



Speech By


**Bruce Saunders**

**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.03 pm): I rise to speak on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I would like to thank the minister and the committee. This bill was examined by the former committee that I was on prior to the 2020 election. After hearing the member for Warrego I thought that people on the other side were starting to get what this legislation is about, but unfortunately some people do not. It is about the workers. It is about a debilitating disease, PTSD, that affects a lot of people. I know of some of the stresses that my colleague who sits beside me, the member for Thuringowa, is under from his days as a paramedic. We all know of this. We have all had friends or work colleagues who have suffered in some way from this. I do not say that I fully understand because I have never been a first responder. I could not imagine what our police officers, ambos or correctional services officers go through. One of my friends opened up a cell door one day and found one of his prisoners hanging. I know that affected him greatly, and I still see him today. He went on a self-medication trip, as we all do. We called it 'Dr Dan's' but that did not help either. It is very sad to see this. This is what this legislation is about. This is what a Labor government does.

We were talking earlier and I have heard members opposite talk about the cost of workers compensation. In all the years I have employed people and all the years I have had businesses my workers compensation bill has always stayed even, but my general insurance bill has gone through the roof. The insurance bills for my businesses, my cars et cetera have gone through the stratosphere and yet the workers compensation bill has been managed well over many, many years. We hear that the workers compensation bill will blow out. However, it was one of the lowest costs in my business in terms of insurance.

When we look at PTSD, we have to look at not only its effect on the individual but also on their immediate families and their work colleagues. I thank the minister, and I worked closely with the minister on this. I know that there is no person in this chamber—and I have known the minister for a long time—who champions workers' rights more and ensures workers are looked after. For the member for Warrego to say that this is knee-jerk legislation is an insult; it is an absolute insult. This legislation is well thought out legislation. This legislation is for the workers. This legislation is for families. This is for the wives and for the husbands. This is for our emergency services people. I was listening to the member for Macalister talking earlier. We should think about the police officer who has to go to a family and tell them that their son or daughter or their husband or wife is not coming home due to an accident or some of the road trauma that the ambos and the fires experience or when they have to go to a house fire and bring children out.

This legislation is good legislation. It is well overdue. This is what a Labor government does; this is what we do: we deliver. If there is a minor cost I think we all should bear that through the community to ensure that people are well looked after, that their PTSD is diagnosed and that they get treatment. As the member for Macalister said, after the officer left, the treatment stopped. We have to make sure we look after people with PTSD continuously because it is an insidious disease.

I support this bill 100 per cent. This is why I am proud to be part of a government—and proud to know this minister—that brings in this legislation for workers throughout Queensland.