



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 4 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast, Beauty Industry Audit

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.08 am): The Bligh Labor government has a strong record of protecting workers' rights, and it remains one of our key priorities. Standing up for Queensland workers is vital to our commitment of protecting Queensland jobs and securing the state's economy. While most employers do the right thing by their employees, there are some who fail to provide a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Certain industries have been identified by my department as repeat offenders.

The beauty therapy industry is unfortunately one such industry. A recent audit of 48 beauty therapy businesses in southern Brisbane and Gold Coast suburbs, between January and March this year, uncovered almost \$45,000 in unpaid wages and superannuation for employees. The offending employers were forced to rectify the situation, boosting the pay packets of the 186 beauty therapists and nail technicians who were affected. One worker alone received an extra \$4,400 in arrears after the audit. Some of these workers are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. That is why our industrial relations inspectors continue to monitor businesses to ensure workers are protected and supported.

Many of these businesses did not necessarily underpay their workers deliberately. Nonetheless, the effect of unpaid wages on vulnerable workers can be huge. These wages help Queenslanders to provide for their families, to pay their bills and also to stimulate our economy. In these tough economic times it is vitally important that workers receive the correct pay they are entitled to. Standing up for Queensland's most vulnerable worker in particular is a major part of our Toward Q2 commitment to fair, safe and caring communities.

We are constantly working with businesses and unions to educate employers and employees about their rights and obligations under Queensland's industrial laws. Any employee with claims of underpayment of wages or non-payment of superannuation contributions should contact industrial inspectors through our Wageline service on 1300 369 945. This government will continue to take action to ensure workers are protected and that they receive their lawful entitlements.