



# **THE VICTORIAN PLAN**

IDEAS FOR SECURE JOBS & A FAIRER VICTORIA





## All Victorians should receive fair wages for the work they do.

**Ensure that superannuation is paid to all workers during parental leave** in all public sector EBAs.

Adopt clauses in public service enterprise agreements that give effect to **5 days of paid leave per year for the purpose of attending and recovering from appointments and treatments relating to reproduction**. Leave should be available to be taken on an hour-by-hour basis. Leave to attend appointments should be extended to workers whose partner is pregnant. The Victorian Government should also adopt clauses in agreements that match the New South Wales Government's entitlement of up to 5 days of **paid leave for pregnancy loss** if it occurs before 20 weeks' gestation.

Amend procurement and funding guidelines to **require any business or service provider who receives government funds to meet minimum requirements around gender equality and the prevention of gendered violence at work**. These minimum requirements should include a reviewable gender equality action plan based on a gender equality audit and gender pay gap action plans to increase pay for low paid women workers.

**End the use of short-term contracts within the public service, as well as in social and community sector funding**, to ensure that public sector workers have access to permanent employment if they want it. Insecure work and subsequent poor career progression disproportionately affects workers who are women or from other marginalised communities. As such, **the use of casual**

**engagement, short-term contracts and labour hire should be eradicated**. The government should also limit the use of consultants. Targets to achieve this should be agreed upon with the relevant unions. Unions should be involved in monitoring and reporting on the achievement of these targets.

**Make it mandatory that performers in the live music industry are offered a minimum rate of \$250 for performances at live music venues**. This is consistent with the minimum rates included in the Victorian Government's Live Music Restart package of support for the live music industry, which is welcomed by the Victorian union movement.

Victorian Government procurement is one of the largest drivers of the Victorian economy. The Victorian Government should ensure that taxpayer funds are spent on good, secure jobs by **lowering the threshold of the Fair Jobs Code** and applying it to all government spending.

Victoria's pioneering **wage theft laws** ensure that employers who rip off their workers face the consequences. Changes to the Magistrates Court ensure that workers can reclaim underpaid wages quickly and easily. These reforms should be defended and maintained.

Victoria's **Labour Hire Licensing Scheme** is vitally important for regulating an industry notoriously exposed to wage theft and sham contracting. The Victorian model acts as a model for other states to follow in addressing exploitation within labour hire and must therefore be defended and maintained.

## All Victorians should have guaranteed access to high quality public education and training.

**Victorian Apprenticeships should no longer be regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)** and instead be regulated by an agency or stand-alone statutory authority. This authority should have the powers to investigate and undertake enforcement actions relating to apprentice training contracts. These powers should extend to the ability to ban employers from taking on apprentices. VRQA should also be removed from the role of approving and monitoring training contracts or banning employers from taking on apprentices.

Publicly owned TAFE is a public good and ought to be accessible to Victorians, no matter their income. Increased investment in TAFE is necessary to ensure that every course is funded in a way which meets the cost of delivery. To make vocational education universal and to increase enrolments at TAFEs, **fee free TAFE should be established across all courses**, including in foundation skills and for workers who already have a TAFE qualification.

In order to deliver the best-quality education and training across kindergarten, public schools, vocational education and university, **teachers and support staff at all educational institutions must have well-paid, secure jobs.** Manageable workloads and fair remuneration are crucial to ensuring that education is seen as a valued and rewarding career. Permanent

and well-paid jobs in the education sector are a key to the retention of existing workers and attraction of new entrants.

Investment in the supply of teachers and education support employees is necessary to address the current staffing shortage in public education and to prevent future shortages. **Providing financial incentives such as scholarships and studentships are necessary to attract Victorians to study teaching.** **Providing additional and more tangible support** to early career teachers is essential to retain them in the profession. Valuing and investing in existing teachers through reduced workloads is crucial to retaining them and is an important way to lift the status of the profession.

**A Single Interest agreement covering all TAFE teachers** in all TAFE Institutes should replace the Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement 2018.

**Deliver at least 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard to public schools** through the next bilateral funding agreement.

To ensure that insecure work doesn't continue to grow, **the use of Casual Relief Teaching agencies by schools should be reformed** to ensure teachers receive equal payment regardless of who the employer is.

## All Victorians should be able to stay home when they're sick, without fear of losing their income

**The Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee should be legislated, made permanent and expanded** to cover all Victorian workers who do not have paid sick and carers' leave entitlements. It should be paid for by an additional payroll tax levy on casual employment.

**The Sick Pay Guarantee should be extended to 10 days per annum** for each casual worker to ensure workers are never put in the position of having to choose between going to work sick and putting food on the table.

The Sick Pay Guarantee should ensure that, where workers are sick for shifts during which they would have received penalty rates (such as on weekends or public holidays), **the rate of payment under the Guarantee should reflect this.** Doing this ensures the scheme does not provide a perverse incentive to go to work when sick.

