The Shadow Attorney General, Natasha Fyles, today called on the CLP Government to come clean and explain whether it has discussed moves to cut workers compensation entitlements with its new MAC administrator Allianz.

Ms Fyles said that the CLP circulated a Statement on Workers Compensation today - on the same day it moved to rush through the sale of TIO.

“Is it a coincidence that the changes - which will benefit Allianz who are already a major worker’s compensation player in the Territory - are being tabled today?” Ms Fyles asked.

“Will the government come clean about what discussions were held with Allianz about these changes in the negotiations to sell TIO?

“Once Allianz acquired TIO, it will dominate the worker’s compensation insurance business in the Territory.

“Actuaries valuing TIO for Allianz will no doubt have placed a value on the future liabilities of worker’s compensation as part of their due diligence.

“These legislative changes proposed by the Chief Minister today will greatly affect that liability. Were Allianz given a private briefing on these amendments?”

Ms Fyles said that the Chief Minister’s statement about the changes is very short on detail.

“Everybody knows the devil is always in the detail in these matters. But we are concerned that the changes will allow insurers to throw people off worker’s compensation with an inadequate lump-sum payment after only two years,” Ms Fyles said.

Ms Fyles said that she is concerned that the timeframe isn’t long enough for a proper medical assessment of how much longer treatment will need to continue to ensure that injured workers are able to return to work.

“The Government itself says that 66 percent of claims involve less than 1 week off work. Of the remaining claims 56 percent will be back at work in less than 6 weeks and less than 5 percent of claims extend beyond 52 weeks.
“We are looking at a very small number of claimants who require workers compensation beyond 2 years. But for them and their families, the weekly payments and medical and treatment costs are critical.”

Ms Fyles welcomed the Government’s response to repeated Labor calls for appropriate workers compensation for firefighters who contract cancer due to their work but reiterated a call for a fairer retrospectivity to cover existing fires affected and queried a cut-off date.

“We desperately need a fair workers compensation system for our firefighters and the CLP are still dragging their heels and failing to adequately cover our fires’ needs.”

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