

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

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Joint Select Committee on the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000
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Dear Sir Madam,

RE: Proposed increase in workers compensation premiums

The most basic and obvious change that should have already been made is to stop the employers liability for workers traveling to and from work. Cover should start when they arrive and finish when leaving. As an employer I have no way of managing my risks, as must be done in the workplace. If an employee has bald tyres I should have the right to stop them from driving home. I don't have that right, yet I still have to carry the cost and responsibility. Most of these claims also have no witnesses which when challenged will always go the way of the worker.

The next big blow out in claims will soon come with the introduction of compulsory hearing tests for all workers in hearing protection areas. There will be a huge increase in doctors and specialists competing to carrying out this lucrative work with the usual increase in the amount of claims made.

Doctors charging extra to do Workers Compensation cases is also another area where large savings could be made. Why should they be allowed to charge extra just because an insurance company is paying? The cost comes back to employers in the long run so this should be regulated much more closely by either workcover or the insurance companies, to ensure all claims large and small are legitimate and managed correctly. Fraudulent claims should be dealt with very harshly and made an example of. It must be very clear the system is only for the genuinely injured workers.

We recently had a claim by an employee who was leaving to take up a higher paying position. His new employer would not start his employment until he had lodged a hearing claim against us. The employee stated he did not want to make the claim but his hand was forced by a company trying to protect their future interests. If they simply had a hearing test at the start of his employment and his potential loss was calculated from that point on we have a much fairer system without the doctors overcharging and over servicing.

Television ads by legal firms encouraging people to make claims and stating there will be no costs also encourages frivolous claims. If it doesn't cost them anything to make claims it encourages fraud. All eventually paid for by employers. If someone has a legitimate claim I'm sure they will know it without the ambulance chasing legal firms encouraging them to do so.

Any increase in workers compensation premiums will no doubt cause loss of employment. Companies are not cash cow that can keep absorbing costs. My company for one will need to make immediate and drastic changes to employee numbers and overtime if the costs escalate as suggested.

Make a few simple changes and catching the ones abusing the system should go a long way to getting the system back on track. There is no reason NSW should have to pay much higher premiums than the rest of the states. The only reason can be it has been poorly managed.

Yours sincerely