

China's workplace safety improves in Q1

China's workplace accidents and related deaths dropped in the first quarter of 2017 as the government stepped up work safety inspections, official data showed Wednesday.

The number of workplace accidents around China plunged 26.3 percent year on year to 10,131 in the first three months, while the death toll in those accidents dropped 16.6 percent to 7,196, according to a report unveiled at a press conference of the State Administration of Work Safety.

Spokesperson Su Jie said at the press conference that the country has stepped up special work safety inspections around major holidays and in important industries since the beginning of this year.

In the first quarter, authorities ordered 1,092 companies to suspend production or business for rectification, up 22.1 percent from a year ago. A total of 246 companies were shut down, up 138.8 percent year on year.

Of those accidents, 7 were categorized as major accidents, compared with 6 major accidents in the same period last year.

A major accident in China refers to one in which either more than 10 people are killed, more than 50 are injured, or the direct economic loss exceeds 50 million yuan (7.3 million U.S. dollars).

In the second quarter, the country will continue to screen for safety hazards to control the occurrence of major accidents, Su said.

Campaigns will be launched to ensure work safety in major industries, including the mining, chemical, construction and transportation fields, she said.

Efforts should also be made to improve emergency response to floods by coordinating efforts of different departments and timely release forecasts and warnings, according to Su.

China to launch first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1

China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 is scheduled for launch at 7:41 p.m. Thursday from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's

Hainan Province, the office of China's manned space program said Wednesday.

The cargo spacecraft will be carried into orbit by a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket, the office said.

Fuelled by liquid oxygen and kerosene, the medium-sized rocket is able to carry cargo spacecraft and man-made satellites. It made its maiden flight June 2016.

Tianzhou-1 is the first cargo ship independently developed by the country. It is expected to operate in orbit at an altitude of 380 kilometers before docking with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab, it said.

The cargo spacecraft will also carry out space experiments, including one on non-Newtonian gravitation, before falling back to earth.

The launch of Tianzhou-1 will mark a crucial step for China in building a space station by 2020.

[Make the money central to the election](#)

The Prime Minister rightly said we need to take back control of our money.

One of the important things the government can do in this election is to say Goodbye to the austerity economics of the EU budget rules and Mr Osborne's tenure. One of the pleasures of Brexit, a positive for voters of all persuasions, will be the ability to spend the net contributions we currently send to Brussels. Once we are out we can offer tax cuts and more spending with no rise in borrowing. Spending the money at home will help our economy and put more of our people to work here, instead of having to send the money abroad and run a larger balance of payments deficit.

We could remove VAT on domestic fuel, tampons and green products. We could spend more on the NHS, training more UK people as nurses and doctors. We could spend more in our schools and do more to promote better roads and public transport.

[China to monitor water pollution spending](#)

China unveiled new measures Wednesday to prevent misuse of water pollution

funds.

A performance rating framework will be set up to assess whether the money is spent wisely and whether the anti-pollution project is well managed, according to a statement jointly released by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Finance.

After a comprehensive review on their performance, fund users will be graded on a four-tier rating system, and local authorities will reward the good, and punish the bad, the statement said.

The detailed guideline came as authorities try to rein in the misuse of environmental funds. China's top auditor has found that 17.6 billion yuan (about 2.56 billion U.S. dollars) of fiscal funds for pollution control and resource management in 2016 were not used effectively.

A total of 397 water protection projects had failed to achieve the desired effect, and some environment funds were not distributed in accordance with special protection plans, according to the National Audit Office.

[Keynote address at the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Breakfast](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning, and thank you very much Terry. It is great to be here this morning with you all and with the Minister, Peter Dutton, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.

You summarised some of our achievements since the election, Terry, and thank you for that. I'm glad to know that there's still a few things left to do on your list. But we have made a lot of progress since the election. We've got a lot of legislation through the Senate that many people said would be unworkable, with fewer seats in the house and fewer in the senate.

