

## **Will you agree to implement true industry bargaining with a single Agreement for VPS and wider sector staff in our coverage?**

We will consider combining enterprise agreement bargaining for VPS and other public sector cohorts who are currently within CPSU coverage.

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## **Will you agree to pilot a four-day week for VPS and wider sector staff? Or the addition of a 19-day month? Or the addition of an extra week of annual leave?**

While we do not have any current policy for a reduced working week or additional leave, we will always bargain in good faith and we support having the most flexible arrangements possible.

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## **What is your parties PS wages policy and how will it address the cost of living for VPS and wider sector staff?**

We intend to review our public sector wages policy early during the next term of government, if re-elected.

We acknowledge that cost of living pressures are being experienced by workers across the economy at the moment and inflation has remained high.

This is an important consideration in setting wages policy for the public sector and so we expect the wages policy to increase next term.

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## **Will you remove the wage cap and actually bargain under new industrial relations laws?**

Our wages policy is aimed at ensuring Victorian public sector employees have fair outcomes and well-deserved improvements to pay and conditions while ensuring that the government maintains discipline in its spending.

We recognise the hard work of our public

service and wider public sector, while investing in the services that every Victorian needs.

Unlike in NSW, we did not impose any wage freezes on our public sector during the pandemic, nor did we set a dollar cap on increases like in Western Australia.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to bargain in good faith with our public sector workers for agreements that would not only increase wages but deliver meaningful improvements to their working conditions.

In the next term, we expect to continue to bargain in good faith for fair agreements that recognise the value of our public sector's contribution to Victoria.

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## **Will you commit to no redundancies in the VPS and wider sector?**

Labor is committed to ensuring that in all government decision making, the impacts upon workers in the VPS and wider public sector are a key consideration, and we aim to avoid and minimise the use of redundancies wherever possible.

We have also established the Jobs and Skills Exchange as a means of promoting mobility and career development within the VPS. It offers VPS staff priority access to employment opportunities in government as well as access to training and career development resources.

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## **Will you commit to maintaining flexible work options for VPS and wider sector staff?**

Throughout government we have been and remain committed to maintaining flexible work practices for the VPS and wider public sector. In partnership with the CPSU, we developed a flexible work policy and rolled it out across the VPS in August 2021.

Labor is dedicated to promoting and implementing family-friendly work practices, helping staff to balance the responsibilities and demands of work and family. Labor also values equity, inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Labor has demonstrated its commitment to flexible work in our approach to 'return to office' following COVID restrictions. Matthew Guy's Liberals' wanted to force public servants to return to the office full-time.

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**Will you commit to 26 weeks paid parental leave for both parents for fairer families and workplaces?**

We recognise the importance of parental leave in ensuring that women in particular are able to remain in work within the VPS. The Government's 2022 Inquiry into Economic Equity recommended, among other things, that Victoria take a nation-leading, best practice approach to parental leave. This recommendation was supported in principle by the Andrews Labor government.

Labor has a long and proud tradition of celebrating and promoting gender inclusivity and diversity and aims to ensure men are able to, and indeed encouraged to use parental leave.

The 2020 VPS Enterprise Agreement provided a significant benefit to public service employees who could otherwise only be a secondary caregiver, or a subsequent unpaid primary caregiver, to their child.

Labor will continue to review its policy and is committed to bargaining in good faith on these and other conditions.

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**Will you legislate to make WorkSafe independent from PS Department employers and report directly to Parliament?**

WorkSafe is a statutory authority governed by a board of management, which can exercise all the regulator's powers and give general directions to WorkSafe in fulfilling its functions and objectives.

Responsibility for day-to-day operations is delegated to a Chief Executive and management team. WorkSafe is charged with ensuring that Victorian occupational health and safety laws and standards are complied with, enforced and communicated.

Government and its departments and agencies owe important health and safety obligations to their workers and others, just like other duty-

holders. WorkSafe conduct their compliance and enforcement role independently and at arms-length from Government.

WorkSafe reports annually to Parliament.

