

Sunday, 23 July 2023

## Death of food delivery rider shows why reform is needed

The Union movement extends its thoughts to the loved ones of food delivery rider who tragically lost their life in Sydney on Saturday, now confirmed to be working for UberEats at the time of his death.

These tragic instances remind us what's at stake when workers don't have the protections they need at work.

There is currently no system in Australia to provide transport gig workers with rights like minimum wage, sick leave, workers' compensation or protection from unfair contract terminations, which add pressure to rush hand work unsafely just to make a living

A recent report by the McKell and the TWU shows that more than half of food delivery riders reported feeling pressured and rushed in order to make enough money and avoid deactivation from the app. McKell research also showed 81% of gig workers rely on these platforms as their main source of income.

UberEats has previously attempted to deny workplace deaths occurred and therefore didn't report them. In 2021, UberEats claimed food delivery rider Burak Dogan wasn't working for them when he went under a truck in April 2020, despite his phone receiving job requests from Uber Eats at the exact time of his death, and afterwards as he lay dead on the road.

Although underreporting is clearly an issue in this line of work, this is the 12<sup>th</sup> food delivery rider known to have died in Australia since 2017, nine of whom were UberEats riders.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Gig workers by its very nature is insecure, which makes it harder for workers to point out safety concerns without the risk of losing their job, not to mention that their only form of contact with the company is via apps and chatbots

"The precarious nature of the work means they are forced to take risks just to bring in a paycheck.

"These workers deserve so much more. Working no matter what the weather or time to bring us convenience comes with a cost; employers are passing risks onto individuals in the pursuit of corporate profits.

"Flexibility may be desired by workers, but it is far from reality. The unchecked transport gig economy puts workers' lives at risk just to earn enough money. We urgently need reform to fix this crisis.

"No worker's life is expendable for convenience."

**ENDS**

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