

# Research shows Queenslanders want more support for retail workers



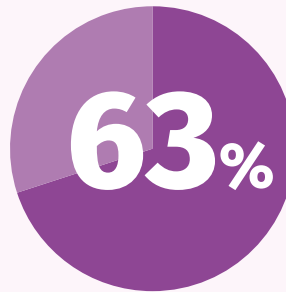
Australia's **1.5 million retail workers** are the country's second-largest workforce cohort. The Coronavirus pandemic has seen retail workers shoulder a disproportionately large burden of ensuring society can continue to function during the crisis. This has amplified pre-existing issues impacting the health and wellbeing of retail workers.

Recent public opinion research<sup>1</sup> across Queensland provides evidence that QLD residents want more government support to help retail workers tackle health and wellbeing issues.

## essential workers essential support

# 18%

of Queensland adults have worked in retail, including food retail, in the past 3 years



of Queenslanders agree that leaders should be doing more to support retail workers, similar to other essential services like healthcare

### Crime and abuse are leading to retail workforce attrition.



**64%** of retail workers in QLD agree that abuse and crime faced by workers are reasons retail staff look for other jobs.

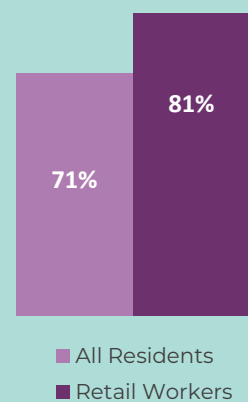
### Abuse is more accepted in retail than other workplaces.

**88%** of retail workers nationally have experienced physical or verbal abuse from customers.

**Two-thirds** (68%) of QLD retail workers feel this abuse is more accepted in retail than in other workplaces, and 45% of QLD residents agree.

### Calls for more action to combat abuse.

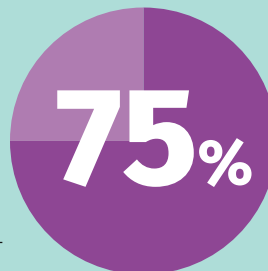
**81%** of QLD retail workers agree that government should invest in campaigns and support programs to combat abuse of retail workers. 71% of QLD residents agree.



### Queenslanders want harsher penalties for retail crime.

There is overwhelming support in Queensland to look at stepping up penalties for these offences.

**Three quarters** (75%) of Queenslanders agree their leaders should consider harsher penalties to address retail crime. Support is equally high among those most affected – the retail workers themselves – with **75%** agreeing harsher penalties for retail crime should be considered.



1. n=5002 telephone survey of QLD residents 18+ in September 2020. Data weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures to be representative of the QLD population by age and gender to within a maximum margin of error of +/-1.38%.

# Retail workers at greater risk of poor health and wellbeing

Stress and abuse experienced by retail workers makes them even more vulnerable to negative lifestyle choices. The pandemic has brought the importance of health and wellbeing sharply into focus around Australia, but especially for essential workers.

While the retail industry is undertaking many actions to accommodate the changing demands of the Coronavirus response, increased tensions faced by the retail workforce may be exacerbating the poor lifestyle choices of some retail workers such as poor nutrition, lack of physical exercise and smoking.



## Queensland has the highest rate of smoking in any mainland state.



The Australian Bureau of Statistics' latest National Health Survey figures show the smoking rate is 14.9% in QLD, higher than the national average of 13.8%<sup>1</sup>, and that rate is no longer going down.

Some areas of QLD have even higher smoking rates, such as Hinchinbrook (25.5%), Charters Towers (26%) and Mt Isa (24.9%).

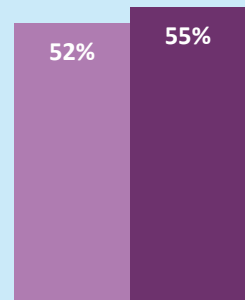
Retail workers are more likely to be smokers than other sectors<sup>2</sup>. Stagnated smoking rates are an issue that QLD leaders should address.

## Calls for leaders to look at legalising vaping products to reduce smoking.

Retail workers need access to alternatives to help them quit smoking. Queensland residents are supportive of QLD leaders considering legalising less harmful alternatives to cigarettes – such as smoke-free vaping products – to reduce smoking rates for smokers who don't quit.

**52%** agree QLD should consider legalisation, and this is higher among QLD retail workers at 55%.

This support is equally represented in regional and metro areas.



■ All Residents  
■ Retail Workers

## QLD residents support health & wellbeing investment in retail workers.

In 2010, the Department of Health<sup>3</sup> found that retail workers (those in retail and food service) were overrepresented for inadequate fruit and vegetable intake and inadequate physical activity outside of work.

Queenslanders see the need for health issues impacting retail workers to be addressed.

**58%** agree that government should invest in campaigns to improve the health and nutrition of retail workers. This rises to 68% among retail workers.



This research supports the National Retail Association's **landmark report into retail worker wellbeing**, which details the health and wellbeing struggles of the retail workforce.

Find the report at [www.essentialretail.com.au](http://www.essentialretail.com.au)

**essential workers**  
**essential support**

# It's time to act.

[www.essentialretail.com.au](http://www.essentialretail.com.au)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2017-18~Main%20Features~Key%20Findings~1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6642a2.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.healthyworkers.gov.au/internet/hwi/publishing.nsf/content/industry>.