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## Injured Workers Denied Fair Compensation

Injured Tasmanian workers are being denied fair compensation for injuries caused by negligent employers, according to two local peak legal groups.

The Australian Lawyers Alliance and the Law Society of Tasmania have called on the state government to urgently change injury compensation thresholds in workers' compensation law.

The call was supported by the Law Council of Australia and unions at the launch of the community-backed campaign *Fairer Compensation for Injured Workers* in Hobart today, which features four weeks of newspaper and radio advertisements.

Law Society President Leanne Topfer said the thresholds, which were introduced in changes to workers' compensation in 2001, have "bought no financial relief to employers and seem to have benefited insurers at the expense of injured workers".

"The changes mean that people injured at work must pass an arbitrary and unfair threshold before they can claim damages from an employer who has caused them often extremely painful and disfiguring injuries."

"We've heard today about a number of seriously injured Tasmanians who will never return to their jobs because of their injuries but who are being denied the right to a comfortable future," Ms Topfer said.

Lawyers Alliance Tasmanian President Sandra Taglieri said her organisation and unions had previously alerted all political parties to the severe hardship of the threshold and that the "issue can no longer be ignored now that there is such widespread concern".

"When it changed the law, the government never intended to completely deny fair compensation to workers who had been injured by their employer's negligence, but that's what has happened. We need some balance restored to the system."

"Workers are having their lives ruined by the present harsh provisions. Only those who suffer the most extreme injuries, such as limb amputation or paraplegia, qualify for adequate compensation," Ms Taglieri said.

The campaign is aimed to ensure that workers injured by the negligence of others at work can access fair compensation by reducing the damaging 'threshold test' and introducing an alternative test based on the successful Victorian model which allows the true impact of a workplace injury on a worker's life and future work prospects.

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