



Speech by

**Hon. GORDON NUTTALL**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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Hansard 23 October 2002

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Tractor Safety**

**Hon. G. R. NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to be able to announce today new measures being put in place by this government to reduce the unacceptably high number of tractor rollover fatalities and injuries in Queensland. Under proposed new regulations, all tractors in Queensland workplaces that were manufactured after 1981 will be required to be fitted with a rollover protective structure, or ROPS—a steel rollbar designed to help protect the driver in the event of a tractor rolling over. These proposed regulations would affect tractors not just on farms but also in workplaces including schools, golf courses, local councils and resorts and in industries such as landscaping.

This government has been working to improve tractor safety since a National Occupational Health and Safety Commission report released last year showed that Queensland had more tractor related fatalities than any other state or territory in Australia. Seven people were killed in tractor rollover accidents in Queensland in 2000, four people died in 1999 and a further three died in 1998. Tractor rollovers account for nearly half of all tractor related deaths on farms in Queensland.

Right now there are an estimated 100,000 tractors operating in workplaces in Queensland, and about 40 per cent do not have a ROPS. It is estimated that some 20,000 tractors will have to be fitted to comply with the new regulations.

As I said, under the new regulations, due to come into effect early next year, ROPS will be mandatory on all tractors manufactured after 1 January 1981. Tractors built before 1981 that are operated by an employee will also be required to have a ROPS fitted. That means that all employees operating a tractor in Queensland will have the added protection of these safety devices. Where a tractor is used in an orchard or inside a building, where the risk of rollovers is minimal, a ROPS will not be required.

In an effort to help owners meet the costs of these new structures, the regulations will be phased in over four years and a subsidy will apply for all WorkCover policyholders who have a rollover protective structure fitted during that period. The rebate will be \$250 for people who fit a structure in the first or second year. That is about one-third of the average cost of \$800 of a standard rollover protective structure. A rebate of \$200 will be offered on a ROPS fitted in the third year of the phase-in period, and \$150 will be offered in the fourth year. I hope the higher subsidy offered in the first two years will encourage people to fit their tractors sooner and perhaps save a life sooner.

At the same time, my department will be introducing a new advisory standard on the use of seatbelts in tractors that will require all tractor owners to carry out a risk assessment on any work to be done, and in high risk work a seat belt must be worn. I would like to thank the many stakeholders throughout Queensland who made significant contributions to the impact statement that was issued for public consultation in September last year. I took members of my Industrial Relations Parliamentary Committee to Proserpine recently to witness first-hand the types of ROPS used on tractors around the state and to talk to workers about their support for these types of protection.

I sincerely believe, and so do many key stakeholders, that these new regulations will help save lives and help prevent the many serious injuries that have hurt not only the rural industry but also many other workplaces right around the state.