

It's time to give some of the \$2billion back to injured workers!

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The New South Wales Government can afford to give a better deal to injured workers, according to recent data showing enormous profits raised under the NSW WorkCover scheme.

A report obtained from the WorkCover Authority of NSW under the *Freedom of Information Act* shows that, in July 2005, NSW WorkCover's actuaries estimated that a \$2 billion deficit in the NSW WorkCover scheme would take until 2012 to pay off. Now, just 12 months later, the NSW Government has announced that the scheme is \$85 million in surplus.

NSW Law Society President Ms June McPhie has today called upon the Minister for Commerce, John Della Bosca, to wind back harsh workers compensation laws.

"There is clearly room to restore consistency and fairness to the WorkCover scheme, which is now making almost \$2 billion per year in surplus revenue. WorkCover is making profits well in excess of what its own actuaries estimated, just one year ago. These figures demonstrate that the government's cuts to workers' entitlements in 2001 have gone too far", said Ms McPhie.

"WorkCover has financed its debts in a fraction of the time that was anticipated by its actuaries, due to a scheme that denies more than nine out of ten injured workers fair compensation."

Last year, in response to widespread dissatisfaction with the current scheme, a NSW Upper House committee unanimously recommended that:

- the WorkCover scheme be brought into line with the public liability scheme; and
- the current methods of assessment under workers compensation legislation be removed.

Mr Della Bosca rejected these and other recommendations, relying on the NSW WorkCover's actuarial advice.

Ms McPhie said: "The validity of Mr Della Bosca's projections is brought into serious doubt by these revelations. Injured NSW workers are suffering needlessly under one of Australia's harshest workers compensation schemes."

"Since the commencement of the campaign "A Fair Go For Injured People", dozens of people have come forward with very serious injuries which have irreversibly changed their lives, for which they will never be properly compensated due to harsh laws in NSW.

"The campaign is aimed at building public awareness about the inconsistency and unfairness of laws protecting injured people in NSW.

"The profits under the WorkCover scheme are an embarrassment, particularly in light of the low cost of workers compensation insurance in this state. These profits exist because injured workers have been left to suffer.

"This injustice cannot, and need not, be allowed to continue", Ms McPhie concluded.

MEDIA CONTACT: KATE ROGERS M: 0413 440 699

A Fair Go For Injured People



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