Minister for Employment, Education and Training Syd Stirling today expressed disbelief at the Opposition’s proposed amendments to Work Health legislation, saying they would increase the HIH levy on workers compensation premiums.

Mr Stirling said he was stunned by the CLP’s attempts to override the Government’s proposed amendments to the legislation. Those amendments ensure the Government contributes to the HIH liability and also place a sunset clause on the levy.

"That the CLP has proposed amendments to block crucial amendments aimed at reducing the impact of the HIH levy on workers compensation premiums is bizarre in the extreme," Mr Stirling said.

"It was the CLP that passed legislation establishing a levy regime on workers compensation premiums, however they made no provision requiring the Government to contribute to the HIH levy.

"Under the Government’s proposed changes, contained in Clause 2, we will contribute to the HIH liability to the tune of around $800,000 per year, on top of the $9 million that has been already contributed.

"If the CLP’s proposed amendment to repeal the Government’s amendment was approved by the Parliament, the full load of the HIH liability will have to be carried by employers.

"This equates to an additional $8-10 million being carried by business. To meet this new impost proposed by the CLP, the levy would have to be increased by a further 1% or extended for a further 3-4years.

"The second amendment proposed by the CLP is to defeat Clause 3. This Clause puts in place a sunset clause to ensure the HIH levy is terminated as soon as the liability is discharged.

"This measure was inserted at the request of employer groups who wanted to make sure that future Governments did not keep the levy going after the liability had been cleared.

"The Government readily agreed to include this in its legislative amendments.

"The CLP’s opposition to this amendment and to the amendment which will ensure the Government contributes to the liability leaves me stunned – they are actually proposing to make it worse for employers."