across retail, fast food, hospitality and passenger transport – sectors where most frontline workers are women, and a third are under the age of 24.

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.

Ram raids will now also be recognised as aggravated burglary, carrying a maximum penalty of 25 years' imprisonment, and serious or repeated offending will fall under *Adult Time for Violent Crime* – delivering serious consequences for these unacceptable crimes.

Next year the Government 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.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny

"We've listened to workers, unions and industry – and these laws respond directly to the disturbing rise in abuse and violence in workplaces across Victoria."

"Every Victorian deserves to be safe at work. These laws strengthen protections and we'll continue that work with Workplace Protection Orders."