

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

NSW LEADING THE COUNTRY IN WORKPLACE SAFETY

Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, Kevin Anderson has announced that SafeWork NSW has allocated an additional \$6.4 million to increase the number of inspectors and associated support staff which will further the NSW Government's successful work in reducing NSW's workplace injury and fatality rates.

Mr Anderson said the funding will be used to recruit 40 new inspectors to add to the 330 strong team as NSW continues its efforts to keep workers safe. The additional inspectors will lift the ratio in NSW to one inspector for every 10,000 workers – in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) benchmark and ahead of jurisdictions including Victoria and Queensland.

“The NSW Government's focus has always been on preventing incidents from taking place and our inspectors play a key role on the front line educating business and ensuring workplaces remain safe,” Mr Anderson said.

This financial year, SafeWork inspectors made 40,297 proactive and reactive visits, issued 8,504 improvements notices and 448 penalty notices.

“These efforts make a real difference when it comes to our safety at work. Under this Government, workplace fatalities have reduced by 25 per cent, and injuries are almost 30 per cent down in the last 10 years,” Mr Anderson said.

Mr Anderson said SafeWork inspectors play both an educative role, helping businesses to implement the right safety measures, as well as enforcing compliance with the legislation and issuing fines and penalties where safety is at risk in line with the national triage model.

“In 2020 NSW introduced the strongest workplace legislation in the country to deter poor workplace practices through increased penalties and making it easier to prosecute employees who put workers at risk of serious injury or death. We've set ourselves incredibly high targets when it comes to improving safety at work and these new inspectors will help us meet and exceed them,” Mr Anderson said.

“SafeWork inspectors have special powers to stop unsafe practices immediately and issue on-the-spot fines of up to \$3,600 to anyone who disregards the safety of others.

“Our focus will continue to be on working with businesses proactively to identify workplace risks early and stamp out unsafe practices before an accident happens. Every time an inspector issues an improvement notice and an unsafe practice is rectified, our workplaces become safer for everyone.”

Recruitment for the new inspectors will commence immediately with the new inspectors expected to join Safework progressively over the next 24 months.

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