LABOR STANDS-UP FOR TERRITORY WORKERS

Michael Gunner today celebrated May Day by announcing that a Labor Government will put Territory workers first by strengthening the operations of Territory Work Safe and reversing many elements of the CLP’s draconian changes to the Return to Work Act.

“Labor will ensure that Territory workers are protected and safe. And if anything does happen to them that they are able to rehabilitate and get back into the workforce with the strongest possible support,” Mr Gunner said.

“Labor will reverse the CLP’s draconian changes to the Return to Work Act that has gutted Territory workers by reducing their entitlements and putting them in a worse position than some other states.”

Mr Gunner said that workers had previously been able to receive benefits to retirement age provided they could prove they remained incapacitated for work. Now, after CLP changes, workers only received payments for 5 years and medical expenses for 6 years even if they are up to 15 per cent permanently incapacitated. After that, they’re on their own, including meeting the costs of future medical bills associated with the injury.

“A Labor government will return to the model that was effectively in place since 1987 to ensure our workers are looked after up to the end of their working lives. It’s a model that has been proven sustainable by both governments for almost 30 years.

“These benefits require regular medial assessments and should someone be found to have recovered, whether after one year or 10 for example, then they will be expected to return to work. Labor believes these changes are important to ensure our workers have peace of mind and will also serve to encourage workers from other jurisdictions around the country to make the Territory their home.

“What the CLP are doing is shifting the cost of caring for workers from insurance agencies to the public health and hospital system.

“Anyone at work, regardless of the type of work, should know there is a safety net if the unthinkable happens and serious injury is suffered as part of their regular duties at no fault of their own.

Michael Gunner said that a Labor Government would also ensure active education programs as well as strong enforcement programs from Worksafe.

“Business needs to be properly educated and supported in doing the right thing in their work place,” Mr Gunner said.

“However, workers need to also know that there is proper enforcement of work safety laws. Labor will separate these arms of work safe and ensure that enforcement is part of the Department of Justice.”

Media Contact: Gino Luglietti 0401 119 794