



Speech by

Hon. GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

WorkCover

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.11 a.m.), by leave: The Premier and I have announced more good news for employers in Queensland this week. The average premium rate for workers compensation in Queensland will remain at the lowest level in Australia for the next financial year. The average rate of 1.55 per cent is the lowest of any state and follows three cuts from the average rate of 2.145 per cent when the Beattie government was elected in 1998. In addition, the government's recent reforms mean that Queensland's scheme now also provides some of the highest benefits to injured workers while still the only solvent workers compensation scheme in Australia.

At a time when other state workers compensation authorities are in the red, Queensland's system is not only increasing its benefits to more workers but improving its financial position and delivering the lowest average employer rates in Australia. In the last 12 months, the maximum statutory lump sum injury claim for an injured worker has been increased from \$127,900 to \$150,000. If a worker suffers permanent injury and is dependent on care, the maximum claim available to compensate for care has also been increased to \$150,000. In the event that a worker is killed, dependants are now able to claim a new maximum of \$250,000, up from \$204,645. We have also improved common law processes to help parties settle matters earlier with fewer legal costs.

The ability to maintain these benefits at the same time as offering the lowest average employer premiums in the country has been no small feat. I would like to thank particularly the management team at WorkCover, specifically the Chairman, Mr Ian Brusasco, and the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tony Hawkins, and members of my department for their efforts in helping to make this achievement possible. Their work has ensured benefits for all Queensland employers and workers and will help attract new businesses and investment to this great state.
