

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Agency - Comcare**

**Department of Employment Question No. EM0738\_15**

**Senator Bilyk provided in writing.**

**Question**

**Review of Recovery and Support Services provided in long term Comcare cases**

Please provide a detailed explanation of how Comcare intends to address or otherwise respond to each of the recommendations in Mr John Cain's Review of Recovery and Support Services provided in long term Comcare cases as itemised in part 3 of his report? What action does Comcare intend to take to resolve the claims covered by the report?

**Answer**

The long term nature of the cases reviewed by Mr Cain mean some of the issues identified by Mr Cain are historical and have already been corrected. Comcare is addressing remaining issues through its ongoing business improvement activities. Some of these actions include:

- Enhancing Comcare's claims management model to tackle the increasing complexity and cost of managing psychological injury and improve return to work outcomes. These changes will include a greater specialisation of staff for the most complex cases.
- Comcare has been strengthening its specialist health services support since 2010, including engaging a Clinical Panel and continues to increase engagement with treating health practitioners. The Clinical Panel has provided Claims Services Officers with support and training. Further, Comcare is a signatory of the Clinical Framework for the Delivery of Health Services developed by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). This Framework has been incorporated into Comcare's existing policies and procedures.
- Comcare is developing a "Recovery Pack" to provide further information/education to injured workers and employers on responsibilities, processes and review rights.

Mr Cain's review highlighted the complexities of the rehabilitation provisions in the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) and recommended legislative change to permanent impairment and normal weekly earnings calculation provisions in the Act. A copy of the report has been provided to the Department of Employment for consideration.

Comcare has a number of programs of work in place to address some of the identified issues within current legislative provisions (Rehabilitation and Return to Work, Health Benefits of Work and Workability and Scheme Liability Management).

All injured workers interviewed by Mr Cain were provided with a copy of Mr Cain's report and invited to contact Mr Cain directly to discuss how their insights informed his findings and recommendations. We are aware of two injured workers taking up this opportunity.

In terms of resolving claims covered by the report, Mr Cain did not identify any issues specific to individual workers requiring resolution by Comcare. In this regard, there is no provision in the SRC Act that allows Comcare to close or finalise claims for compensation. Accordingly, apart from addressing the action items identified for Comcare's consideration by Mr Cain's report there are no additional actions Comcare can take to resolve individual claims.