

# Summary of findings from the *Return to work: A comparison of psychological and physical injury claims* report

## An employer's role in return to work for psychological and physical injury claims

Workers with psychological injuries generally have lower return to work (RTW) rates than workers with physical injuries, but there are things employers can do to improve the outcomes.

The *Return to work: A comparison of psychological and physical injury claims* report looks at the similarities and differences between psychological and physical claims, including how workers view their claims experience. This report is based on results from the 2013 and 2014 National Return to Work Surveys (the Survey).



### Key findings for employers

Employers play an important role in RTW and can help to improve RTW outcomes. The report found that the key influencing factors, such as the employer's response to injury and early contact from the workplace, were common to both physical and psychological injuries.

### Psychological injury claims

Workers with psychological injury claims were more likely to report a negative claims experience, including less contact from their workplace, more disputes relating to difference of opinion between the worker and employer or claim organisation, and lower levels of support. Findings from the report show:

- Workers with psychological injury claims were less likely to have received contact from their employer (36 per cent compared to 59 per cent of those with a physical injury claim).
- Workers with psychological injury claims were more likely to be concerned about lodging a claim (likely due to the worker's anticipation of how the employer will respond).
- Disputes are more likely in psychological injury claims. Twice as many workers with a psychological injury claim reported a difference of opinion with their employer or claim organisation.

### How employers can improve return to work outcomes

The Survey results show that employers can help to improve RTW outcomes for injured workers with psychological and physical injury claims by:

- making genuine and regular contact with the worker
- understanding and providing information about the worker's rights and responsibilities
- making an effort to find suitable alternative duties
- assisting the injured worker with their recovery such as providing support and encouragement, and
- treating the worker fairly during and after claim lodgement.

Early intervention also improves RTW outcomes. Employers can help their workers to successfully RTW by:

- having a pre-claim discussion with their worker
- providing pre-claim assistance
- helping workers to lodge their claim early, and
- having early contact with their worker.

### Further information



- For information about workers' rights and responsibilities, employers should contact the relevant [workers' compensation authority](#)
- [Return to work: A comparison of psychological and physical injury claims](#) report
- [National Return to Work Survey](#)
- [Mental health in the workplace](#)

