



Welcome to the SRCLA June 2020 Newsletter

If you have any feedback or any items you would like to be included in a newsletter please let Agnes know (agnescamilleri@outlook.com)

SRCLA Covid-19 (C19) Working Group

The C19 working group kicked off in April and has been very busy since, holding several meetings to consider the impact of C19. WHS, workers' compensation and rehabilitation information has been prepared and disseminated to members and posted on the SRCLA website. Material produced included an initial paper on immediate considerations and impact, a moving forward paper considering the transition out of the C19 state and actuarial considerations as we move into the end of FY year actuarial assessment of outstanding liabilities. If you need further copies of this information check the website or contact Agnes.

The C19 working group also conducted a short survey in which members were asked for feedback on opportunities and challenges generated by C19. A range of suggestions have been received and three further working groups established to progress consideration of detail relating to WHS, workers' compensation and rehabilitation. Further information will be disseminated and presentations for members considered. Watch this space.

The C19 working group included participants from member organisations K&S Freighters, Pacific National, NAB, Telstra, Virgin Airlines and Australia Post. It also included the SRCLA honorary advisor representatives Damian Clarke, McInnes Wilson Lawyers and Clive Amery, an actuary. The collaboration of this group was great leading to the production of material that could assist members in the rapidly changing C19 environment.

SRCLA Meeting with Department of Industrial Relations

With C19 evolving rapidly the SRCLA President and Vice President met with the Attorney General and Industrial Relations Department Group and Branch heads to share self-insured employer experience. A meeting was held on 14/05/20 and a range of issues were discussed including:

- Very few workers' compensation claims for C19 across Australia;
- No plans to include C19 as SRC Act deemed disease;
- Mental health issues arising from home based work are expected to increase. Home based work will also be more prominent post C19; and
- Use of technology applied during C19 will be more prominent in future.

Whilst the government legislative change agenda is focused on C19 and economy, the SRCLA took the opportunity to highlight legislative issues related to injury and disease provisions linked to heart attacks/strokes, and the need for more flexibility in regulatory arrangements through group licences. It was highlighted that the balance of power issues in parliament will continue to make legislative change a challenge unless uncontroversial.

The meeting was a positive exchange of information and further meetings using the use of technology will be conducted.

SRCLA Discussions with Comcare

Meetings with Comcare scheme management and self-insurance representatives have also been conducted for the same reason as the meeting held with the Department. Once again the meetings held in April and May have been positive and collaborative as all parties tackle the unprecedented challenges that C19 has presented. Some key issues covered:

- WHS issues associated with home based work – complexity will arise that is not clearly accommodated in legislation;
- Mental health and issues such as domestic violence may become more prominent WHS concerns;
- Regulatory decisions relating to licence fees, new licensees and audit schedules are impacted by C19;
- LKPI performance impacted by C19 is an area of interest to all parties. SRCC to consider in June.

The SRCLA requested that when we emerge from the C19 state the temptation to catch-up on action should be resisted. All businesses have been significantly impacted by C19 and continuing to address those challenges will be an ongoing priority for the foreseeable future.

Comcare Claims Manager Forum

Not surprisingly the recent claims manager forum held on 28/05/20 had a focus on workers' compensation claims linked to C19. In particular claims arising from home based work, injury and disease consideration, C19 claims specifically, exclusions and the evidentiary issues that would need to be established were covered. Slides and questions/answers have been disseminated and are worth a look. Contact Agnes if you did not receive a copy.

The meeting was held online using Microsoft Teams and in the writer's view the technology was utilised very well to create interaction and maintain interest. Mixed presenters, slide display and in the moment questions made the forum effective. There is good potential to use this platform moving forward to reach a broader audience and with less disruption for participants.



Comcare Seeking Feedback on Guidance for Work Health Safety (WHS) Undertakings

In early March Comcare commenced action to consult on proposed new guidance for WHS undertakings. Whilst there is no issue that Comcare has authority to publish guidelines the impact of C19 limited the feedback that could be provided within the allowed timeframe. The SRCLA raised concern that progressing with the implementation of new guidance material at this time was not appropriate. Comcare allowed a two month extension to end of May for feedback and confirmed that with legal processes continuing the guidance would assist relevant parties progressing through current action. A submission was made by the SRCLA and we will wait the release of the guidance. A post implementation review has been indicated at which time a further opportunity to comment will be provided. Thanks to McInnes Wilson Lawyers for assistance in preparing the SRCLA response.

SRCC Request for Early Intervention Programs Information

As you will recall the SRCC requested information concerning licensee early intervention programs back in December 2019. The request involved nine questions that would assist the SRCC to better understand how early intervention programs operated across licensees. Due to C19 the SRCC has provided an extension to 30/06/20 to provide answers to questions three to nine.

It is noted the SRCC initiated this action to identify better practice early intervention across workers' compensation jurisdictions. The SRCLA supports the sharing of better practice and we will monitor progress to see how the SRCC intends to influence pre SRC Act activity.

Comcare – License Fee Cycle

Final licence fees will come out in late June and it is expected there will be variation to the indicative fees issued in May. The final fees will reflect the impact C19 will have on Comcare and SRCC programs that are included in the cost recovery model.

Health Benefits of Good Work

The RCAP has commenced issuing newsletters which the SRCLA receives as a signatory to the HBOGW consensus statement. The newsletters will be disseminated to members and retained on the website for future reference. Not surprisingly the May newsletter had a focus on C19.

The RCAP is planning to commence HBOGW webinars which will be a valuable source of information for members. Watch this space we will keep you posted when we hear anything.

SRCLA Treasurer Role

The SRCLA has a new treasurer. Laura Hudswell, who has been a general member on the Executive Committee, has stepped up to take over the treasurer role from Gavin Lynch. Thanks once again to Gavin for all of the great work done over several years and we look forward to working with Laura in her new capacity.

Comcare LLF June Meeting

The next LLF meeting is fast approaching and will occur on 24/06/20 using technology to link all participants remotely. The following agenda items have been proposed:

- C19 update;
- New auditors' approach to audit methodologies – changing expectations on provision of evidence;
- LKPI performance reporting – C19 impact; and
- LCPI reporting template and licence fees.

Think about the questions and queries you may have in preparation for the meeting. In particular if you have been through a recent audit is there feedback you could provide?

More News

- **SRCLA Member Meeting** – Like everyone else the next member meeting will utilise technology to connect us more effectively in the continuing C19 environment. Meeting will occur in August.
- **COVIDsafe** – access to the Government's COVIDsafe app tracking information would assist employees to establish whether C19 contraction was work related. Advice received to date is that for privacy reasons this information would not be made available to employers.
- **SRCLA Membership Fees Tax Invoices** - membership fees remain at the same level in 2020 and tax invoices have now been issued. Let Agnes know if there are any queries.