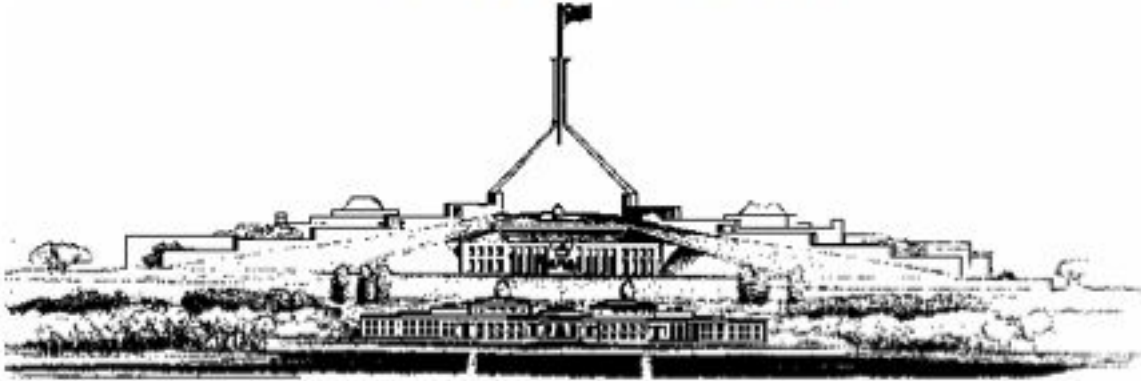




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

New South Wales: Workers Compensation

SPEECH

Thursday, 28 June 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 28 June 2012
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Questioner
Speaker Jones, Stephen, MP

Source House
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Responder
Question No.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (09:59): The New South Wales government have shown themselves to be against working Australians yet again, with the O'Farrell government's sweeping cuts to workers compensation benefits in New South Wales. In my electorate of Throsby, in the Illawarra, I often meet people who have had the misfortune to be affected by workplace accidents and injuries. Some of them, tragically, have been permanently disabled. One of these workers is Graeme Holz, whom I took the time to meet with and discuss his circumstances a few weeks ago. Graeme has been on workers compensation since he sustained a debilitating back injury on the job 22 months ago. I am sure that Mr Holz did not foresee this accident occurring nor do anything to warrant his injuries, but it just goes to show that workplace injuries can happen to anyone at any time.

For the first time in decades, workers in New South Wales will no longer be looked after if they are injured during their passage to or from work. Further, those who are injured while moving between job assignments during working hours face a very uncertain status. What is worse, from the day you are injured, your salary is immediately cut, with further reductions occurring to your benefits after 13 weeks from the injury taking place. These laws completely terminate benefits to large numbers of injured workers after 2½ years and for many others after five years, even if the injury is permanent and they cannot return to work. What is more, workers who do the right thing and return to work will lose their medical benefits after 12 months, even if they require ongoing treatment or their injury comes back.

These are good, honest, hardworking people. People like Mr Holz, who have been injured through no fault of their own, are being treated like cheats and bludgers, while falling behind on their bills and facing the real danger of losing their homes and their livelihoods. It is not just workers who are impacted by these laws; it is their families and loved ones. The emotional and financial ramifications can be profound. These people are not only suffering the debilitation of their injuries; they are suffering a loss of income and everything that that means to them and their families.

Thanks to Barry O'Farrell's broken promise on workers compensation, people like Mr Holz and thousands and thousands of others stand on the verge of losing absolutely everything. This does not sit right with me, and I encourage all right-thinking people to get behind the campaign that is currently being led by the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales, Mr John Robertson, to join the fight against these changes, in the interests of people like Mr Holz and every other worker who stands to be affected by them.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Hon. BC Scott): Order! In accordance with standing order 193 the time for constituency statements has concluded.