



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Safe Work Month**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.10 pm): Queensland Safety Ambassador Shane Webcke kicked off Safe Work Month events at an industry breakfast in Mackay last week. The sponsor of the event was Zarb Road Transport, a company that residents of Mackay see on a daily basis hauling sugar to the Mackay harbour. This event was to bring awareness to the smart safety solutions that are driving down injuries and ensuring that workers go home to their families at the end of each working day. I was honoured to join with Mr Webcke and Antarctic expedition leader Rachael Robertson for the event which was to help remind workers and employees why staying healthy and safe at work is so important for the community as well as the state of the economy. 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. In some good news, recent surveys show that safety really matters to business and very few employers now accept dangerous behaviours 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 this country. 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.

It was inspiring to see so many people from businesses in Mackay come together to discuss and learn from each other and demonstrate a strong commitment to improving safety in our community's workplaces. Mr Mark Lalor from Zarb Road Transport presented his workplace plan for a safer, injury-free workplace. At Zarb Road Transport workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility. The expectation is for the whole of the workforce to show respect and take responsibility for everyone's safety. Employees are encouraged to say if they believe something is unsafe. The expectation is that all equipment is handled in the correct and safe manner. Mark told us that when interviewing potential drivers they take them out and test-drive them at the locomotive siding. Drivers need to be able to back a semitrailer up to the siding for the cane bins. It is a very difficult manoeuvre. The semitrailer driver has to align the tracks on his truck with the train tracks. They do not necessarily employ the person who gets it right the first time; they employ the people who use common sense and look out for the safety of themselves and the vehicle. Mr Zarb told me that he is proud of his team. He and Mark take a barbecue out to the workers on their work site and they sit down and talk to them and they find out how they are feeling. They like to look after their mental and emotional health as well. Work health and safety is everyone's business.