

BUILDING INDUSTRY, REDUCTION OF STANDARD WORKING WEEK

176. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection

- (1) Does the Minister support the CFMEU's national campaign to cut the industry's standard working week from 38 hours to 36 hours?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of the increased construction costs in Victoria, where the 36-hour working week has been in operation since 1999?
- (3) What would be the estimated escalation of costs for public capital works?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

- (1)-(3) A 36 hour week has been agreed by some building and construction employers. The Minister believes that consent agreements between employers and unions are preferable to industrial disputation and arbitrated outcomes.

Where such agreements take account of the genuine interests of both parties and lead to increased productivity, that can also benefit the wider community.

Where additional costs in an agreement outstrip productivity improvements, the potential for real total cost increases is of concern.