



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

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Media Release

Compromise and Cooperation the Keys to Changing Draconian Workers' Comp Laws

The Law Council has urged the Tasmanian Government and insurers to make concessions to allow the State's injured workers a fair go, instead of diverting attention from the real issues.

Workers' compensation laws in Tasmania are the most restrictive in the country, precluding fair compensation for Tasmanian workers who do not meet a 30 per cent whole person impairment threshold. A coalition of lawyers, unions and doctors has united in calling for the laws to be changed.

Law Council President John North said, "The Law Council is involved in this campaign because lawyers are the first to be consulted by injured workers when the system fails them."

"It is an ongoing frustration for lawyers in Tasmania that, time and time again, they must tell seriously injured clients they do not have a claim," Mr North said.

"Many of those clients cannot be rehabilitated and are simply shifted onto welfare when weekly payments are cancelled or expire," he said.

In five years since the reforms were introduced, only six people injured at work have had injuries severe enough to overcome the 30 per cent threshold. In the same period, insurance company profits have skyrocketed each year, to a record \$3.252 billion in 2005.

"Insurers cannot be allowed to continue holding governments and industry to ransom, with threats of premium increases if even minor concessions are made," Mr North said.

"The Tasmanian Government must reach a compromise on workers' compensation and give Tasmanian workers a fair go," Mr North concluded.

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The Law Council of Australia exists to represent the legal profession at the national level, to speak on behalf of its constituent bodies on national issues, and to promote the administration of justice, access to justice and general improvement of the law.

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