

WORKCOVER, INCORPORATION INTO DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION

104. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Labour Relations:

Given the Government's stated intention to incorporate WorkCover WA into the new Department of Employment and Consumer Protection -

- (1) Is the minister aware that employers in industry, and particularly small businesses that fund the operation of WorkCover through their workers compensation premiums, are opposed to such incorporation?
- (2) How will the minister ensure that employers have a say in how their money is spent to ensure that they do not end up paying for a new super government department and its function?

Mr KOBELKE replied:

- (1)-(2) The premise of the question is wrong. It is not the intention to incorporate WorkCover into a larger department. There is an intention to incorporate some parts of WorkCover. The reason for the important distinction - as the member who asked the question well knows - is that WorkCover is a very important organisation that is established under an Act of this Parliament, but it is funded by employers through a levy on their workers compensation premiums. It is not funded from the consolidated fund. Therefore, WorkCover's establishment ensures that the industry is represented on the commission that makes decisions regarding the funding that covers its operations. It is not my intention to interfere with that part of WorkCover, but it may be appropriate to place some organisational parts under the control of a larger agency. However, it will not take away the independence of the WorkCover commission and the important role it plays.