

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Wednesday, 4 July, 2018



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

DELIVERING FOR THOSE WHO DELIVER TO US

The Andrews Labor Government is making work fairer and safer for workers who are owner drivers or forestry contractors – including drivers using digital freight and delivery platforms.

Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins announced reforms today, which will make it easier for the growing number of owner drivers and forestry contractors to get paid on time, be safe at work and support their businesses.

Owner drivers are effectively small businesses that own and operate one to three vehicles to deliver goods around Australia.

The changes announced today are in response to a comprehensive review of the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act (ODFC Act), which found widespread non-compliance with the Act by hirers and brokers, putting workers safety, their incomes and their businesses at risk.

The review also had to respond to the fact that, when the ODFC Act was created over a decade ago, digital platforms such as Uber Freight, Uber Eats and Deliveroo didn't exist.

The reforms respond to the emergence of these online platforms and strike a balance between supporting these growing independent small businesses and their needs as they compete with large businesses.

Under the proposed changes, for the first time, there will be education, enforcement and compliance for this industry within the newly announced Victorian Wage Inspectorate.

There will be penalties for not complying with the mandatory requirements of the Act, and infringements for failing to provide relevant rate and cost schedules, a written contract or a notice of termination or payment in lieu of notice.

Businesses will also be required to pay owner drivers within 30 days of receiving an invoice – reducing financial pressure for drivers.

These business owners will also have access to a fast, low cost and confidential binding dispute resolution process. The Government will also remove a loophole that has denied some of these workers the right to take disputes to the Victorian Small Business Commission and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The *Victorian Budget 2018/19* provided \$22 million for the Inspectorate, which includes up to \$5.5 million to fund enforcement of these reforms.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins

“These reforms respond to changes within the industry and the emergence of online delivery platforms, to ensure the laws that govern these businesses continue are effective and drivers are protected.”

“The review uncovered widespread non-compliance by businesses, which meant drivers were not being paid on time and were at a competitive disadvantage. These new laws will put an end to this.”

“Through the Victorian Wage Inspectorate we will keep the industry accountable and make work safer and fairer for these workers.”

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