



Speech by

Hon. GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Workplace Health and Safety Week

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.19 a.m.): As many as 100 people this year in Queensland will leave home in the morning and because of an accident at work never return to their family. The incidence of injury and death in our workplaces is an unacceptable statistic that supports this government's drive to make workplaces in Queensland safer than ever before.

As part of our strategy a full week, starting on 19 May, will be devoted to health and safety in workplaces in Queensland. Workplace Health and Safety Week will be an opportunity for workers and employers to learn more about better managing risks in the workplace and changes to health and safety laws. Almost 100 seminars will be run by my department, free of charge, right around the state on issues like Queensland's first electrical safety laws, which were introduced by this government last year, changes to safety laws in the building and construction industry and the sugar industry, diving industry safety issues, safety in the health care industry, workers' rehabilitation and compensation, and the list goes on.

Right now, members of this House are debating some of the most significant changes to the Workplace Health and Safety Act since its inception 13 years ago, including new and increased penalties and new responsibilities for a greater number of stakeholders. Thirty-two seminars in 23 locations will be devoted to these changes during the week.

Workplace Health and Safety Week will be a significant opportunity to help educate as many Queenslanders as possible—workers and employers—on how they are directly affected by these changes and their new responsibilities. In addition, regional departmental offices will be running hundreds more events in schools and local communities to help promote health and safety in the workplace to all areas of industry and to all age groups. I and senior officers from my department will be travelling around the state north to Cairns and as far west as Dalby to attend seminars and to talk with small and large employers, industry groups, unions and local communities about workplace safety in city and rural areas.

This is an unparalleled opportunity to bring together as many Queensland workers and employers as possible in an effort to better understand and help improve workplace health and safety risks in workplaces throughout Queensland. The week will include television, radio and press ads as well as promotional material like fact sheets, posters—

Mr ROWELL: I rise to a point of order. I believe that there is in the House a bill that is still being debated that deals with workplace health and safety—

Mr SPEAKER: No, not this matter; that is last year's legislation.

Mr NUTTALL: As I was saying, this will include television, radio and press ads as well as promotional material, fact sheets, posters, media kits and other items which will be available closer to the time. I would urge every member of this House to be involved and to have their electorates involved in helping to reduce the incidence of injury and death in our workplaces.