




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNELL

Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Workplace Safety, Mental Health

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk government has a proud record of leading the nation when it comes to worker protections, especially in work health and safety, and we all need to recognise that mental health is just as important as physical health. Physical risks and hazards at work are often more visible. Being able to prevent a psychological injury is not always as obvious. That is why we have created Australia's first legally enforceable code of practice directly addressing mental health risks at work. The new code—*Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work code of practice*—comes into force this Saturday, 1 April. The code provides a practical guide for employers and workers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities after a national review found many employers were unsure of their duties to manage psychological health and safety risks at work. The code includes advice on how to comply with existing health and safety obligations while also providing practical examples on how to manage psychological, social and psychosocial hazards in the workplace. It includes industry-specific case studies and templates businesses can tailor to their needs.

We are proud to partner with Commonwealth gold medallist and Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Mental Health Ambassador Hayley Lewis to launch the code. I am delighted she is joining us in the chamber today. Hayley is a passionate advocate when it comes to mental health and she knows that creating healthy workplaces is a winner for everyone. I thank Hayley for the important role she plays in promoting the benefits of mentally healthy workplaces.

This code was developed in consultation with academics, unions and employer organisations, and the community sector. It has been welcomed by employer groups, including Master Builders Queensland whose General Manager of Workforce Services, Craig Dearling, said the new code 'will most certainly assist in achieving better work health and safety outcomes for the industry'.

The Office of Industrial Relations has been providing extensive support to employers, including a communications campaign and the recording of a free live stream event that was attended by nearly 3,000 people from Cape York to the Sunshine Coast. They are continuing this with regional information sessions over the coming weeks in Townsville, Cairns, Longreach and Rockhampton.

It is clear that this code provides greater protection for workers. It also shines a spotlight on the importance of taking mental health just as seriously as physical health, which is something I am sure all members in this House can get behind. Thank you once again, Hayley Lewis.