

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



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FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Saturday, 22 September, 2018

NEW INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE THE GIG ECONOMY

The Andrews Labor Government will launch an Australian-first inquiry into the on-demand workforce and gig economy, following widespread claims of workers being underpaid and poorly treated.

Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins today announced *the Victorian Inquiry into the On-Demand Workforce*, which will investigate the conditions of workers working to digital platforms.

The inquiry will be chaired by former Commonwealth Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James and will investigate the status of people working with or for on-line companies or platforms in Victoria.

The establishment of the inquiry follows widespread concern about the wages and conditions being offered to workers in the on-demand gig economy, where people are often categorised as independent contractors. There are also concerns from many businesses about the lack of a level playing field.

It also follows the findings of the Federal Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers that workplace laws have failed to keep pace with the rise of digital platform work.

The controversy was highlighted last month when food delivery company Foodora signalled its exit from Australia shortly after the Fair Work Ombudsman commenced action in the Federal Court, alleging the company had engaged in sham contracting.

The inquiry will examine allegations and determinations concerning contracting arrangements and whether these arrangements are being used to avoid workplace laws and other statutory obligations in Victoria.

It will review the application and effective enforcement of workplace laws, including accident compensation, superannuation and health and safety to people in the gig economy.

The inquiry will also examine how on-demand workers are regulated internationally and interstate, including Australia's obligations under international law.

The inquiry is expected to deliver a final report to the Government in late 2019 and will be seeking public submissions, worker and business input.

Quote attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins

"This inquiry will lay the groundwork to ensure people are protected in the new economy."

Quote attributable to Minister for Finance Robin Scott

"The inquiry will examine Victoria's capacity to protect the rights of vulnerable workers in the absence of a meaningful national approach."

Quote attributable to Chair of the Victorian Inquiry into the On-Demand Workforce Natalie James

"Australia is crying out for an evidence led, independent examination of the work arrangements in the gig and on-demand economies."

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