Media Release

Peter Styles
Minister for Business

Legislative changes to benefit workers in the NT

1 July 2015

Changes to the Northern Territory Workers Compensation Scheme, benefitting workers and employers will take effect today, Wednesday 1st July 2015.

“The Return to Work Act ensures injured workers receive greater support and are helped to return to work as soon as possible after injury,” said Minister for Business Peter Styles.

“The Northern Territory Workers Compensation Scheme was reviewed in 2014 and the Country Liberals Government is implementing recommendations that will help rehabilitate and compensate injured workers.

“The scheme has been one of the most generous in Australia with injured workers receiving weekly payments, medical treatment and rehabilitation costs.

“The name of the legislation has changed to emphasise the main objective of the Act, which is to rehabilitate injured workers and assist them to return to work.”

Some of the key changes in the first package of amendments include:

- The limit of compensation payments to five years for less seriously injured workers, in order to help control premium increases in the scheme.

- The definition of a worker has changed to better assist businesses and workers determine who should be covered by workers compensation.

- The new definition aligns workers compensation with the definition used by the Australian Taxation Office.

- A number of amendments increase the cover and benefits to workers.

Minister Styles said Presumptive legislation is now making it easier for firefighters to claim compensation if they are diagnosed with a cancer covered under the legislation.

“This presumptive legislation has been made retrospective and a three month sunset clause is in place to support those who have served and protected,” he said.
“Older workers who are injured at work will also see their period of compensation increase from 26 weeks to 104 weeks. This amendment recognises older workers are staying in the workforce longer and require a more reasonable level of financial protection should they get injured at work.

"This is good legislation. We have achieved in two years what the previous Labor Government failed to do in almost 12 years.

The process of claiming workers compensation will be made easier for firefighters, as a result of the Northern Territory Government listening to community concerns and making changes in the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Legislation.

For more information on the changes to the ACT please visit http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/Legislation/workers-comp-legis/Pages/default.aspx

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