

Media Statement

26 September 2007

Successful Prosecution

General Manager Regulation and Compliance Division, Peter King has reminded employers that not having a current workers' compensation policy can be a costly exercise after a local business was fined more than \$30,000 for non-compliance.

Che Christopher Barden, trading as C&L Bricklaying, was successfully prosecuted by WorkCover Western Australia in the Perth Magistrate's Court and fined \$30,000, ordered to pay a further \$24,923.61 for avoided premiums plus \$705.75 in costs for not having a workers' compensation policy over a 10 month period in 2004-2005.

The business employed 102 workers over that time as sub-contractors, who should have been covered under a workers' compensation policy.

"There is simply no excuse for not covering workers in the event of injury at work," Mr King said.

"If one of these workers had been injured, C&L Bricklaying would have been liable for the cost of the statutory benefits under the Act. This could cost more than \$600,000, plus legal costs involved in court action, and the cost of any action taken at common law.

"It is compulsory for Western Australian businesses to have a current workers' compensation policy and to provide a work environment that protects workers in the event of an injury at work."

Mr King also said that by not paying workers' compensation, employers do not contribute to the premium pool to share costs of injuries for the industry.

The average premium rate in Western Australia fell from 2.117 per cent in 2006-07 to 1.849 per cent in 2007-2008. WorkCover WA independently recommends benchmark premium rates for workers' compensation insurance. These rates are based on the performance of the workers' compensation scheme and claim experience across more than 480 industries.

"Over the past few years, the State Government has been able to deliver significant improvements in benefits to injured workers, while at the same time reducing premiums paid by employers," Mr King said.

“Businesses avoiding these costs directly impact on other employers throughout the State, which means compliant employers’ are paying for uninsured employers.”

Workers’ compensation laws ensure injured workers are cared for by accessing appropriate medical treatment and by giving them the opportunity to be gainfully employed following their workplace injury.

Workers must have confidence that if they are injured at work, they will be supported both financially and medically, and assisted in their return to work.

WorkCover WA provides a range of information to employers and employees to help them understand what requirements they need to meet regarding Workers’ Compensation, Injury Management and Return to Work programs under the [Workers’ Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981](#).

WorkCover WA conducts compliance programs across a range of industries to check that they meet these requirements.

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