

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

Joint Select Committee on the NSW
Workers Compensation Scheme

I am writing this to you to let you know how the proposed changes to workers compensation in NSW would adversely affect me and other people in my situation.

First I would like to tell you a bit about myself. I am 57 years old and I have been unemployed since 2001 owing to injuries I sustained in my job. These injuries have meant my doctor needs to put me on ongoing Workcover medical certificates, which restricts me in the type of physical activity I can partake in, therefore, limiting me in the employment I can apply for. Unfortunately, the type of work I can apply for, that is within my physical limitations, I have no experience in so am greatly disadvantaged. This, together with my age, makes it extremely difficult to find any kind of employment.

I have had numerous rehabilitation providers since 2001 that have assisted me in seeking suitable employment. The best we could do was find two work trials from two different companies totalling seven weeks. These work trials did not help me find any kind of employment as intended.

My injuries are skeletal and because of this, my doctor has informed me that they will be with me forever and will more than likely worsen as I get older. My injuries will require ongoing medical treatment and rehabilitation such as physiotherapy; anti-inflammatories and a gym membership to try to manage my chronic pain and slow down the decline in these injuries. In the future I may need surgery to try and correct these problems.

Coming to terms with my situation has not been easy. The ongoing physical pain that I endure is bad enough but the despair I often feel being unemployed takes a huge toll on me emotionally. I have had psychological treatment and have been on anti-depressants at various times.

If the proposed changes to workers compensation are passed, I will be taken off insurance payments and put onto Centrelink benefits. Unfortunately, because my partner earns slightly above the threshold per fortnight of \$1660 gross, which is not a great deal of money, I would not receive any financial assistance from anyone. Plus, all ongoing medical treatment would be at my expense.

If the proposed changes are passed, I will more than likely be forced to sell my home and move to an area where homes and the cost of living are less expensive than where I live now. This would mean my partner leaving the job she has worked at for fifteen years and seeking new employment in a new location. This move would also take me away from my friends and family members who provide me with much needed emotional support. I have been avoiding this but can see no other way if these changes come into effect.

I sustained these injuries at my place of employment simply by working hard to earn a living. I feel as though I am being punished for injuries sustained through no fault of my own. The Joint Select Committee must understand how negatively these proposed changes would affect me and other people on workers compensation. The Government should help the less fortunate, not kick us in the guts when we are already down. I ask you to let me keep my dignity and not to pass the proposed changes

Yours sincerely