

Media Release

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NEW LAWS TO BOOST CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OVERSIGHT

The Allan Labor Government is taking strong action to stamp out the rotten culture that has been exposed in the construction sector.

New legislation will be introduced to the Victorian Parliament today to implement one of the key recommendations from the independent Wilson review.

The *Wage Theft Amendment Bill 2025* delivers on the first recommendation of Greg Wilson's review and will establish a new complaint referral service.

This new service will be responsible for receiving complaints and tip-offs about improper conduct at public construction projects and ensure those complaints are referred to the appropriate investigating entity.

This will make it easier for complaints to be made and provide a single doorway for issues to be raised and actioned, with a particular focus on complaints that involve a threat to the safety of women.

The referral service will be established within *Workforce Inspectorate Victoria*, which is the new name for Wage Inspectorate Victoria to reflect its new legislative mandate. Similarly, the *Wage Theft Act 2020* will be re-named the *Workforce Inspectorate Act 2025*.

Embedding the complaints referral service within an existing agency is the fastest and most effective way to establish the new service, drawing on the skills and experience of an existing regulator.

Workforce Inspectorate Victoria will continue as an independent statutory body with responsibility for administering the *Child Employment Act 2003*, *Long Service Leave Act 2018* and *Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act 2005* and as a regulator under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

The Commonwealth Government's amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009* mean that it is now a criminal offence in Australia – not only Victoria – to intentionally underpay wages and related employee entitlements.

This new legislation introduced today will also amend the *Wage Theft Act 2020*, repealing Victoria's wage theft offences, as well as the associated investigation and enforcement functions so that Commonwealth legislation will now replace the Victorian wage theft scheme.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Jaclyn Symes

"Criminal and unlawful behaviour has no place in Victoria's construction industry."

"We're taking strong action to stamp out rotten and unlawful practices, and this new complaints service will help rid worksites of this bad conduct."

"The vast majority of construction workers are hard-working and honest people. This new service will empower them to bring complaints forward and help clean up the sector."