

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000290

Senator Urquhart asked on 22 October 2015 on proof Hansard page 31

Question

SWA - Work Related Traumatic Injury Fatalities 2014 report

Senator URQUHART: In which industries were those tragic deaths highest in 2014? You said there were 188 in 2014.

Ms Grey: The worst performing industries are agriculture and road freight transport. The way that fatalities are measured for industry is by the rates as opposed to the number of workers. Again, the way the information is collected is quite different. We have a number of priority industries where the fatalities are highest and that includes agriculture, road freight transport, construction and so on. It is because of the fatality rate in those industries.

Senator Cash: I will just say that I have put out a statement recently.

Senator URQUHART: I am sorry, you have put out a statement on costs?

Senator Cash: No. I am happy to provide you with it. It is in relation to the Work Related Traumatic Injury Fatalities 2014 report. There are still fatalities. That is tragic. It is unacceptable, but it is on a downward trend and what it is showing is the number of Australians killed at work has steadily decreased since 2007. It is a Safe Work Australia report and it shows that 188 workers died from workplace injuries in 2014. It is the lowest number of fatalities in the 12 years of the series, as I said. The number of workplace fatalities has decreased from 310 in 2007 to 188 in 2014, so you are looking at a 39 per cent decrease. It is still not good. I have dealt with workplace fatalities—

Answer

The Minister had approved a media release to be issued when the *Traumatic Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2014* report was released. The report was released on 29 October 2015 and the following ministerial media release was issued on the same day.

Australian workplace fatalities continue to decline

Thursday 29 October 2015

Media Release

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment

Minister for Women

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service

Minister for Employment, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash released the *Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2014* report this morning, showing the number of Australians killed at work continues to steadily decline.

The Safe Work Australia report shows that 188 workers died from workplace injuries in 2014, the lowest number of fatalities in the 12 years of the series.

While the downward trend is encouraging, the number of worker deaths highlights the importance of National Safe Work Month (Safety Month)—a time to focus on health and safety in your workplace to reduce death, injury and disease.

Using the Safety Month theme of “Be safe. Be healthy. Because...” Minister Cash is urging Australians to Be Safe. Be healthy. Because... your actions make a difference to workers’ lives.

“While a single worker fatality is one too many, the overall downward trend is a positive sign that Australian businesses and workers are committed to keeping their workplaces safe,” Minister Cash said.

“Safe Work Australia data show worker fatalities have been steadily decreasing over the past decade. This trend is encouraging, however no worker should die at work and it is very important that we keep striving to ensure this number is lower again next year.”

“I am pleased that Australia has made great strides in improving health and safety over the last decade,” Minister Cash said.

“Our challenge is to continue this trend and National Safe Work Month is one way to put a spotlight on workplace safety and drive further improvements through education and raising awareness.”

The worker fatality rate in 2014 was 1.61 worker fatalities per 100,000 workers – for male workers the fatality rate was 2.81 and for female workers the rate was 0.23.

Over the 12 years of the series, one-third of workers who were killed while working died in vehicle collisions on public roads, one-third in vehicle collisions at workplaces (not on public roads) while one-third of fatalities did not involve a vehicle.

The *Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities, Australia 2014* report is available at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/statistics/work-related-fatalities/pages/workrelatedtraumaticinjuryfatalities>.

For more information about how to participate in Safety Month, explore the Safety Month web page at <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/media-events/safety-month>.