



A•S•U
Australian
Services
Union
Central & Southern
Queensland Branch

Fact Sheet

All
Stand
United

www.qld.asu.net.au

WorkCover

Fact Sheet

Bulletin No.1684 • 10 March, 2010

Workers' Rights to WorkCover At Risk

A recent review of Qld's WorkCover has revealed that investment returns have been drastically affected by the Global Financial Crisis, down by around \$800 million.

At the same time, WorkCover has experienced an underwriting shortfall of \$500 million. As a result of these difficulties, WorkCover appointed Deloitte to do a business review and make recommendations.

The Deloitte Report found:

- Growth in net claims expenditure, mainly from an increase in common law claims
- Employer premiums have not kept pace with the growth in claims
- The last two years' investment returns have been in negative territory

Based on further actuarial reports, the WorkCover Board has made a number of recommendations to government, including:

- Increasing the employer premium over the next 7 years
- Implementing a threshold for common law claims of impairment at 10% or 15%
- Increasing statutory lump sum payouts and improving return to work provisions
- Altering weekly payments over long term periods

Other commentators have called for more changes:

- Tightening up access to common law claims further
- Changes to court processes
- Excluding workers assessed with 0% impairment from common law claims
- Capping common law damages under the Civil Liability Act

Should workers lose access to common law claims?

Excluding claims as suggested will mean that 85 – 95% of injured workers will be locked out of the common law process.

Careers can end with impairment at 0% - these claims routinely settle for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Common law claims are a way of compensating workers for damage to their future working prospects brought about by their employer's negligence.

Should employers continue to pay discounted premiums and workers be prevented from seeking justice?

Queensland employers currently pay the lowest Work Cover premiums in the country – the next lowest is Victoria, which has premiums 21% higher than ours. ***Is it right that this should continue to be the case, and incentives to create a safe workplace are whittled away?***

The Department of Justice & Attorney-General have produced a Discussion Paper and called for comment by Monday 22nd March 2010. Urgent changes will be made once these have been considered.

Unions will of course be making submissions to this review. If you want to let the government know what you want to see happen, you can fax your thoughts to 3247 4519 or email to: wcpolicy@justice.qld.gov.au

Help the ASU to show the government how strongly workers feel about saving our scheme – get your colleagues to sign the petition on the following page and return to the ASU Office via fax on 07 3844 5153.

FIGHTING FOR YOUR WORKCOVER RIGHTS

PROTECT YOURSELF
JOIN THE ASU TODAY

The Australian Services Union (Clerical and Administrative Branch) represents workers in the clerical, administrative and call centre industries across both the public and private sectors throughout central and southern Queensland.

Authorised by Julie Bignell, Branch Secretary Australian Services Union Central and Southern Queensland Branch • Level 3, 27 Peel Street, South Brisbane • Email: info@qld.asu.net.au • Tel: 07 3844 8402