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**Will you update referral to ensure Federal IR changes to sex discrimination, bullying, and bargaining apply to Victorian public sector?**

The Andrews Labor Government supports appropriate safeguards being built into industrial instruments to protect public sector staff from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Labor is currently considering Recommendation 16 of the Ministerial Taskforce on Sexual Harassment, which relates to the powers of the Fair Work Commission in respect of Victorian workers.

These are important and expanding areas of responsibility for the Fair Work Commission and we work with unions to review the referral and ensure Victorian public sector workers are adequately protected.

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**Will you agree to remove the current budget settings that place a cap on staffing?**

The Andrews Labor Government expects all departments to make staffing and other financial decisions responsibly, consistent with our priorities.

There is no cap on staffing.

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**Will you remove the efficiency dividend and fully fund the delivery of Government programs?**

The Andrews Labor Government will continue doing what matters for Victorians - and that includes fully funding the delivery of our priorities.

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**What are your regional development plans for VPS and wider sector staff whose Department or Agency is currently City or Metropolitan based?**

Labor has a proven record of investing in Regional Victoria to deliver sustainable

economic growth and a great lifestyle for regional towns, businesses and communities.

Throughout our term of government we have prioritised building infrastructure, creating jobs, setting up regional 'GovHubs', and establishing nine Regional Partnerships, to make sure that decisions about regional Victoria involved the voices of those people who actually live in regional Victoria. Significantly, Labor has also committed to hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games sports in a number of regional locations.

The three new GovHubs are intended to increase public sector job opportunities in the regional communities where they are based, co-locating public services for the benefit of residents and bringing services to the regional areas that may have been based previously in metropolitan Melbourne. The project is also intended to contribute to the growth of a qualified and highly skilled workforce in the regions where GovHubs are located, as a means of sharing and sustaining prosperity.

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**Will you work with CPSU to further develop cadetship scheme to improve the intake into VPS to ensure the VPS reflects the community that it serves?**

Labor is happy to work with the CPSU on the VPS cadetship program to ensure it reflects the diversity of the Victorian community.

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**Will you review the contracts of outsourced service providers to ensure they are compliant with the Jobs Code?**

The Fair Jobs Code requires eligible businesses applying for Victorian Government contracts or grants to show compliance with industrial relations and occupational health and safety laws and to work towards Fair Jobs Code standards, including secure work.

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**How will you address excessive workloads which contribute to the increase of stress and mental health claims?**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians.

During the previous term of government, in collaboration with departments and unions,

we developed a framework for public service employers to create a mentally and physically safe workplace.

The strategy is supported by an interdepartmental governance body, accountability processes and resources and templates for use by employers. As a Labor government, we want to set an example for mental and psychological safety at work.

We are also developing psycho-social health regulations pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which we are committed to progressing in 2023.

These regulations will be intended to better clarify the duties of employers in respect of preventing and acting on claims of mental injury. 'High job demands' is a risk factor in respect of which employers will be required to specifically draft a prevention plan.

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**Will you agree to assist higher education degree mandated occupations by reimbursing HECS fees?**

The Government is not currently considering subsidising any other degree-qualified courses, however should the CPSU wish to table these matters as part of bargaining, we will consider these matters and bargain in good faith with the CPSU.

We are also committed to working with the CPSU to look at ways of encouraging young people into career pathways in child protection and student support services.

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**Will you agree to assist filling job vacancies in regional areas with salary incentives?**

In March 2022, the Andrews Labor Government announced the Regional Incentives Program, which offered packages of up to \$20,500 for practitioners who accepted child protection roles in regional areas including Sale, Bairnsdale, Bendigo, Shepparton, Ballarat, Swan Hill, Hamilton and Horsham.

The incentives were created to encourage Victorians with relevant qualifications to take up child protection practitioner jobs in regional areas.

Incentives have also been offered to encourage school teachers to work in regional or rural communities.

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**Will you commit to continue recognised short course delivery and extend the stackable training options of Learning and Development need such as data analysis?**

Labor is committed to ensuring that skills training is targeted effectively - both at the industries most in need of workers and at the workers most interested in and available for further training.

We have recognised a number of short course providers and see stackable, micro credentials as crucial to ensuring that people are able to access relevant training and pursue professional development opportunities.

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**Will you empower the Public Service Commissioner to be to direct PS employers?**

This is not currently being considered.

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