

Welcome

..... to the second edition of our newsletter for 2003.

In this issue we will provide an overview of the new *Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* and explain how it differs from the now superseded *WorkCover Queensland Act 1996*.

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work and skills that you bring to your roles as school based rehabilitation coordinators, so in each edition we will be profiling one of you. If you have anyone you would like to nominate please contact the OHU.

We also introduce a new section which will answer your Frequently Asked Questions.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Yvette Wareham on 3237 0789.

What's New in Rehab?

THE EAS REVIEW

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) review has been commissioned to improve service provision to EQ employees by providing greater direction and role clarity for Employee Advisors in EQ.

An independent consultant will be appointed by tender to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the EAS in EQ in terms of:

- Accessibility of service for all EQ employees throughout Qld;
- Best practice service delivery;



- Improved management of absenteeism;
- Continuing professional development for EAs.

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT PILOT

The Intensive Case Management pilot is underway with two successful providers chosen from the 'Whole of Government' tender process established by the Dept of Industrial Relations.

This project has been initiated and funded by DIR in order to help Departments reduce their WorkCover premium costs.

The pilot involves the outsourcing of the initial stages of rehabilitation assessment and intervention to professional providers.

The providers will spend up to fifteen hours on each case that has the potential of becoming a WorkCover psychological claim in the Metropolitan North and South CSUs.



MANUAL HANDLING PROJECT

The project will be boosted during Semester 2 with the addition of specialist manual handling staff located around the state. These staff will help develop ways to improve manual handling across all EQ schools. Staff will be based in Far Northern, Central and Met North & South CSUs. The resource will include risk management examples, audits and checklists and "how to get started" information.

New Workers' Compensation Legislation



The ***Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*** came into force on 1 July 2003 to formally separate WorkCover's insurance and regulatory functions.

Under the now superseded *WorkCover Queensland Act 1996*, Q-COMP reported to the Board of WorkCover as a business unit. The National Competition Policy Review recommended that, in the interests of transparency and impartiality, Q-COMP should be established as a separate statutory authority, although its functions would essentially remain the same.

The title of the legislation was changed to better reflect its function, which is to provide optimal workers' compensation and rehabilitation services to Queensland workers.

The main elements of the Act provide for:

- The repeal of the *WorkCover Qld Act 1996* and the *WorkCover Qld Regulation 1997*;
- The maintenance of the essential characteristics of Queensland's workers' compensation scheme;
- The establishment of Q-COMP as a statutory Authority;
- The establishment of WorkCover as a commercial entity, with a smaller board divested of regulatory functions; and
- The establishment of WorkCover Advisory Committees to provide policy advice.

The Act also provides for new cross-border arrangements, specifically in regard to provisions for interstate workers.

*** PLEASE NOTE that although much of the content of the Act remains the same, many of the original sections have been renumbered.**

WPRC Profile



Meet Rob Jones - a Guidance Officer and a school based workplace rehabilitation coordinator. Not only does Rob manage these dual roles; his rehab coordinator role is shared (Q-Comp approved) between three schools (Innisfail SHS, Innisfail SS and Goondi SS). Rob is, understandably, a very busy man!

Since being trained in 1998 Rob has handled a number of diverse rehab cases and has found the role rewarding. "I have a huge amount of satisfaction when a colleague is able to successfully return to work. I have also found that my relationships with the whole-of-school staff has been enhanced through the rehab role - they now see me as someone that supports staff as well as students".

When asked what he finds challenging Rob said "the challenges for me are finding the time and managing the competing demands of both roles".

Rob believes the most important strategy for successful rehab is "to be a very good listener". Here are some of the other strategies that have worked for him:

1. Do a lot of listening before you take action;
2. Facilitation not administration.....remember that you are there to empower the employees with information to make their return to work easier and to help them with decision making;
3. Find someone to bounce ideas off and debrief with (such as support staff from CSU/DO or another rehab coordinator);
4. Rehab is full of emotional and complex situations so challenges and difficulties are sure to arise. When things go wrong or don't work out try not to take it personally - deal with the issues while not feeling a sense of personal failure; and
5. Monitor your own stress levels and responses. Don't allow situations to drain you emotionally.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Where Can I Find WorkCover And QSuper Forms?

You can find links to the WorkCover and QSuper home-pages on the Creating Healthier Workplaces website at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/rehab/>
This site also contains resources including EQ's rehab policy, case management forms, a contact list and lots of other information that you will find useful.

Q2. What Is The Time Limit For Submitting An Employer's Report To WorkCover?

The employer **MUST** send the report to WorkCover **within ten days** after: they know the injury has been sustained; the worker reports the injury or WorkCover requests a report. If this time limit is not met a financial penalty of up to \$18,750.00 may apply for each late report.

WorkCover Investigations

As many of you in regional areas will already be aware, WorkCover are in the process of changing their stress claim investigation process.

The process of claim investigation will be:

1. The worker sustains an injury and applies for compensation;
2. WorkCover arranges for a psychologist to interview the worker;
3. WorkCover arranges for an independent investigator to interview the witnesses;
4. WorkCover refers the worker to a psychiatrist for medical assessment;
5. WorkCover assesses the application and makes a decision to accept or reject the claim.

The length of this process will depend on the complexity of the situation and the availability of evidence, however WorkCover is required to make a decision within three months of receiving an application.

As a general guide, WorkCover recommends that the employer should nominate 2-3 witnesses, as more than this number providing the same information may delay the investigation process.

To help this process run smoothly, WorkCover requests that you:

- Make sure witnesses are available to be interviewed;
- Make arrangements for the interviewer's visit and make a private room available, and
- Provide copies of relevant documents as required by Workers' Compensation legislation.

The psychologist, interviewer and psychiatrist will only provide reports to WorkCover, not assess the claim. A WorkCover assessor will make a decision on the application and will be the main contact for everyone involved in the process.

