



Suite 5 Petroleum House
12 Brodie-Hall Drive
Technology Park
Bentley 6102
Western Australia

Telephone 08 9355 1400
Facsimile 08 9355 1499
Email safety@marcsta.com
www.ohswa.marcsta.com

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (WA BRANCH)

WORKERS' COMPENSATION WORKING GROUP

Notes from the meeting of 15 August 2013

Documentation provided:

- List of items of concern for discussion
- Possible seminar objectives
- Background material –
 - Workers' Compensation – WorkCover data 2007/08 to 2011/12
 - Lost Time Claims 2007/08 to 2011/12
 - WA Public Sector – State of the Sector 2012 – RiskCover report/data
 - WorkCover WA – Gross premiums 2008 to 2012 (est)
 - WorkCover WA – Long duration claims 2007/08 to 2011/12
 - RiskCover WA – Workers' compensation premiums 2007/08 to 2013/14
 - Research reports – ISCRR, Monash Uni, Various
 - Research paper – Dr Alex Collie, ISCRR

General discussion:

The data provided as pre-reading and some additional information was tabled.

The possible reasons for the increase in long duration claims incidence and the length of time away from work were considered at length. These included:

- the increasing involvement of lawyers in pursuing workers' compensation business;
- the role of general practitioners (or medical practitioners) in the process;
- the role of insurers/brokers who are there to provide cover without having any real incentive to facilitate return-to-work;
- the role of EAP providers and vocational rehabilitation providers whose interest is in the welfare of injured persons rather than returning them to work early;
- the emergence of group medical practitioners operating in the workers' compensation field;
- whether small employers are participating adequately in return-to-work programs.

No obvious specific interest group was seen as responsible for the worsening situation although it was generally agreed that 'return-to-work' should be the focus of a proposed seminar/conference activity.

Identifying any aspects which could be delaying persons' prompt return-to-work should be the target.

It was suggested that the involvement of the following organisations should be sought:

- WorkCover WA
- Insurers/brokers
- General practitioners (or medical practitioners)
- Lawyers (Law Society)
- Unions (TLC)
- EAP providers
- Vocational rehabilitation providers
- Academia

It was further agreed that a meeting be requested with Chris White at WorkCover as a prelude to final program presentation.

++

WORKERS' COMPENSATION WORKING GROUP

Notes from the meeting of 15 August 2013

Questions for WorkCover

- What data is available, if any, on the size of respective employers?
 - claims by small vs large
 - injuries by small vs large
 - long duration claims by size of employer
 - does it show on claim form?

- Is there any data on compliance with the requirement for employers to have in place 'a documented injury management system'?

- Is the requirement to have in place a return-to-work program?
 - policed in any way?
 - do insurers audit that this is actually occurring (ask Allaine this one)

- Where lawyers may advise injured persons who are participating in a return-to-work program to discontinue as it may prejudice a claim, does/can WorkCover get involved?
 - do/can insurers get involved (ask Allaine)

- Accountability of mental health claims for compensation.
 - range/type etc, limitations, diagnosis – GP's
 - return-to-work etc

- Growth of mental health claims.
 - stress, depression etc.

- Number of long duration claims/increase numerically and in length.

- Is there any data on cost of claims by age groupings?
 - Note, 2007/08 to 2011/12 increases in claims in older groupings.