



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2015

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Safe Work Month**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.07 pm): This month is Safe Work Month and I was pleased to join Shane Webcke, one of the great legends of the game, at the Safe Work Month breakfast in Rocky recently to promote work health and safety. Shane gave a very emotional and insightful talk about his personal experience after his dad's death as a result of a workplace incident. I also recently attended the Queensland Miners Memorial Day in the historical township of Mount Morgan on 19 September, Police Remembrance Day on 29 September and Firefighters Remembrance Day on 10 October in Rockhampton. It is a tragic reality that in 2014 34 workers died in Queensland and 624 Australian workers have been killed at work since the start of 2012. In Queensland the cost of work related injuries to our economy is about \$6.2 billion or 2.8 per cent of our gross state product each year. The good news, though, is that recent surveys show safety really matters to businesses and very few employers now accept dangerous behaviour in the workplace. Because of this, work related deaths and injuries are trending down and our businesses are paying the lowest workers compensation rates in the country. Working together, the government and business can make real inroads to cutting the tragic toll of workplace deaths and injuries.

I was honoured to lay a wreath at the service in Rockhampton on Police Remembrance Day to commemorate the 140 Police Service officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. National Police Remembrance Day is a time for Queenslanders to reflect on the difficult and dangerous job officers do to keep the community safe right across the state.

Over the 151-year history of the Queensland Police Service, 140 serving officers have died protecting others. National Police Remembrance Day is an opportunity for all Queenslanders to reflect on that sacrifice and to show our police how deeply we appreciate everything they do each and every day to keep us safe. There are times, however, when no matter how dedicated, committed and courageous our officers are, they face unbeatable odds.

The 2015 Miners Memorial Day service at Mount Morgan was also an emotional tribute to those who have lost their lives in Queensland's mines. It was fitting to hold the service at the historical mine site at Mount Morgan. Miners Memorial Day shines a light on the most important aspect of mining: the safety and health of the men and women who work in Queensland's mines. Since 2008, the Queensland government, industry and unions have come together to honour the memory of the more than 1,500 people who have lost their lives in Queensland mines since mining began in the 19th century. On 19 September every year, a service is held to mark the anniversary of the state's worst mining disaster. On this day in 1921, 75 miners lost their lives in a gas explosion in a coalmine at Mount Mulligan in North Queensland.

Likewise, on 10 October we recalled the brave and fateful firefighters who have laid down their lives in service of their community at the Firefighters' Remembrance Day service in Rockhampton. We

also paid tribute to those men and women in the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services who on a daily basis continue to put their lives on the line to protect those in the community. Firefighters' Remembrance Day is a sobering reminder of the danger faced by all career and volunteer firefighters. Without a doubt, their courage makes Queensland a safer place and we should never forget that. Sadly, since 1877 in Queensland we have lost 50 officers and, on Saturday, we paid our respects to their sacrifice.

It was inspiring to see so many local people at the recent work health and safety forum, who came together to discuss and learn from each other and demonstrate their commitment to improving safety in their workplaces. Likewise, the Palaszczuk government is committed to collaborating with employers to make workplaces safer whilst maintaining a strong compliance focus. But as long as workers are getting injured, there is more that each of us can do, especially if we want to see workplaces in our state become the safest in Australia. If employers and workers understand the real cost of workplace injuries, both human and economic, and the return on investment that safety delivers they have a strong incentive to improve their safety culture. By working together, the government and business can make real inroads into cutting the tragic toll of workplace deaths and injuries, because the Palaszczuk government believes that everyone has the right to return home safely to their loved ones after a day's work.