## All Victorians should be free from harassment, assault or bullying in the workplace and be free to speak out should they experience it.

**Restrict the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) to ensure that victim-survivors of gendered violence and bullying in the workplace are empowered to speak out** about their experience. Far too often, non-disclosure agreements are used to silence women and protect the reputations of employers that have allowed gendered violence to occur. When women are forced to stay silent on their experiences, employers are not held to account for failing to provide a safe workplace and workers are unable to come together to address gendered violence at work.

**Legislate to make company directors and senior management liable for incidents of sexual harassment** in circumstances where it is found that they have failed to meet their obligations under the EO Act to take proactive measures to address sexual harassment and to create a safe workplace.

Resource WorkSafe to **conduct a restorative justice pilot** built on a model of reconciliation and rectification of the system failure on sexual harassment incidents at work. An effective restorative justice system,



alternative to an adversarial model, allows the acknowledgement of harm but also charts a path forward that allows a victim-survivor to feel comfortable to remain in the workplace.

## All Victorians should have a mentally healthy and safe workplace.

**Strengthen protections for Victorian apprentices** to ensure they are protected from harassment and bullying at work. According to surveys at the Young Workers Centre, 41% of apprentices have reported bullying and harassment in the workplace and 50% have reported inadequate health and safety practices. These figures are completely unacceptable. The Victorian Government must make the machinery of government changes necessary to ensure that employers with a track record of harassment or bullying are prevented from taking on apprentices.

To ensure that all health and safety representatives (HSRs) receive training that **specifically addresses gendered violence at work**, including sexual harassment, the Victorian Government should amend section 67 of the OHS Act to give HSRs the right to paid time to attend a gendered violence refresher course at least twice a year without refusal from their employer.

Invest in WorkSafe projects that **encourage women and non-binary workers to become HSRs** at their workplaces.



## All Victorians should receive a paid career break every 10 years - to recharge and support good mental health.

Current long service leave entitlements exist for workers who serve an extended period with one employer and portable long service leave schemes only provide for portability within a specific industry.

Neither of these scenarios is fit for purpose in the modern world of work and leaves long service leave far out of reach for many working people. 33% of Australian workers have no access or entitlement to long service leave and 75% have been with their employer for less than 10 years.

**Victorians should have access to universal portable long service leave** which guarantees every worker a paid career break every 10 years. This scheme should be compulsory for all

Victorian businesses and workers, regardless of employment status. It should provide at least 8.67 weeks leave paid at ordinary pay after 10 years of work (pro-rata at 7 years) plus payout on retirement. It should be funded by a levy on employers and invested by the Authority and also guarantee to workers no loss of entitlements already able to access a long service leave scheme.

This universal scheme would allow workers to change industries and keep their accrued entitlement to long service leave. This would ensure all Victorians would be able to take a paid career break every 10 years to recharge and support good mental health and lifelong learning.

## All Victorian kids should receive a high-quality early childhood education.

Maximise the educational, social and economic benefits of early childhood education and care by **ensuring that all Victorian families have fully-funded access to full-time, high-quality childcare** so that no parent is out of pocket.

Continue reforms to early childhood education by **ensuring that all Victorian children have free access to 15 hours of three year old kindergarten and up to 30 hours of four-year-old kindergarten.**

High-quality early childhood education and care is critical to achieving workplace gender equality. This is evidenced by the gap in workforce participation for women with young children and that women with young children are also more likely to work part-time. These

factors contribute to women's economic inequity.

**Commit to improving the wages of early childhood educators, teachers and administrative staff** to recognise the importance of the sector and its workers. The early childhood education sector suffers from high workforce turnover and significant challenges in attracting and retaining potential workers in vocational education and training courses compared to other industries. Victoria needs a strong and properly resourced early childhood education workforce to deal with the demands of free and expanded kindergarten and to give our children the best possible start.



## All Victorians should have privacy at work, and the right to disconnect from work at home.

Increased use of digital surveillance and algorithms in the workplace such as social media monitoring, movement tracking and keystroke monitoring lead to physical and mental health risks, discrimination and a loss of privacy for Victorian workers.

Victoria needs a **Privacy in Working Life Act** that stands alone from the Surveillance Devices Act, which limits optical, audio and tracking and data surveillance.

The proposed Privacy in Working Life Act would also **limit the use of personal health information and would establish rules for the use of algorithms** in the workplace.

To supplement stronger protections from digital workplace surveillance, the Victorian Government should also ensure that workers have **a right to disconnect outside work hours**, limiting communication from employers to emergency and critical situations.

## All Victorians should benefit from a world-class health system where health workers are treated with respect.

**Support nurses and midwives, medical scientists and health professionals with well-paid, secure jobs to work and live in rural and regional areas** to address staff shortages.

Continue and accelerate the program of **returning private hospitals to public use**, ensuring that hospitals in Victoria operate in and are accountable to the public interest. This should also involve ensuring that all hospital staff in casual or contract employment, from medical professionals to building maintenance staff, are offered well-paid, permanent jobs.

