

June 12, 2009

Media Statement

Workers' compensation review must ensure better cover for over 65s

"The Rudd Government's plan for people to work until 67 years old means there is an urgent need to amend the WA workers' compensation laws to ensure older workers are fully covered for accidents at work," Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson said today.

"The current workers' compensation laws discriminate against people over 65 years as full coverage of weekly wages is not covered in the event of an accident or injury sustained at work.

"This is a clear case of age discrimination in State legislation which needs to be removed," Ms Henderson said.

The Federal Government announced last month that from 2017 the qualifying age for the Age Pension will increase from 65 to 67 by 2023.

"If older workers are to remain longer in the workforce then we must ensure there are no obstacles or disincentives that will prevent them doing so.

"We are simply discriminating against people if they are not afforded the same workers' compensation cover as everyone else just because they are over 65 years of age."

Commissioner Henderson said that in light of the economic downturn, many people will also need and want to work for longer and their right to be equally protected by workers' compensation laws should be enshrined in legislation.

"People are being encouraged to work longer and with a large proportion of our workforce reaching retirement age - and the effect this will have on the country's productivity - it is important that any incentives to work longer are encouraged and protected," Ms Henderson said

State Government announces review of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act:

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/WACabinetMinistersSearch.aspx?ItemId=131580&minister=Buswell&admin=Barnett>

Federal Government's Age Pension reform:

<http://www.treasurer.gov.au/DisplayDocs.aspx?pageID=003&doc=../content/pressreleases/2009/056.htm&min=wms>

**FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT: Commissioner Yvonne Henderson
(08) 9216 3954 or mobile number 0409 880 544**

Level 2, 141 St Georges Terrace, Western Australia 6000 - Tel: (08) 9216 3900 - Fax: (08) 9216 3960
Email: eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au Website www.eoc.wa.gov.au

G O V E R N M E N T O F W E S T E R N
A U S T R A L I A