



The Hon Greg Pearce MLC

Minister for Finance and Services

Minister for the Illawarra

MEDIA RELEASE

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RETURNING TO WORK MADE EASIER

NSW Minister for Finance and Services, Greg Pearce announced today that the NSW Government had introduced a raft of new initiatives to help injured workers return to work.

“The NSW Government is committed to ensuring both employers and employees are provided with incentives and assistance to ensure longer-term injured workers can re-join the workforce,” Mr Pearce said.

“It is vital that injured workers are provided with the tools and programs to assist them to get back into the workplace,” he said

“Starting this week are new improvements to WorkCover’s Vocational Rehabilitation Programs that simplify the process for employers that want to place an injured worker in a new job and provides services to assist injured workers to re-enter the workplace.

“For employers we have reformed the WorkCover JobCover Placement Program making it easier to hire an injured worker seeking new employment.

“This includes cutting red tape by enabling the agent managing the worker’s claim to manage the program, pay the wage subsidy to the JobCover employer retrospectively and certify eligibility for premium protection.

“We have also increased the wage subsidy with a new employer from \$3,600 over 12 weeks to \$27,400 over the first year.

“For injured workers we have enhanced rehabilitation programs to allow more scope and flexibility in meeting their needs to return to sustainable employment and overcome barriers that might have previously hindered a worker obtaining a new job.

“The transition to work payment is a new program that allows up to \$5,000 for employment placements to overcome significant barriers to joining the workforce like travel or childcare.

“We have extended the work trial period beyond the current 12 week period allowing for extensions of several weeks if it leads to a more secure employment.

“Being injured and unable to work is an anxious time for any worker and their family and these initiatives will make a real difference to the lives of injured workers in NSW,” Mr Pearce said.

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NEW OPTIONS FOR INJURED WORKERS

- **Transition-to-work payment:** A new program that allows up to \$5,000 for employment placements where the costs of items such as travel, clothing, relocation or childcare are a significant barrier to commencing a job.
- **Equipment funding:** Extended to include tools required for a job search. For example tools for a maintenance worker, commercial cooking knives for a cook and a security belt for a security guard.
- **Extension of the work trial period:** Allowing the work trial period to be extended several weeks beyond current 12 week limit if it will secure employment.

NEW OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Updated JobCover Placement Program** helping injured workers to secure a job with a new employer:
 - Increasing the wage subsidy with a new employer from \$3,600 over 12 weeks to \$27,400 over the first year;
 - Increasing from one to two years the period that an injured worker's wages are exempt from being included in the employer's workers compensation premium calculation;
 - Increasing the protection period against further costs associated with an existing injury from one to two years; and
 - Reducing red tape by enabling the agent managing the worker's claim to manage the program, pay the wage subsidy to the JobCover employer retrospectively and certify eligibility for premium protection.

Further information on WorkCover's vocational rehabilitation programs is available from www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or by calling 13 10 50.