

MEDIA ALERT

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2018

Asbestos removal on Airtasker prompts calls to regulate gig-economy

Revelations of unlicensed asbestos removal performed through the job posting website, Airtasker, have prompted Unions NSW to begin a national push for a new body to properly regulate the gig economy.

The peak trade union council has already had some success in improving standards on Airtasker, where minimum rates are now advertised for work performed through the site.

However, that was only a start and issues of safety and licensing on the site remain a serious concern. Unions have collected evidence of serious safety and licensing concerns.

Jobs have been posted on Airtasker requesting workers to break up and dispose of asbestos sheeting.

In one job, a worker was paid \$50 to remove 5 sheets of asbestos, and was provided only a safety mask for protection.

And Perth plumber Alec Sharland says he was banned from the site for pointing out licensing and safety breaches.

Unions NSW Secretary, Mark Morey said the gig economy has outpaced traditional regulation and needs its own dedicated body to ensure safety and licensing standards are met.

“While there have been some improvements to wages and conditions on Airtasker, the reality is businesses establishing in the gig economy have a ‘catch us if you can’ mentality to regulation,” Mr Morey said.

“Between now and the national ALP conference, we will campaign for an incoming Labor Government to establish an independent body that would monitor the gig economy and work closely with trade unions to make sure minimum wages aren’t undercut and basic safety and licensing standards are met.

“This is about saving the gig economy from itself. Unless we put a floor under this unregulated work, it will eventually suck all of us down.”

Unions will begin building support in ALP branches for their position from next week.

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