

Media Release

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KEEPING WORKPLACES SAFE AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

The Victorian Government will maintain the WorkCover average target premium at its current rate of 1.272 per cent of remuneration for the 2021/22 year – keeping Victoria’s premium rate one of the lowest in the country.

The Government will also provide \$550 million to the WorkCover scheme to ensure people injured at work can continue to access the support they need to recover and get back to work – while also furthering efforts to prevent and better respond to workplace injuries.

Victoria’s vital WorkCover scheme has been under pressure in recent years due to significant increases in the number, complexity and cost of claims – particularly mental injury claims. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the impact on WorkSafe’s sources of revenue – premium payments and investment returns.

While it’s positive to see that workers are putting their hand up to get the help they need – the Government is acting now to ensure the scheme remains sustainable into the future.

By maintaining the low premium rate this year, businesses will continue to have the support they need to keep workplaces safe, while recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This comes on top of \$350 million worth of WorkCover premium relief and exemptions provided by the Government in 2020 to Victorian businesses participating in the JobKeeper scheme.

Work is well underway to improve the WorkCover scheme, including measures to better support people returning to work, a focus on injury prevention and tailored claims handling.

Given the growing awareness of workplace mental health and associated increase in mental health related claims, the Government is also prioritising better prevention of workplace psychological injuries and early intervention when mental injury does occur.

The Government’s \$50 million WorkWell initiative focuses on prevention by promoting mental wellbeing and providing workplaces with the tools they need to reduce the risk of workplace mental injury.

Provisional Payments legislation passed through the Parliament in February 2021, making it easier for Victorian workers to get treatment and support for work-related mental health injuries while making a claim.

The Labor Government is also developing new regulations to strengthen the occupational health and safety framework to provide clearer guidance to employers on their obligations to protect workers from mental injury.

This work complements the Government’s broader priority to ensure Victorians are getting the mental health support they deserve – with the *Victorian Budget 2021-22* delivering landmark investments to build a new mental health system from the ground up following the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

“We’re doing everything we can to make workplaces safe and support injured workers, while keeping premiums low for businesses so they can grow and create more jobs.”

“This investment means Victorian workers can be confident that they will get the help they need, when they need it – while making sure businesses are supported to keep their workers safe.”

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