

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Workplace Safety



Tuesday, 29 October 2019

WORKPLACE MANSLAUGHTER TO BE ENSHRINED IN LAW

The Andrews Labor Government will make workplace manslaughter a criminal offence as promised, under tough new legislation introduced in Parliament today, because no person deserves to die at work.

As many as 30 people are killed in workplaces across the state every year, with 19 people having already lost their lives so far in 2019.

Under the proposed new laws, which deliver on an election promise, employers who negligently cause a workplace death will face fines of up to \$16.5 million and individuals will face up to 20 years in jail.

Too many Victorians have had their lives tragically cut short after simply going to work and this new offence will hold employers who don't put safety first to account.

The offence will fall under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) and will apply to employers, self-employed people and 'officers' of the employers.

The legislation will also apply when an employer's negligent conduct causes the death of a member of the public - ensuring that all Victorians are safe in, and around, our workplaces.

WorkSafe Victoria will investigate the new offence using their powers under the OHS Act to ensure employers can be prosecuted – making clear that putting people's lives at risk in the workplace will not be tolerated.

Earlier this year, the government announced a Workplace Manslaughter Implementation Taskforce to help develop the tough new laws.

Led by Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety Natalie Hutchins, the taskforce included members and representatives from business, unions, industry and victims' families.

The Taskforce was supported by a Families' Reference Group, which was made up of a number of families who have been impacted by a workplace death.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Jill Hennessy

"The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on its election promise to make workplace manslaughter a criminal offence because no person should die at work."

"All workers deserve a safe workplace and the proposed laws send a clear message to employers that putting people's lives at risk in the workplace will not be tolerated."

"I cannot begin to imagine the pain felt by the families who have lost a loved one at work."