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GREENS TAKE WORKERS COMPENSATION IN RIGHT DIRECTION

The Law Society and Australian Lawyers' Alliance have applauded the Tasmanian Greens for acknowledging the need for significant reform to workers compensation laws in Tasmania and proposing a policy which will significantly assist those suffering injuries in the workplace.

President of the Law Society Leanne Topfer said since the introduction of workers compensation changes in 2001, the 30 per cent whole person impairment threshold has meant that many workers injured through no fault of their own have been unable to receive the compensation they justly deserve.

The Greens' policy proposals address a number of matters raised by the Australian Lawyers Alliance and the Law Society including introducing a 'serious injury test' and reducing of the whole person impairment threshold.

"The Law Society of Tasmania has been calling for the introduction of a 'serious injury test' which assesses the impact of the injury on a worker's future life and ability to earn income," Ms Topfer said.

"Such a system operates successfully in Victoria and its introduction in Tasmania would significantly improve the current workers compensation system," she said.

Lawyers Alliance Tasmanian President Sandra Taglieri said she was relieved that some politicians were "seeing through misinformed claims that improving workers compensation would lead to a flood of claims".

"Prior to the introduction of the current system, workers compensation claims and associated costs were decreasing, and there is no justification for blaming rising insurance premiums on damages claims by injured Tasmanian workers."

"We support the push for rehab and getting injured workers back to work, but not all injured workers can return to work either because of their injuries or their lack of skills."

"Good policy must encourage safe work practices and penalise unsafe practices. Laws that fail to make negligent employers accountable are bad policy, bad law and bad economics," Ms Taglieri said.

Both the Australian Lawyers Alliance and the Law Society have challenged the Labor and Liberal parties to follow the Greens' lead on this issue.

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