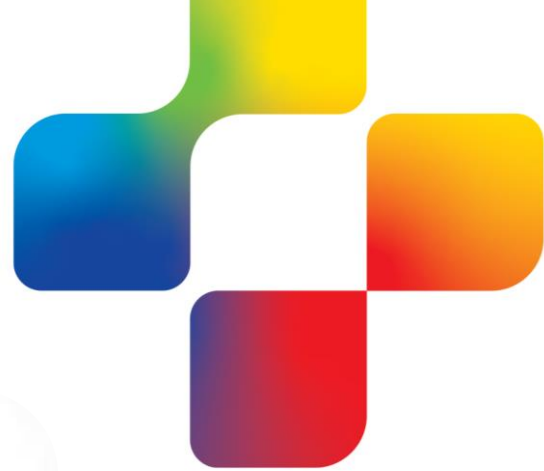


# ESF IMPACT

## newsletter

ISSUE 36, 23 November 2022



## The Future of Mental Health Claims

In 2018 the Beyond Blue *Answering the Call* study looked at employees' experience with the workers compensation claims process related to mental health conditions. Of the 21,000 employees involved in the study a large number indicated that they received inadequate support during the claims process, were treated somewhat or not at all fairly, found the process to be stressful and that it generally had a negative impact on their recovery.

ESF recently hosted a workshop to discuss the future of mental health claims which brought together WorkCover agents Gallagher Basset, EML and DXC along with rehabilitation providers, WorkSafe and agency representatives working in the claims space from across the sector.

Sam Jenkin from WorkSafe said PTSD accounts for 36% of all claims but this is only part of the story. Poor interpersonal relationships and culture are much bigger contributors to mental injury in the emergency services sector.

Sam spoke of the significant upward trend in mental health claims that began before the pandemic. He discussed return to work data and noted that people rarely get better by staying in the scheme for long periods. Even though we know that healthy work is an important part of overall wellbeing, WorkSafe is seeing more emergency service workers remain off work for longer periods of time.

This was the focus of discussion and participants heard how DELWP, AV and VicPol have considered this problem and are working to make a difference to how claims are managed and how to improve the experience for those involved. Connecting with people within the first week, a job bank to help place people in different areas of the organisation and development for managers to help them understand the importance of keeping connected with employees off work were just three ideas shared.



*better together*

Workshop participants agreed that with an increase in the volume and complexity of claims the key to success is early conversations to build engagement with the individual and that there needs to be a range of performance measures including the individual's own goals.

ESFs Learning Network exists so people in the sector can share and learn from each other, and this event was a terrific example of that.

### RESPONSES

It was great to be part of another ESF event bringing together the people that support our emergency services workers. The Foundation continues to provide a great forum for emergency services employers, whether big or small, to learn from each other about what works and what doesn't in managing mental health in an often complex operating environment.

**Sam Jenkin**  
WorkSafe

It was a great experience learning all the initiatives and experiences the ESF participants have with Mental Health & Injuries. I have learnt so much!

**Sue Baker**  
EML

It was great to meet up with staff from other agencies only to realise that we are all working with similar issues.

**Tony Milczakowsky**  
Fire Rescue Victoria

Thanks for the opportunity to share ideas, hear what other are doing and get some thinking going about ways forward.

**Heather Miller**  
Ambulance Victoria

I loved hearing all the ideas and thoughts in the room. It's a challenging issue but the energy and enthusiasm of the sector is inspiring.

**Irene Krishnan**  
WorkSafe