

Media Release

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Coles and Transport Workers Union sign ground-breaking charter on standards in road transport and gig economy

Coles and the Transport Workers Union have signed a charter on standards in road transport and the gig economy focusing on safety, driver education and mental health.

The charter commits that Coles and the TWU will work collaboratively to ensure high standards on safety and fairness throughout the supply chain as a way to ensure positive health and safety outcomes.

This includes a formal consultation process between the TWU and Coles to ensure an ongoing emphasis on safety and to establish mechanisms through which safety issues can be identified and addressed.

Coles and the TWU will also work together on safe and fair outcomes for workers in the rapidly-growing gig economy.

Coles and the TWU have been working towards the charter since 2018, when they signed a formal agreement to ensure safety and fairness for transport workers within the Coles supply chain. Under the terms of the newly-signed charter, Coles and the TWU will now establish pilot programs with businesses in the road transport and gig economy sectors.

Coles Group CEO Steven Cain said the charter would provide the basis of a formal working relationship with the TWU and transport workers to ensure safety and fairness remain the highest priority.

"Coles relies on the skill and dedication of thousands of transport workers across Australia, and we have always recognised their right to a safe and healthy working environment," he said.

"Health, safety and wellbeing are at the core of our culture at Coles, and the processes we will establish through this charter with the TWU will help us maintain that same focus on safety throughout our transport supply chain."

Coles Chief Operations Officer Matt Swindells said safety was a shared passion for Coles and the TWU.

"We have a common goal of improving safety through the transport supply chain, and by taking a collaborative approach we will be even more effective in achieving safer outcomes that benefit everyone," he said.

TWU National Secretary Michael Kaine said the charter was a major step forward in ensuring the lifting of standards on road safety in Australia.

"This charter is ground-breaking in continuing to prioritise safety and fairness in one of the biggest retail supply chains in Australia. For truck drivers, logistics workers and food delivery riders it means the bar has been set very high in terms of listening to their concerns and investigating issues. For road users it means a major retailer is putting in place mechanisms to make our roads safer. Road transport is a deadly industry and it requires responsible corporate citizens standing up and acting in the interests of the community as Coles is doing," he said.

While the road transport industry accounts for just 2% of the Australian workforce, data from Safe Work Australia shows that it accounts for 17% of work-related fatalities and 4% of workers' compensation claims for injuries and diseases involving one or more weeks off work – around 5,100 claims each year, or 14 serious claims each day.

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