We have managed to secure the passage of legislation that we had no chance of getting through in the last parliament. We showed the courage of our convictions. We haven't backed away from tough issues. We haven't kicked things into the long grass. We have got on with it. We have restored the rule of law to the building and construction sector as you said. We have delivered tax cuts for companies with turnovers of up to \$50 million over the next few years. In fact, we have delivered our enterprise tax agenda to companies and businesses that employ more than half of all Australians.

But I'm here to today to talk, however, about migration.

I'm talking about the greatest assets of Australia which are not under the ground, but walking around on top of it – 24 million of us.

We are as old as our First Australians, who have cared for this country for more than 50,000 years. And we are today here on Ngunnawal land, cared for by the First Australians here in this district, for tens of thousands of years and we honour them, and we honour their elders past and present, here on their land.

These First Australians have cared for Australia for time out of mind. They embody the oldest continuous human cultures on earth.

But at the same time we are as young as the baby in the arms of her migrant mother.

We are an immigration nation. We are the most successful multicultural society in the world.

28 per cent of us were born outside Australia and nearly half of us have a parent who was.

In my own city of Sydney 40 per cent of people in Sydney were born overseas and around half have parents born overseas.

So what makes this work? What makes this work?

Immigration is, and always should be, conducted resolutely in the national interest.

Our immigration programme is a recruiting exercise. Peter Dutton, he's the head of human resources, he's the chief recruiter for Australia to get the best and brightest from the world and to make sure that the people we want to come into Australia come in, and those who we have not permitted to come in do not. That's what it is about. This is about recruiting.

Now it has been ever thus.

Right through to the 1960s most Australians saw themselves as thoroughly British – as Menzies said: 'The boundaries of Britain are not on the Kentish coast but at Invercargill, the bottom of the South Island of New Zealand and Cape York'.

And migration was overwhelmingly from the British Isles until, with a mixture of nation building ambition and an anxiety best summarised as "populate or perish" about an invasion from the populous north, migration was ramped up after the Second World War with thousands of European migrants, including many refugees.

These men and women, came together to build modern Australia. Men who had fought against each other – Germans and Poles, Italians and Greeks – worked together with Australians to realise the great projects of the 50s and 60s,

and of course none greater than the Snowy Mountains Scheme itself which we are going to deliver Snowy Hydro 2.0. We are going to deliver on that vision of that era, the next stage, plans that were drawn up originally in that era of nation building, we're getting on with.

Now our migration programme, including the humanitarian stream, brings people from every corner of the world and in the midst of this extraordinary diversity we have maintained our Australian values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law and a unique sense of fairness alongside a spirit of enterprise.

We believe in a fair go and opportunity, that people should help themselves but be able to count on a hand up when they fall behind.

Now, these distinctive national characteristics have helped us to achieve what others can only dream of.

Economically we stand tall, with over 26 years of unbroken economic growth.

And in a world of conflict, we are a harmonious mixture of races, cultures and faiths, where mutual respect has made our differences a strength, not a weakness.

Our Australian values have united us.

That is a remarkable achievement in a world which seems, despite all of its technological advances, so much less tolerant in many parts of the world than it was a generation or even a century ago.

These achievements have not happened by accident. We have succeeded because we understand that one can and must complement the other – by adjusting the policy settings we are ensuring that they continue to do so.

Now more than ever, we must harness our migration program and fully utilise its potential to guarantee our future prosperity.

These are the most extraordinary times in human history, with economic change unprecedented in its scale and pace. Technology has transformed our lives in ways we could not have imagined a decade ago. And our greatest imaginings today can only hint at what technology will do for us in the coming decades.

In these times of challenge and change, my Government is focused on providing opportunity and security, opportunity and security for all Australians. We are bringing a more competitive edge to our tax system, as Terry observed, our energy markets, our economy.

We cannot remain a prosperous high wage first world economy with a generous social welfare safety net unless we are more competitive, innovative and productive.

If Australia is a football team – our migration programme is the way we recruit the best players. It is conducted in our national interest. Our migration programme is conducted in Australia's national interest.

Our migration story has never been without controversy. The post war mass migration of Europeans, the abolition of the White Australia Policy, the development of a thoroughly multicultural migration system in modern times.

