

COMMUNIQUÉ

Meeting of Workplace Relations Ministers

20 June 2024

1. Attending Commonwealth, State and Territory Workplace Relations Ministers met today to discuss progress on national labour hire licensing reform and opportunities to improve usability of the workplace relations system and outcomes for businesses and workers by minimising regulatory inconsistency across jurisdictions.
2. The meeting was chaired by the Hon Tony Burke MP, Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.
3. Ministers agreed to hold their next meeting in December 2024.

National Labour Hire Licensing Scheme

4. At the last meeting on 13 December 2023, Workplace Relations Ministers endorsed a model for a harmonised approach to national labour hire regulation. Ministers tasked a Senior Officials' Implementation Working Group, led by Victoria and the Commonwealth, with developing an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to establish a harmonised national labour hire licensing scheme.
5. Ministers also tasked Senior Officials with forming a project office to manage the establishment of the National Labour Hire Regulator and support development and adoption of a model law to underpin the harmonised national labour hire licensing scheme.
6. At today's meeting, Ministers confirmed their continued commitment to the endorsed model and a harmonised approach, subject to agreement on funding arrangements. Tasmania noted it would provide its position out of session.
7. Ministers agreed to publish the endorsed model on the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' website. Senior Officials were tasked with developing a strategy for consultation with business, industry, unions and other stakeholders. Consultation is expected to commence shortly.
8. Ministers noted the progress made by the Implementation Working Group in developing the IGA. They noted that a number of important issues remain to be resolved and instructed officials to continue work to ensure the IGA can be finalised as soon as possible once work on funding arrangements is complete.
9. Ministers also noted progress made by the project office on the funding arrangements for the National Labour Hire Regulator.
10. Ministers agreed that the final IGA and full funding arrangements be provided to them for consideration in December 2024, subject to appropriate approvals.

Improved Coherence of Workplace Laws

11. Ministers agreed that the Commonwealth, States and Territories will consider opportunities to work together to minimise regulatory inconsistency across jurisdictions, to improve usability and outcomes for businesses and workers.
12. Ministers agreed that Senior Officials will progress work on minimising regulatory inconsistency across jurisdictions, including, with respect to the impact of recent reforms in referring jurisdictions, and in particular:
 - a. the meaning of 'employee' and 'employer' in the *Fair Work Act 2009*; and
 - b. the inclusion of superannuation in the National Employment Standards.
13. Ministers noted the importance of ensuring victim-survivors of family and domestic violence have legislated protections from discrimination in the workplace. Ministers agreed that jurisdictions not providing such protections should consider doing so, having regard to specific jurisdictional frameworks.
14. All Australian employees, including casual employees, now have a right to ten days of paid family and domestic violence leave each year to deal with the impact of family and domestic violence. A statutory review of this entitlement, led by Flinders University, is currently underway and Ministers agreed that the report may provide a basis for further consideration of national consistency.
15. The prohibition of discriminatory conduct toward victim-survivors of family and domestic violence is a key measure to ensure workers are not unfairly denied access to this leave entitlement.
16. A progress report prepared by Senior Officials will be provided to Ministers by 15 November 2024, for discussion at the next Meeting of Workplace Relations Ministers.