

Submission
No 110

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

Joint Select Committee on the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme

Parliament House
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16 May 2012

Dear Members of the committee we are writing in response to the NSW Workers Compensation Issues paper as located on the NSW WorkCover website as at 14/05/2012

As a national Provider of Occupational Rehabilitation and OHS services we acknowledge that NSW is the most expensive state for employers who pay workers compensation premiums.

have conducted research and monitored our own performance on workers compensation cases and find that cases with lengthy time delays between date of injury and date of referral often will have impaired outcomes. A review of our own data would indicate that the average time lag from date of injury to date of referral is 12 weeks thus making successful RTW outcomes difficult to achieve whilst also being costly and time consuming and thus impacting on the NSW Workers Compensation scheme.

Research suggests that the success of a RTW program is more likely in a program that has commenced as soon as possible after the injury, the outcome in terms of RTW is usually not as positive if the length of time between injury date and referral date is post 3 months this will have significant impacts on claims cost predominantly as a result of lost time from work impacting on wages paid.

In order to attempt to improve our performance and the outcome for the injured worker, I would suggest the following :

1: In terms of rectifying the above situation as a RTW service provider in the NSW scheme we would recommend that referrals be made once there is 5 days lost time on all files this will enable efficient and timely RTW outcomes.

2: Whilst it is important to obtain NTD approvals and to work with the NTD it is important to note that a new system needs to be applied such as electronic lodgement of medical certificates to speed up this process and allow for RTW and that perhaps an allied health assessment could take the place of a doctor's visit when there were untimely delays. This would certainly be the case for certification upgrades where there are often appointment delays resulting in lengthier time frames in terms of upgrades and getting the injured worker back to work

3: That standard time frames for RTW be utilized by NTD's to lessen the amount of subjectivity and "emotional" decision making for common and less significant injuries and that these guidelines are transparent and also utilized by other service providers and Agents.

4: That standard performance reporting be implemented for all providers to avoid time consuming and costly administration for providers who currently provide a different report for each agent –this will enable improved benchmarking and enable providers to concentrate on service provision.

5: As a service that is regularly in touch with employers who pay workers compensation premiums we would recommend that there be some incentive for employers who perform well with their WHS risk management as a means of improving the performance of the whole scheme.

6: Provide easy to understand information to injured workers about the NSW scheme their obligations and their rights.

7: Improve claims management efficiency and transparency regarding claims costs including review points and estimating guidelines so that employers can be fully aware of the need to encourage RTW and the impact on their premiums.

8: Determine effective work capacity testing with the use of appropriate standardized testing that can be completed locally and efficiently.

9: That incentives be provided to injured workers for those who return to work as opposed to the current system that seems to encourage some injured workers to remain off work for longer.

10: That journey claims not be included as part of the NSW scheme.

Should you require further details or would like to contact us please do not hesitate to contact us

Yours sincerely