

PAEC Inquiry into the 2018-19 Budget Estimates – Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearing

Minister Hutchins, Industrial Relations, Thursday 14 June 2018

Question 1

Budget reference, *Gender Equality Budget Statement*, page 1. The question is: Minister, during last year's budget estimates you said:

I think in the long term, a longitudinal study by us as a government into how it has kept women in employment is something that I look forward to being able to report back on to the committee in the future. At this stage we have received just over 50 claims.

Can you provide an update on those figures in terms of the number of people making claims, the number of public sector agreements covered and the number of employers covered? Regarding the study you mentioned to assess the impact of these provisions, are there any plans for that to take place, and have any budgetary provisions been made for that?

Response

The Victorian Government has continued to introduce family violence leave entitlements and supports in public sector enterprise agreements. As at 30 April 2018, the entitlement has been included in 105 enterprise agreements, covering approximately 278,000 public sector employees.

The most recent data available shows that, of those employees who applied for family and domestic leave entitlements, 118 were female, with the breakdown per Department or Agency as follows:

| Department or Agency | Number |
|---|--|
| Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources | Less than 10 |
| Department of Education and Training | Less than 10 |
| Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning | 11 |
| Department of Health and Human Services | 19 |
| Department of Justice and Regulation | 54 |
| Department of Premier and Cabinet | Undetermined (recorded as <i>Special Leave</i>) |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | Less than 10 |
| VicRoads | Less than 10 |
| Victoria Police | 16 |
| Victorian Public Sector Commission | Undetermined (recorded as <i>Special Leave</i>) |

Note: Numbers below 10 have not been disclosed to support privacy and confidentiality

The take up of provisions will continue to be monitored.

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Question 2

2. The budget paper reference is BP3, 'Service Delivery', page 139, and the question is: one of the concerns with the introduction of the labour hire licensing scheme relates to how the transition will impact on a large number of undocumented workers that will lose their jobs and livelihoods when this scheme is introduced, which is an unintended consequence of the bill. What, if any, measures are being put in place to identify and assist these workers, who are particularly vulnerable?

Response

This question is concerned with the fact that the *Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018* (Vic) is likely to reduce instances of undocumented worker participation in the labour market economy. An object of the statute is to protect workers from exploitation and this includes circumstances where labour hire service providers and hosts exploit undocumented workers.

The regulation of undocumented workers is a power that sits in the Federal jurisdiction. The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has indicated support for a suggestion by the Federal Government to create a jurisdictional working group to examine areas of cooperation between State and Territory Governments and the Federal Government on agricultural labour issues. This includes regulation to prevent exploitation of migrant workers. However, the Federal Government has yet to establish this group.

The Victorian Government has also allocated more than \$580,000 for employment law advice and assistance to prevent the exploitation of hundreds of temporary visa workers across regional Victoria. In partnership with Victorian Legal Aid, the government has selected a group of agencies that include JobWatch, the Goulburn Valley and Barwon Community Legal Centres to deliver the program.

In addition, the Department of Premier and Cabinet is also currently providing funding for the establishment and operation of the Migrant Workers Centre, which will advocate for the rights of migrant workers and provide education and information to migrant workers about their rights, proper wages and safe working conditions.