The largest single group of immigrants today is from India, Chinese is the second most spoken language at home in Sydney after English. Australians are growing up in a society others can only dream of – diverse in race, culture and religion and yet harmonious.

And we should be proud of that.

I spoke with pride in the United Nations General Assembly last year when I described the way in which we have achieved what has been denied to so many other nations – that harmony – and I set out in detail how we have built that on a foundation of a migration system that is respected and borders that are secure.

Now, our success, as I said at the UN, is in large measure a consequence of Australians knowing that their government, and it alone, determines who comes to Australia, how long they stay, and makes that determination in Australia's national interest.

Understanding why we have been successful is critical to ensuring we continue to be successful – strong borders, vigilant security agencies governed by the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to the shared values of freedom and mutual respect.

Around the world support for migration has disintegrated in countries where people feel their borders are no longer secure and their governments have lost control – that's a fact. It has disintegrated in countries where governments have lost control of their borders and their migration system has got out of control. Out of control migration, irregular migration has threatened the social fabric of those nations.

European leaders have described the collapse in migration security in their continent as an existential threat. We should not underestimate the importance of a strong migration system and secure borders. We must never underestimate that and we must not take our achievement in that regard for granted.

We faced a situation of that kind under Labor when they abandoned John Howard's proven policies and lost control of our borders. In the ensuing chaos, as we recall, there were 50,000 irregular arrivals aboard 800 boats. A thousand people a week were arriving on Christmas Island. 8, 000 children were placed in immigration detention in Australia and, most tragically of all, 1200 lives—of which we know—were lost at sea.

Australians lost confidence in the system. Our nation lost the advantages that flow from properly controlled migration.

Since 2013 the Coalition has restored the strong border protection policies of the Howard Government. There has not been a successful people smuggling expedition to Australia for almost a thousand days.

But I can assure you that neither the Minister nor I nor any member of our Government takes that for granted or has a moment of complacency about it. We are ever vigilant to ensure that our borders remain secure.

Under Labor net migration peaked at an unsustainable 315,000 migrants a year. It is now less than 200,000.

We are back in control of their borders.

It means we are able to do what Labor could not do – set the parameters for a well-regulated, sustainable migration program and focus our humanitarian efforts on those whom we judge most in need.

And it means we can harness migration for the benefit of our economy and for all Australians.

Migrants have brought diversity, creativity, and in areas like IT where we are producing too few graduates, they have brought vitally needed skills.

Our skilled visa program has allowed us to tap into the best and brightest minds around the world. More than 65 per cent of permanent visas accessed in 2015/16 were by skilled professionals who are now an integral part of our workforce.

But migration must be in our national interest.

And now that we are back in control, we can use it to bolster the workforce with the skills we need while making sure that vacancies are filled by Australians first. Australian jobs for Australians first. That must be the commitment, that must be the objective. That is our obligation.

Now, Labor not only mishandled this aspect of migration, but under Bill Shorten as the employment minister it upended the usual practice and actually put foreign workers first.

As is often the case with Mr Shorten, he does not practice what he preaches. Despite claiming he wants to protect Australian jobs, as employment minister he granted a record number of 457 Visas. He even did special deals for fast food restaurants.

He blames the 457 explosion during his time on the mining boom. He increased 457s by two-thirds. Said it was all about the mining boom. Less than 10 per cent went into the mining industry. Two-thirds of them went to Sydney and Melbourne.

The 457 visa was designed originally to fill gaps in the workforce that could not be filled by Australian workers.

Labor used it to fast track foreign workers into jobs ahead of Australians – jobs like auctioneers, driving instructors, workplace relations advisers – I don't think any of you would imagine there was a shortage of local talent in that regard. I mean – really! When you look at the list of skills that were on the list that we inherited from Labor, it is actually, it is laughable.

Radio announcers – anyone in the media here concerned that there's a gap in radio announcers? I think most people in the media sector feel there are too few jobs for Australians, not huge skill gaps.

The reality is the system was abused, it was abused by Labor, it was discredited, it lost its credibility.

