




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Industrial Relations Act, Review; Occupational Dust Lung Diseases

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.51 am): I am pleased to advise the House that a review of the Industrial Relations Act will commence in the coming weeks. In 2015, Jim McGowan AM headed the first major review of Queensland industrial relations laws since 1998. Following on from the review, the Industrial Relations Act 2016 delivered fairer and balanced Queensland industrial laws. It is now time to ensure Queensland's IR laws provide contemporary industrial protections and keep pace with the changes in work. Two eminent reviewers will lead this work: a former member of this House and Queensland's first female attorney-general, Linda Lavarch, and former Queensland industrial relations commissioner John Thompson.

The review will explore the following matters to ensure our IR laws keep pace and provide contemporary protections: protections for workers in precarious and short-term employment arrangements such as independent courier drivers and casual workers; how our industrial relations laws interact with federal IR laws, including recent changes to casual employment; and the implementation and effectiveness of the reforms following the 2015 review.

Significant workplace issues have been identified in recent times; namely, in the *Respect@work: sexual harassment national inquiry report*. Events in Canberra have shown that workers in any workplace can be the victims of sexual harassment and gender inequity. That is why these pressing issues will be addressed in the review, including the relevant recommendations from the *Respect@work* report in our IR laws, such as industrial protections for workers subjected to sexual harassment and powers for the QIRC to make anti-sexual harassment orders.

I am also pleased to advise that we are delivering on yet another election commitment when it comes to Queensland workers. This government will invest \$5 million over four years for research that improves the health and wellbeing of Queensland workers with occupational dust lung diseases; namely, silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Expressions of interest are now open until 14 June, with a panel of local, national and international health, safety, medical and research experts to assess the expressions of interest.

As Queensland recovers economically from the global health pandemic, this government will continue to stand up for Queensland workers.