



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Budget, Worker Safety**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.02 am): I wish the member for Clayfield a very happy wedding anniversary.

**Ms Boyd:** And his good wife!

**Ms GRACE:** And his good wife, of course. This budget delivers for Queensland workers, continuing our jobs-generating economic recovery plan, an economic recovery plan that is delivering jobs throughout Queensland, and builds on our record of protecting Queensland workers because that is what Labor governments and Labor budgets deliver.

This budget continues our \$6 million, four-year election commitment to boost our labour hire licensing compliance unit with eight additional frontline audit and inspector positions. These frontline positions will build on the success of Australia's first labour hire licensing scheme, of which we are very proud, that we established three years ago to regulate an industry that was unregulated for far too long. This scheme is lifting the standard of the industry and plays a very important role in protecting vulnerable workers from exploitation as licensees must abide by regulatory requirements.

As at 17 June 2021 there were 3,447 licensed labour hire providers in Queensland. At the time that the legislation was passed we estimated that there would have been around 2,000. Now 3,447 have the licence required to operate. The labour hire licensing compliance unit has taken compliance action against nearly 675 providers who have not met the required standards. Since the scheme started there have been 15 successful prosecutions, with the courts imposing fines totalling over \$820,000.

In addition to protecting vulnerable workers from exploitation, my department is continuing its focus on worker safety through a comprehensive review of the Electrical Safety Act, a five-yearly review of the Industrial Relations Act headed by Linda Lavarch and John Thompson, and developing codes of practice in the areas of sexual harassment, psychological health and silica in the construction industry. We look forward to working with stakeholders across all these sectors, from employer organisations to unions, to develop these codes of practice that meet the standards and requirements of modern workplaces.

The budget also funds our four-year commitment of \$5 million for medical research into the terrible affliction that is dust lung disease, in particular silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis. This is a budget that continues to deliver for Queensland workers, including underpinning the highest jobs growth in the nation. As the Treasurer outlined, it is an extraordinary feat to have an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent while at the same time increasing our participation rate. To achieve that is an outstanding effort, and is leading Australia, but that is what Labor budgets deliver.