



Speech by

Hon. P. BRADDY

MEMBER FOR KEDRON

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Division of Workplace Health and Safety

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.47 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform the House of the continuing and successful operations of the Workplace Health and Safety Division of my department. Earlier this year I announced the division's policy initiative, the Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Enforcement Framework, which details new enforcement, investigation and prosecution policies. Honourable members would be aware that in the past the division's inspectors concentrated on encouraging voluntary compliance with workplace health and safety standards. Our new enforcement framework tips the balance towards a more robust regime to ensure that health and safety standards reach a higher compliance level. An important aspect of that policy is Statewide audits of industries and hazards. In planning these blitzes, the Division of Workplace Health and Safety consults with industry groups to help target specific safety issues. I am pleased to say that both trade unions and employer organisations strongly support a more proactive stand on these important safety issues. The special audits commenced in August, with inspectors targeting the residential construction industry.

In consultation with industry, the division has decided that the next target of a blitz will be the mobile crane industry. From November this year, specially trained inspectors will be equipped to conduct a Statewide audit of mobile cranes to check safety standards. Mobile cranes have caused some devastating incidents in recent years by coming into contact with powerlines and toppling at building sites. More than 1,000 cranes located at construction sites and in crane hire yards will be targeted. The program is a proactive endeavour to lower the unacceptable toll in workplace injuries and deaths in Queensland. WorkCover recorded 93 fatalities and 73,000 compensated injury claims last year. The targets of the safety campaigns are selected by the division, in consultation with the industry, based on the level of incidents recorded in the particular industry or related to a particular hazard. The new policies will lead to more notices and prosecutions of employers who do not look after the basic safety requirements of their workers.

Together with the blitz on mobile cranes, I am launching a video on the dangers of operating cranes in the vicinity of powerlines. The video has been produced by the Department of Mines and Energy's Office of Electrical Safety with the assistance of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. Brambles and Energex also offered expert assistance in producing the video. It graphically depicts the dangers of mobile cranes striking powerlines, whether they are above the crane or below an excavation site.

The education process will continue next month when the division's new compliance program will be highlighted at seminars across the State. Business should take advantage of these seminars to receive information on the new enforcement, prosecution and investigation policies. This information should help stop injury and death to workers.

Last financial year employers were fined more than \$300,000 in 64 serious prosecutions. The cost in human terms is much higher, and these could be avoided with careful assessments of workplace risks and work practices. I commend the second of the safety blitz targets under the enhanced enforcement framework of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety to the House.