

WORKPLACE NOISE LEVELS

3019. Hon Alison Xamon to the Minister for Commerce

I refer to my question No. 411, regarding noisy workplaces, and further ask —

- (1) If a workplace does not undertake the necessary steps to test workplace noise levels and arrange to conform with *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 1982* —
  - (a) what other methods does WorkSafe use to identify dangerously noisy workplaces;
  - (b) how does WorkSafe ensure that workplace noise levels are tested; and
  - (c) what actions does WorkSafe take when alerted to a noisy workplace that has not declared itself a prescribed noisy workplace?
- (2) Has WorkCover come across any instances where workplaces with high noise levels have refused to test their noise levels?
- (3) Has WorkCover come across any instances where workplaces that have been identified as ‘prescribed noisy workplaces’, have failed to fulfil their obligations under the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 1982*?
- (4) In each instance identified in (2) and (3), what actions did WorkCover take?
- (5) How does WorkCover bring employer obligations under the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 1982* to the attention of workplaces?

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN replied:

- (1)
  - (a) WorkSafe responds to enquiries made about workplace noise and where considered appropriate, will conduct an investigation; or may consider the issue during general inspections.
  - (b) The Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (the OSH Act) provides WorkSafe inspectors with powers for purposes of enforcing the OSH Act but does not provide specific power to "ensure that workplace noise levels are tested". The OSH Act includes the powers for inspectors to conduct an inquiry and issue improvement and prohibition notices.
  - (c) Neither the OSH Act nor the OSH regulations have provisions requiring a workplace to "declare itself as a prescribed noisy workplace".
- (2)-(3) No
- (4) Not applicable
- (5) WorkCover WA uses education and information initiatives to raise awareness of the noise induced hearing loss provisions of the workers’ compensation legislation. This includes the provision of information through presentations, dissemination of ‘A Guide to Noise Induced Hearing Loss’ fact sheet, and information provided on WorkCover WA’s website. WorkCover WA also administers claims for noise induced hearing loss and through this process informs employers of potential claims and their obligations in relation to those claims.