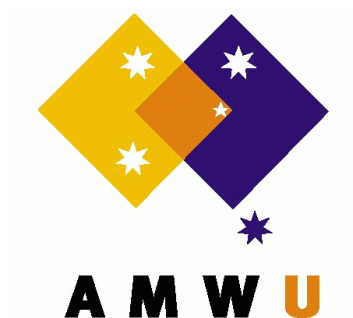


*Inquiry into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other
Legislation Amendment Bill 2015*

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Finance and
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AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING WORKERS' UNION



Submission to the Finance and Administration Committee

August 2015

Enquiries:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This submission is made on behalf of members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union ("AMWU"). The AMWU, as known on a collective and public basis, is made up of the Automotive, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland (the state registered Union) and the Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union" known as the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) (the federal registered Union). The AMWU represents members working across major sectors of the Australian economy, including in the manufacturing sectors of vehicle building and parts supply, engineering, printing and paper products. Our members are engaged in maintenance services work across all industry sectors. We cover many employees throughout the resources sector, mining, aviation, aerospace and building and construction industries. We also cover members in the technical and supervisory occupations in engineering and across diverse industries including food technology and construction. The AMWU has members at all skills/classification from entry level to degree. The AMWU Queensland/NT Branch represents over 17,000 members, with the vast majority employed in Queensland.
- 1.2 The AMWU notes that the manufacturing, construction and transport industries have the highest level of workplace injury and death. On a daily basis, Officers, Officials, delegates and members of the AMWU bear witness to the effect workplace injuries, and regrettably on an all too frequent basis work related death, has on workers and their families within our areas of coverage.
- 1.3 The AMWU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Finance and Administration Committee in respect of the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* ("the Bill").

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The AMWU strongly supports the Palaszczuk Government's reform agenda to restore fairness and balance to Queensland's workers' compensation scheme. In particular, we support the reinstatement of common law rights for all eligible injured workers.
- 2.2 Protections for workers injured as a result of their employment is a fundamentally held principle of the AMWU and its members. Moreover, there is a widely held community expectation that injured workers will be appropriately compensated and cared for. This is because workers' compensation is a matter that affects every Queenslanders.
- 2.3 The AMWU strongly opposed the former LNP Government's ideologically driven changes to Queensland's workers' compensation scheme. It is noted that the LNP Government made these legislative changes despite the recommendations of its own Parliamentary Committee into the scheme.

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- 2.4 One of the key areas of the LNP Government's changes to the Queensland workers' compensation scheme was the introduction of an unfair permanent impairment threshold. The introduction of this unfair threshold stripped away the legal rights of up to 60% of injured workers in Queensland from accessing common law rights. The Palaszczuk Government's Bill removes this unfair threshold.
- 2.5 Access to common law rights, in circumstances in which a worker can prove negligence on the part of their employer, is central to a fair and equitable workers' compensation scheme. It is necessary and appropriate for legislative amendments to be made to reinstate fairness and balance back into Queensland's workers' compensation scheme, including the removal of the permanent impairment threshold.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 On the basis of our submission above, the AMWU accordingly commends the Bill to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Submission end.