




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Workplace Safety

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.39 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting workers because we all have a right to come home safe and healthy at the end of every working day. October is Safe Work Month and the spotlight is firmly on safety and wellbeing in the workplace. Right across Queensland my department is hosting events, including free support sessions on the Gold Coast and at Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton and Mackay. There is also an online speaker series featuring safety advocates such as Maroons legend Kevin Walters and Supercars presenter Riana Crehan, whose dad was seriously injured in a workplace accident.

Tragically, in the past financial year 38 workers died at work and members will be aware that in recent weeks five Queensland workers have lost their lives in the workplace. My sincere condolences go to their families and friends. Behind these numbers are individuals. Each of them was a person who left behind grieving families, loved ones and friends whose lives have been turned upside down. That is why the Palaszczuk government has passed nation-leading laws when it comes to protecting Queensland workers. We will not hesitate to take action, up to and including prosecution, against the employers and businesses that violate these laws and put their workers in danger. Recently I met with my regulator and key stakeholders, including unions, and made my expectations very clear: Queenslanders should be safe at work and employers should be doing everything in their power to make that happen.

However, we will never rest on our laurels and if there is more that we can do for Queensland workers then we absolutely will. That is why we have accepted all 31 recommendations from the independent review into our workplace health and safety laws and I will be introducing legislation later this year. Recently we also appointed a new Work Health and Safety Board and are in the process of appointing members to several industry sector standing committees.

This week is Mental Health Week, which is a timely reminder that safety at work is not just about preventing physical injuries; it includes psychosocial risk management too. Earlier this year our nation-leading code of practice came into effect, which I was proud to launch with Commonwealth gold medallist, small business owner and Queensland Mental Health Ambassador Hayley Lewis. Hayley is doing wonderful work to promote the benefits of mentally healthy workplaces. Next Friday, 20 October, I am looking forward to sharing the stage with her as we announce the winners of this year's Work Well Awards. Members, let me remind you that we sell our labour, not our health. Remember: work safe, home safe.