



Speech By  
**Hon. Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Safe Work Month**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.14 pm): Safe Work Month is well and truly underway this October. Some workplaces are hosting a toolbox talk for their own workers and some are sending people to one of the many forums that the Queensland government is putting on. This year, for the first time though, businesses across the state have taken up our invitation to hold their own safety forum, open for all to attend. This means that, at its own cost and by its own choice, industry is creating a platform for safety professionals to come together to share and expand their knowledge. Never before have we seen industry embrace safety so emphatically as part of its core business and deliver such a clear statement that safety must be embraced at an industry-wide level for the benefit of all.

It is easy to see why. Work related deaths and injuries in Queensland are trending down and our businesses are paying the lowest workers compensation rates in the country. Our workers compensation laws are now fairer and more balanced—much more balanced—making it easier for workers to be fairly compensated for legitimate workplace injuries. Last month, amendments were passed that give Queensland firefighters—auxiliary, full-time and volunteer—some of the best workers compensation entitlements in the world.

This week, we want to see changes to work safety laws that reinstate the rights of work health and safety entry permit holders to gain immediate access to a workplace and the power of health and safety representatives to direct workers to cease unsafe work, because 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.

Last week, I joined safety ambassador Shane Webcke at the King George Square Safe Work Month breakfast. I can tell members that it was very popular with both blue- and white-collar workers. What a great way to start the working day! There were celebrity cook-offs, fitness demonstrations and a heap of safety expertise on offer to get everyone thinking about what they can do to make their workplaces that much safer. Shane Webcke is a fantastic ambassador for work safety—and it shows, as people are flocking to listen to him speak at around 30 events from the Gold Coast, up to Cairns and out to Roma. Shane took on the role as safety ambassador because he knows only too well what a workplace death can do to a family. He put his career on hold when his dad was killed at work. Now that he is a dad himself, as well as an employer, he is determined to see that no other family should go through what the Webcke family did. I will join him at a breakfast forum in Cairns next week, one of many events still to come in Safe Work Month.

A highlight for me will be next week when Shane and I announce the winners of the Safe Work and Return to Work awards. These awards recognise and reward the efforts of those who are excelling

in keeping our workers safe, or getting those who are injured back to meaningful work as soon as they can, because we firmly believe that, when we find someone who is getting safety right, it is common sense to celebrate their success and share their solutions with other businesses. By working together, Queensland's government, its businesses and its workers can make real inroads into creating the safest and most productive workplaces in the country. Safe Work Month inspires us to think about how we can make our workplaces safer.

To get the community further engaged in Safe Work Month, people can share their most important reason for working safely for their chance to win one of five Fitbits by posting their photo on our Facebook page using the hashtag #Momentsthatmatter and telling us their most important reason for working safely. The first 50 people who send in photos are going to receive a poster signed by Shane Webcke. We hope that everyone can come on board and join us in this very important initiative, Safe Work Month.