

Media Release

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Minister for Workplace Safety
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Friday, 27 May 2022

HELPING BUSINESSES RECOVER AND ENSURING SAFER WORKPLACES

The Andrews Labor Government is keeping WorkCover premiums at one of the lowest rates in Australia so Victorian businesses can keep recovering and rebuilding as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The average target premium rate will remain at 1.272 per cent of remuneration for the 2022/23 premium year, ensuring business continues to benefit from low rates.

The global pandemic has been disruptive for workers and businesses, and WorkSafe hasn't been immune to this. Volatility in international markets has affected WorkSafe's financial projections compared to last year – on top of the existing pressure from complex claims, especially for mental injuries.

To provide WorkSafe with assurance and maintain the existing premium rate, the Government will provide \$300 million to the scheme. This will help injured workers continue to get the support to recover and return to work.

The Government is acting to ensure the scheme remains sustainable, with work underway to better prevent injuries, increase support for injured workers and improve tailored claims handling.

In March 2022, the Government announced key reforms to the WorkCover scheme in response to an independent review conducted by Peter Rozen QC into the management of complex WorkCover claims.

The reforms will transform the scheme to better address modern workplace injuries, particularly mental injuries – which can be harder to identify and require unique supports and recovery pathways. WorkSafe is expanding its Claims and Recovery Support Team to focus on specialised interventions for these more complex claims.

The Government is also continuing to develop Psychological Health Regulations to better prevent workplace psychological harm. The draft regulations were released for consultation in February 2022.

WorkSafe's Mental Health Strategy 2021-24 and year one Action Plan guides the significant reform work already underway to establish mentally healthy workplaces.

This includes WorkSafe's successful \$50 million WorkWell program, which helps employers to create mentally healthy workplaces through funded projects, learning networks and a soon to be expanded online toolkit.

This work complements the Government's broader priority to ensure Victorians are getting the mental health support they need, 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 know it's been a tough few years for businesses – that's why we're keeping WorkCover premiums low so businesses can continue to recover from the impacts of the pandemic."

"Victorian workers need to know that when they ask for help, the WorkCover scheme is there to support them and their families – this investment ensures that help is there as we get on with making our workplaces safer."

Quote attributable to Assistant Treasurer Danny Pearson

"All Victorians should have peace of mind knowing they're protected while they work, that's why we're ensuring WorkCover has the support it needs to help all Victorians injured in their workplace recover and return to work."

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