




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

WorkCover

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.42 pm): Queensland's workers compensation scheme, WorkCover, is the envy of the nation. Not only does it provide workers with nation-leading coverage; it also has the lowest average premiums of any Australian state or territory. I am pleased to inform the House that WorkCover Queensland's premiums will continue to be \$1.20 per \$100 in wages paid in 2016-17, unchanged from the previous financial year. This is significantly lower than South Australia and Western Australia, which have announced average workers compensation premium rates of \$1.95 and \$1.48 respectively for the next financial year. It is also lower than Victoria, which announced their premium would remain at \$1.27. This is a testament to the Palaszczuk Labor government's fair and sensible management of Queensland's workers compensation scheme.

WorkCover maintains a strong financial position. WorkCover is required by Queensland Treasury to have a funding ratio of 120 per cent. The financial results to the end of the quarter ending 31 March 2016 show its current funding ratio is 160 per cent and projected to be 156 per cent at the end of the financial year. In addition, the latest national comparative data released by Safe Work Australia shows Queensland recorded a 22.5 per cent reduction over the five years to 2013-14 in the incident rate of serious work related injuries. We have been able to achieve all of this without stripping away injured workers' rights and entitlements.

By way of contrast, in 2013 the Newman-Nicholls LNP government rammed through unfair common law amendments restricting injured workers' rights and entitlements. These actions put financial pressure on injured Queensland workers and their families—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide, I cannot hear the minister's contribution.

Ms GRACE: These actions put financial pressure—

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise again on a point of order. If ministers are going to use the opportunity in ministerial statements to attack this side of the House, you cannot expect us not to respond.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide. I will respond appropriately. Resume your seat.

Ms GRACE: These actions put financial pressure on injured Queensland workers and their families at a time when they were most vulnerable. WorkCover's low average premiums are yet another sign that Queensland is a great place to do business, particularly for small business. This is good news and the Palaszczuk government will continue to work with WorkCover. We will ensure that it remains the best workers compensation scheme in Australia for both workers and employers.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gaven, you are warned under standing order 253A for your unnecessary interjections.