

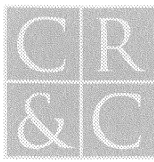
Submission
No 5

INQUIRY INTO WORKERS COMPENSATION INJURY MANAGEMENT PILOTS PROJECT

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Date Received: 6/05/2005

Theme:

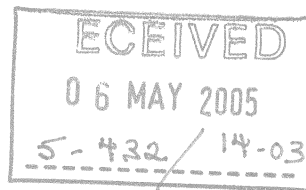
Summary:



CAMPBELL RESEARCH & CONSULTING

Tuesday, 3 May 2005

Ms Rachel Simpson
The Director
Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000



Dear Ms Simpson,

Re: Inquiry into workers compensation injury management pilot projects

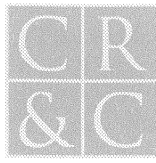
Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the inquiry into the workers compensation injury management pilot projects overseen by WorkCover in 2001.

Campbell Research & Consulting measured processes and outcomes of the pilots using the Return to Work (RTW) Monitor and compared these to state benchmarks. It was found that, overall, injured workers participating in the pilots had better return to work outcomes and received better insurance type services.

A summary of the key findings is attached.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stephen Campbell
Managing Director



CAMPBELL RESEARCH & CONSULTING

**Inquiry into
Workers Compensation
Injury Management
Pilot Projects**

A submission prepared for

**Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Legislative council
Parliament House**

May 2005

Executive Summary

- The Return to Work (RTW) Monitor provides a statistically rigorous and reliable tool for benchmarking performance of workers' compensation. The RTW Monitor is independent of the way in which compensation and services are administered.
- The RTW Monitor was used to measure outcomes and process indicators for the pilots. The results were compared to other comparable injured workers in New South Wales over the same period.
- It was found that injured workers who participated in the pilots had better RTW outcomes and experienced better insurance type services than other injured workers.

Background

The Injury Management Pilots Project commenced in January 2001 with the aim of identifying and achieving best practice claims and injury management. Campbell Research & Consulting was commissioned to survey injured workers participating in the pilots and provide a comparison with injured workers in New South Wales not participating in the pilots using the Return to Work (RTW) Monitor.

The RTW Monitor

The RTW Monitor is one of the Comparative Performance Measures used by the Ministers' of Workplace Relations Advisory Council to monitor the performance of Australian and New Zealand workers' compensation systems. The Monitor provides information based on three key stages in the injured workers' claim experience:

- The time when the claim was lodged;
- The time of RTW (if RTW occurs); and
- The time of interview.

The Monitor is conducted with injured workers who have had more than ten days compensation paid and interviews are conducted seven to nine months after a claim has been lodged. It is a sensitive and reliable instrument that provides outcomes and process measures that are independent to the structure of workers' compensations systems.

Methodology

For the Evaluation of the Injury Management Pilots Project, interviews with pilot participants were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) in November 2001 and February 2002. The aggregate results from the two survey waves were analysed and compared with non-pilot participants interviewed in November 2001. Comparisons were made between individual pilots and all pilots combined against the "non-pilot" results. As such, the study provided a case-comparison methodology using the RTW Monitor as an established benchmark for New South Wales, nationally and New Zealand.

Key Findings

Overall, the pilots performed better on nearly all outcome measures than the non-pilot group. At the time of the interview (seven to eight months after claim lodgement), pilot participants were:

- More likely to have returned to work - nine in ten pilot participants had returned to work, compared with eight in ten non-pilot participants;

- More likely to have a durable return to work - eight in ten pilot participants had a durable RTW, compared with seven in ten non-pilot participants; and
- Less likely to still be receiving compensation payments – two in ten pilot participants were still receiving weekly compensation payments, compared with three in ten non-pilot participants.

The pilots had achieved measurable improvements in return to work for injured workers.

Pilot participants were more likely to consider the return to work plan helpful. A medical practitioner was more likely to be involved in developing the return to work plan, while the main supervisor at work was more likely to help pilot participants do what was recommended in the return to work plan. Pilot participants were more likely to return to their pre-injury employer and duties.

Compared with non-pilot participants, pilot participants gave higher ratings for their insurer's customer service.

The pilots had provided higher quality services to injured workers.

The sample sizes for each pilot were too small to identify differences between the pilots and had to be interpreted with care. Generally the pilots had similar RTW outcomes, with some differences observed between pilots for a number of process measures such as the use of RTW or rehabilitation plans and ratings of the insurer's customer service:

- The Central West regional pilot had a lower RTW rate;
- The private hospital industry pilot had a higher RTW rate; and
- QBE had a lower rate of providing RTW plans and a higher rating for insurer services.

However, there was no consistent pattern observed.