

**Submission
No 318**

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Mr Robert Reid

Date received: 28/05/2012

workerscompinquiry - hoping to have my views heard

Ms Shu-fang Wei.

Dear Ms Wei,

I made a submission to the original Sheehan inquiry prior to the setting up of WorkCover, but do not have a copy of that submission, am old & computer stupid & am unable to retrieve it. I doubt that my views would have changed with my extensive work since then in WC & CTP matters. I have been involved in many thousands of cases, also in the past, Public Liability since 1985. Up to 2006 I had been working/travelling 60-80 hrs each week in my work. That has declined since then because of particular circumstances & age now of 85 yrs. I restrict my work now to 3 cases each fortnight, mostly very complex Workers' Compensation as an IMC.

Each case occupies 60-90mins interview & physical examination & 6-9 hrs analysing documents, dictating & editing reports & speaking to employers, treating doctors etc, I also spend 1-3 hrs most weeks at a hospital clinical meeting.

My point is, I am still in touch. I am even needing to resist pleas to increase my cases. Certainly I am slower than in the past, but medico-legal work should always be very time consuming if done adequately. Sadly, very few of us do it adequately & therein lies one of the many problems which needs to be addressed – less reports but appropriate quality. It is not generally recognised, especially by many doing it, how very specialised it is, how different from purely treating medical practice

That is perhaps even the least problem of many. There has been ignorance & arrogance amongst the administration leadership amongst high & middle levels, not only allowing, but insisting on millions of dollars wasted as well as often being harmful & delaying finalisation (if at all) by years. Unnecessary expensive investigations, poor rehabilitation attempts, often prolonged or repetitive, physiotherapy, psychology & the list goes on, without regard to expense or outcome, so often just to seem to be doing something.

I haven't even touched on the deficiencies of the legal profession & the insurance companies. For the latter, it does not seem to be appreciated by anyone who matters, just how important are the case managers. Whilst there are many of those case managers who work it out for themselves & do an excellent job, in my opinion there should be a TAFE course, say for one year, or more as part time, while appropriately employed. As I understand it the case managers are at present also very restricted in decision making by the supervision & instructions from WorkCover.

I am concerned that the Government may be persuaded by some advisers that one or more silver bullets will fix the problem quickly. I know some of those who have quite a career of being the advisory sages. Whilst they may be good people, clever, highly qualified & all that, they often lack common sense, & as for us all, their advice needs to be considered carefully & critically.

It is the whole culture which needs to change & it is very important to get it right, even at the expense of a little extra delay.

I am most anxious to have the opportunity to be heard by the reformers & to be able to enlarge on the above. I regret that I did not comply with the timings for attending the public hearings, but I have some difficulty keeping up with all my demands & in this case I became aware of the opportunity too late..

Your very sincerely.

Robert Reid