

SUBMISSION OF WILLIAM LESLIE

[REDACTED]

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I have had two experiences with Australia Post's compensation system and their FNDs. The first point I would like to make is about the lack of knowledge among staff about our rights and responsibilities in this area. The second is about the pressure staff are put under to attend FNDs. The third is about the pressure the FNDs put injured workers under to return to work whether or not this is appropriate given their injuries.

A few years ago I was "T-boned" by a car coming out of a side-street while out delivering on my motor-bike. Eventually, I found out I had broken an ankle. An appointment was quickly made for me to attend an FND – [REDACTED] I had an X-Ray. [REDACTED] interpreted this X-Ray saying that I didn't have any broken bones and told me to purchase a special boot and return to work on restricted duties. I did this but was in so much pain that I had to buy myself crutches as well.

As the pain persisted I went to my own doctor who looked at the original X-Ray and said that I did have a broken ankle. He ordered further X-Rays to see if there had been any further damage done walking on it. He put my foot in plaster and sent me home to heal for 6 weeks.

Management rang up to send me back to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] again maintained that I could go back to work straight away on light duties and made arrangement for me to get a chair that supposedly could accommodate my injury. I told him that he needed to speak with my treating doctor. [REDACTED] later told my manager, [REDACTED] that my doctor had agreed to his plan to return me to work. I know that this was not the case because my doctor was not available at the time.

I decided to follow my treating doctor's advice and my compensation was not paid for the time I was absent from work. On some days I received up to 8 phone calls a day to try to get me to return to work but I decided it was more important to heal properly and not to compromise my ongoing health. The constant contact was very stressful for my partner and me.

A few months ago, I came off my motorbike while on delivery. I had a brand new tyre on and for some reason it had no grip, and the bike slid from under me. I was knocked unconscious and was severely bruised on my right side. I was taken to hospital where they kept me under watch until releasing me at 3am with a certificate for 2 days leave.

That morning I received a letter to my house to visit [REDACTED] straight away. I rang and said that I wouldn't see him as I had no confidence in him given the previous episode. Another appointment was made for me to attend another FND within half an hour which was a physical impossibility as I was in Mornington trying to get new glasses seeing mine had been smashed in the accident. I agreed to go to the third appointment to a company doctor who was located in Cranbourne.

My right knee was hurt in the accident and is still not right after my free physiotherapy under the Early Intervention program. I have recently received a denial of liability for compensation for this knee because of the FND's documentation.

The investigation into the accident was less than satisfactory. It was alleged that I was going too fast which is not true. There has been no explanation of why the new tyre did not have any grip. I have not received the results of any testing of that specific tyre. I believe it may have been covered with the 'greasing agent' that is used on the mould used to make the tyres. I have ridden motor-bikes for decades and know that the accident was not simply rider error.