

WORKPLACE DEATH — MIDLAND

**1087. Hon JON FORD to the Minister for Commerce:**

I refer to the reported tragic death of a 53-year-old mechanic who bled to death as a result of a work-related injury and whose body lay undiscovered at a Midland industrial auctioneer business for more than two days.

- (1) Does the minister intend to strengthen any legislation or regulation to ensure that employees working in potentially dangerous activities can do so only in the company of others?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

Firstly, every death by accident, including death in the workplace, is an absolute tragedy, and I was appalled by the circumstances of this matter. I was also saddened that we have had half a dozen deaths in the workplace just in the course of November. The six deaths have all been different, in quite different locations and quite different occupations. A four-year-old girl was killed on a farm; there was the 53-year-old chap who was just mentioned as part of this question. Another fellow, a bystander as it happens, in his 70s, was killed by a piece of heavy equipment. One death is too many, and I just want to record my sadness on the spate of deaths that have occurred.

- (1)–(2) WorkSafe is investigating the specific case that the member mentioned. I was particularly concerned to note the raw circumstances of the case that have been publicly reported; that is, that this fellow injured himself—cut himself—in a workshop with a piece of equipment on a Friday afternoon when he was on his own and nobody knew anything about it until Monday when they turned up for work and discovered his body there. It saddens me that no-one was asking questions about why this fellow did not go home; perhaps he did not have family here in town at the time, but I think that in itself is tragic. It gives rise to the question that the member raises. I will wait for advice from WorkSafe investigators about this incident, but I do not imagine that we will suddenly change the law to prohibit people working on their own. That is my immediate reaction to that. So, the nature of my response is to say, no, I have not formed a view to recommend such a change to cabinet; I await the WorkSafe investigators' report.