**All Victorians should have free ambulance cover - for themselves and their families.**

Australians are rightly proud of our Medicare system that ensures we can access the care we need without fear of a massive bill at the end. However, the costs associated with calling an ambulance are a barrier to care for many Victorians and may leave them with an unexpected debt having received emergency medical care.

Our right to universal health care should extend to emergency transport to ensure Victorians get the care they need when they need it.

## All Victorians should be able to arrange their working week in a way that meets their needs, such as arranging with their employer to work a four-day week.

A reimagined working week could be achieved in a number of different ways. **Workers should be empowered to arrange with their employer to perform their work in a way that meets their needs.** Examples could include: a shorter working day such as a six-hour day; shorter working week such as a four-day work week; or working the hours of a five-day week in four longer days.

Reimagining the working week would provide **additional flexibility for families** allowing workers the capacity to pick up kids from school and childcare or assist with community sport while retaining full time employment.

In particular, **a four-day work week becoming normalised** would help shift cultural attitudes and economic trends that punish women for bearing children or fulfilling caring responsibilities.

A shorter work week ultimately assists in improving work-life balance, leaving more time for rest, social activity and leisure, which are crucial to a person's overall wellbeing and productivity. This is important as reports of burnout around the world have risen following years of pandemic-related stress

and deteriorated mental health. To ensure that workers in Victoria are each supported to bring to work their best strengths, and provide the skills that our economy needs, the Victorian Government needs to find new ways to ensure workers and their skills do not exit the workforce unnecessarily, through stress, burnout or exhaustion.





## All Victorians should have access to affordable, renewable, publicly-owned power.

**Establish a public authority similar to Queensland's CleanCo** to fully own (or at least own a 51% stake) in large-scale renewable energy. Equity stakes in offshore wind projects should be explored.

**Return transmission and distribution networks, which are natural monopolies, to public ownership.** This would eliminate rentier behaviour by the private sector, and enable better planned investment and reduced costs.

**Introduce a gas reservation policy**, similar to the policy which operates in Western Australia, to ensure that Victorians are not paying international price for gas produced in Australia.

**Establish a state-wide energy transition authority** to plan the transition from coal and gas generation to renewables. The current

ad hoc, market-based approach adds extra financial and social cost because there is no clear plan for when power stations will close and what will replace them.

**Introduce comprehensive industry policies for the development of supply chains in renewable energy technologies**, including wind turbine manufacture, battery production, solar panel and inverter manufacture, EV chargers, electric vehicles, and other new economy products. Establishing industrial capacity in these areas will reduce long-term importation costs, minimise the risk of supply chain disruption, create jobs, and develop manufacturing and technical innovation capacity. Public equity investment in or direct ownership of manufacturing facilities is recommended as an alternative to pure subsidy of private operations.

## All Victorians should have a secure, comfortable place to call home.

**Legislate a 'right to shelter'**, making it a government's responsibility to ensure adequate shelter is accessible and available for every person in Victoria who needs it. This should include a guarantee that every person has access to shelter that is safe, private, secure, hygienic, functional, not over-crowded, with all the necessary amenities. This project could be modelled on the right to shelter provisions in New York City, which kick-started accurate data gathering on the number of homeless people in New York City and drove massive investment in homelessness services.



Amend the Victorian Tenancies Act to **prohibit landlords from asking the referees of rental applications invasive questions** about the applicant; and restrict permissible questions to confirmation of employment status only.

**Expand the tax on vacant houses that have not been made available for tenancy**, to increase the supply of housing on the private market and discourage landlords from hoarding and inflating the price of housing.

**Establish minimum standards for cooling** in line with the current standards for heating, to minimise the health risks of extreme temperatures for renters, given the increasing frequency of extreme heat as a result of climate change; for example, amending the Residential Tenancies Act (1997) (Vic) to include a fixed (not portable) cooling system in the main living area as a minimum standard.

Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to **limit the cost on tenants for breaking a fixed term agreement**. Fixed-term lease break fees allowed currently place an excessive financial burden on renters who need to move unexpectedly.

**Install free, fast and reliable Wi-Fi in all public housing towers in Victoria**. The shift of essential services like banking, healthcare, employment and education to online platforms over the past decade has made reliable, affordable internet a prerequisite for basic participation in our communities.

**Legislate protections for tenants exercising their legal rights under the Residential Tenancies Act** against adverse action by landlords or real estate agents. This includes protections of the right to lodge a complaint with VCAT or Consumer Affairs against adverse action, and should apply both during a tenancy as well as in the application for a tenancy. Too many renters are fearful that landlords and real estate agents will not renew a lease or will refuse to accept a future tenancy application if they have a record of enforcing their legal rights as a renter. Renters must be empowered to defend their rights with adverse action protections.





**WE ARE  
UNION**