



Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities

Australia and New Zealand

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MEDIA RELEASE

Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities look at ways to improve workers compensation

Chair of the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities, Jon Blackwell, today announced the outcomes of the group's October meeting.

Mr Blackwell said a number of key issues were discussed during the meeting held in Melbourne on 19 October, which addressed the way jurisdictions could work together address common workers compensation issues.

"Talks include looking at the development of a framework for the national approval of rehabilitation providers and the development of a common assessment tool for permanent impairment," Mr Blackwell said.

"HWCA members also held a joint workshop with the Victorian Transport Accident Commission and the Heads of Compulsory Third Party Providers to discuss catastrophic injury claims management," Mr Blackwell said.

Further information about the activities of the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities, in Australia and New Zealand including the group's current work plan, is available from the website at www.hwca.org.au

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COMMUNIQUE OF MEETING OUTCOMES

Key issues discussed and matters agreed by Heads of Workers Compensation Authorities (HWCA) at its 19 October 2007 meeting include:

Catastrophic injury claims

WorkSafe Victoria in conjunction with the Transport Accident Commission Victoria, coordinated the workshop preceding the HWCA meeting on the topic of catastrophic injury claims management. This was a joint workshop between HWCA members and the Heads of Compulsory Third Party Providers to discuss scheme management issues and consider various models across the jurisdictions.

2008 Australian Rehabilitation Providers Association 3rd Injury Management Conference

The Australian Rehabilitation Providers Association (ARPA) will be holding its 3rd Injury Management Conference in Sydney from 15-16 May 2008. The conference will feature presentations and discussions from academics, practitioners and regulators concerning workforce participation issues including injury management and return to work.

ARPA has extended an invitation to HWCA members to present papers at the conference and to participate on a discussion panel. Several HWCA members, or their representatives, will represent their jurisdiction by presenting a paper at the conference. Topics are to be finalised in the coming month. HWCA members, or their representatives, have also accepted the invitation to participate as part of a discussion panel.

National approval of rehabilitation providers working group

HWCA has established a working group to oversee the development of a work plan for a nationally consistent framework for approving rehabilitation providers.

The purpose of a nationally consistent approval framework is to:

- ensure a robust approval system across the jurisdictions;
- enable the objective measurement of provider performance against conditions of approval; and
- establish standards designed to deliver high quality workplace based rehabilitation to workers, employers and insurers.

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The reference group has developed a work plan that includes a consultation strategy. The strategy details the processes for consultation with ARPA and other stakeholders.

HWCA members considered a draft position paper prepared by the reference group concerning the framework. The draft position paper is still under development and will be released for comment to industry once it is finalised.

National Self Insurance Harmonisation Project

HWCA members discussed the possibility of undertaking future initiatives to harmonise self-insurance arrangements once the current harmonisation activities are completed.

HWCA Chair, Mr Jon Blackwell, recently met with the National Council of Self Insurers (NCSI) Chair, Mr Robin Shaw, to discuss a range of issues including progress to date on the harmonisation of self-insurance arrangements, the national audit tool and the next stage harmonisation activities.

HWCA will continue to work closely with the NCSI to ensure industry concerns are taken into consideration in the development of all harmonisation initiatives.

HWCA work plan 2007-09

The HWCA work plan is now available on the HWCA website. It details the priorities for HWCA over the next three years. Progress made against each of the initiatives will also be available periodically on the website

News and updates

Further news and updates regarding the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities in Australia and New Zealand are available on the HWCA website on www.hwca.org.au