



Speech by

Hon. GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Hansard 3 April 2003

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

WorkCover Premiums

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.19 a.m.): I have stood before this House on many occasions with good news about our workers compensation scheme known as WorkCover Queensland. It seems the news just keeps getting better. This morning I can announce that the average premium rates for employers in Queensland will remain at the lowest of any state in Australia for the next financial year, 2003-04. For the fourth consecutive year under the Beattie Labor government Queensland employers will enjoy the lowest premiums anywhere in Australia. At the average rate of 1.55 per cent, Queensland is significantly lower than the current average New South Wales rate of 2.80 per cent and Victoria on 2.22 per cent. This will be the fourth year at a record low of 1.55 per cent after three successive cuts from the average rate of 2.145 per cent that we inherited when the Beattie Labor government was first elected in 1998.

Mr Purcell interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: That is exactly right. This will mean a greater competitive advantage to Queensland employers who compete for business Australiawide. All the while WorkCover Queensland continues to offer injured workers among the highest benefits anywhere in Australia and covers more workers every year. WorkCover Queensland was Australia's first publicly owned workers compensation scheme more than 85 years ago and today it is still Australia's only publicly owned, operated and underwritten scheme with the distinguished acclaim as the only fully solvent scheme in the country. While other compensation schemes are in the red, WorkCover Queensland has weathered turbulent world financial markets to again deliver the lowest average premium rates in the country while maintaining higher benefits and full funding. I thank the team at WorkCover, particularly the chairman, Mr Ian Brusasco, and the chief executive officer, Tony Hawkins. Their work has ensured continued benefits for all Queensland employers and workers and will help attract new businesses and investment to this great state.