



## MEDIA RELEASE

### HWCA meet in Canberra, endorse Strategy

8 October 2009

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA) endorsed the Australian and New Zealand Workers Compensation Strategy at their meeting in Canberra last week.

The Acting HWCA Chair, Mr Greg Tweedly, welcomed jurisdictions' commitment to working co-operatively on key priorities identified in the Strategy. Mr Tweedly said the strategy is designed to deliver a coordinated approach to workers' compensation across Australia and New Zealand over the next three years.

The strategy has two main objectives:

1. To deliver best practice services to injured workers and employers to assist recovery; and
2. To build sustainable workers compensation schemes.

HWCA will now develop jurisdictional action plans to support the Strategy. A copy of the strategy will be available shortly on the HWCA website ([www.hwca.org.au](http://www.hwca.org.au)).

HWCA endorsed a paper on principles of early injury management and noted that the working group on Biopsychosocial Rehabilitation will develop a plan for the next steps.

Prior to the meeting, HWCA was joined by other government accident insurers to take part in a workshop to discuss permanent impairment. Members discussed the use of Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment and permanent impairment assessments. Members agreed to work together toward a harmonised approach to permanent impairment assessments.

Mr Greg Tweedly, Chief Executive Officer, WorkSafe Victoria, was appointed the new Chair of HWCA. Members acknowledged the contribution of the former Chair of HWCA, Mr Jon Blackwell. Mr Blackwell resigned from his position as Chief Executive Officer of WorkCover NSW in August 2009.

HWCA is a group comprising the Chief Executives (or their representatives) of the peak bodies responsible for the regulation of workers compensation in Australia and New Zealand. Further information about HWCA activities is available from the website at [www.hwca.org.au](http://www.hwca.org.au)

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# Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities

Australia and New Zealand

## COMMUNIQUÉ OF MEETING OUTCOMES

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA) discussed and agreed to the following key matters at its 2 October 2009 meeting in Canberra.

### **HWCA Australian and New Zealand Workers Compensation Strategy**

HWCA members endorsed the Australian and New Zealand Workers Compensation Strategy to guide HWCA activities. The strategy will provide a coordinated approach to workers compensation across Australia and New Zealand over the next three years.

The strategy identifies a common set of goals to improve workers compensation and injury management arrangements, while maintaining fair, affordable and financially viable workers compensation schemes.

The strategy has two main objectives:

1. To deliver best practice services to injured workers and employers to assist recovery; and
2. To build sustainable workers compensation schemes.

To achieve the strategy's objectives, jurisdictions will focus on four priority areas over the next three years:

- Best practice, evidence-based injury management and return to work initiatives
- Efficient claims management
- Engagement with third-party service providers
- Research and identification of emerging trends.

Jurisdictions will begin reporting on progress made on measures under the strategy in 2010.

### **Bio-psychosocial Rehabilitation Working Group**

HWCA agreed the Bio-psychosocial Rehabilitation Working Group would develop a national action plan regarding prevention of long-term disability and work loss, which will support the strategy.

### **Review of the National OHS Audit Tool**

Members were advised of the progress of the National OHS Audit Tool Working Group. It was agreed that the Working Group should continue the development of a common set of audit processes with the expectation that this be finalised out of session in the next few months.



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## **Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers**

Members noted the progress of the Working Party for Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers. It was agreed that the endorsement of the "*Statement of Agreement to the National Framework*" and the protocols for information sharing between participating jurisdictions would be finalised in the near future to ensure implementation of the framework by the agreed date of 1 July 2010.

## **Permanent impairment workshop**

Prior to the meeting, HWCA was joined by representatives of Heads of Compulsory Third Party insurers and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, to take part in a workshop to discuss assessment of permanent impairment. Members discussed the use of Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment currently in use by jurisdictions, permanent impairment assessments methodology and application and the way forward for harmonisation. Members also noted that Comcare is currently undertaking a policy review of permanent impairment. Members agreed to work together toward a harmonised approach to permanent impairment assessments.

## **Next meeting and workshop**

The next HWCA meeting will be held on 5 February 2010.

## **News and updates**

Further news and updates regarding the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities in Australia and New Zealand are available on the website at **[www.hwca.org.au](http://www.hwca.org.au)**

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