We have already reined in Labor's excesses, reducing the 457 visa grants. We've stopped the rorts like the fast food labour agreements. At the same time, we've helped create half a million jobs for Australians, but that is only the start of the overhaul and we are making this as part of our push to build a more competitive economy creating opportunity and security for all of us.

The temporary work system must better prioritise Australian workers and ensure we bring in genuinely skilled labour, not simply become the training ground for others.

This week we have announced important changes that mark another milestone in our efforts to ensure our migration system is working in our best interests.

The 457 visa will be abolished and replaced with a new temporary visa, underpinned by skills lists that are focused on critical skills shortages and more stringent conditions.

We will no longer allow 457 visas to be passports to jobs that could and should go to Australians.

There will be two visa classes – one for up to two, another for four years. The skills list for the four-year stream, the medium term stream, will be more restricted to strategic skills shortages – in fact there will be more than 400 fewer skills on it, fewer occupations on it than under the current 457s – currently 183 versus well over 600 on the 457 list. And the short term visa, the two-year visa will have more than 200 fewer occupations on it.

We are focusing on the list of skills we need and reducing it from a grab bag of around 650 occupations to a bit over 400 for the two-year visa and as I noted 183 for the four year one.

And we will work with business so the list responds to your needs and the needs of our economy – the short term occupation list will be reviewed every six months and the medium term one every year.

Throughout, the test will be the availability of Australian skilled labour.

Labour market testing will be generally mandatory, at least two years of work experience will be required – currently none is. A higher standard of English will be required for the four-year visa.

Where skilled Australian workers are not available, migration should be able to provide business with the critical skills that they need to grow. But Australian workers must have priority for jobs in our country.

Foreign workers add value to the nation, but they must supplement and not replace hardworking Australians.

The new Temporary Skills Shortage Visa will give business incentives to employ Australian workers first.

And it will help train Australians to fill the skill gaps in the workforce with a new training fund to take the place of the existing benchmark system, as recommended by the 457 visa review commenced in 2014.

Employers who nominate workers for the temporary visas will contribute to the fund which will support skills development and take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships. We will announce more details in the Budget.

Similar changes will be made to the Permanent Employer Sponsored Visas whether Employer Nominated or Regional Sponsored Migration schemes. The maximum age will be reduced from 50 to 45, competent English will be mandatory, no exceptions, and the pathway to permanent residency will begin at three years, not two years.

Our changes to citizenship will also enable our migration program to contribute still further to our social cohesion while enhancing our security.

Australia must continue to attract people who will embrace our values and positively contribute – regardless of their nationality or religious beliefs.

This is important for temporary visas and vital for permanent residency and citizenship. Citizenship must be valued and we are making changes so that the practices and principles of those obtaining citizenship are consistent with our cultural values.

Our reforms are designed to get more out of our migration system, to realise its potential to contribute to our economy.

They will also ensure that each new migrant has the skills and the outlook to contribute to Australia and our economy in the way we need them to. This ability to 'hit the ground running' will benefit both our migrants and our nation by helping them integrate into our culture and our workforce.

It is not an understatement to say that the modern Australian nation was built on immigration. We are, as I often said an immigration nation. We see it in the physical infrastructure that we use every day, we experience it in the extraordinary wealth of culture that surrounds us and which we all enjoy, we feel it in the unique Australian character to which every Australian contributes, we are the most remarkable nation and we should, we should not be backward in identifying shortcomings where we can do better, but we should vocal, proud of what we have achieved.

I say to you my friends, our achievements here in Australia, the most successful multicultural society in the world are extraordinary. Almost unique in the world. It is a remarkable achievement but the foundation of that is a strong migration system that Australians understand is controlled by their government, the government they elect, responsible to the Parliament

they elect, governed by the laws that that parliament enacts. It is fundamental to maintaining our harmony that we have a migration system that Australians respect.

We know what happens when countries lose control of migration. We saw it here when Labor lost control of the migration system.

We have secured our borders. We are reforming migration. We are putting Australians and Australian jobs and Australian values and Australia's national interest first.

Thank you very much.

Great to be with you.

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