

Question on Notice
No. 65
Asked on 23 February 2022

DR C ROWAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to ENT Specialists and WorkCover—

Will the Minister advise (a) how many ENT Specialists are on the relevant WorkCover Panel to assess claimants for industrial noise-related hearing impairment conditions, (b) whether these assessing specialist ENT surgeons exclusively provide these services and/or maintain a clinical practice and (c) with respect to assessed claims over the last five years, what percentage of claims are approved as work-related hearing impairment, in Queensland, under WorkCover?

ANSWER:

Otolaryngologists (Ear Nose and Throat or ENT specialists) do not undertake assessments of the degree of permanent impairment resulting from industrial deafness. Under section 179 of the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*, assessments are conducted by registered audiologists. ENT specialists undertake reviews of audiologist industrial deafness assessments where further clarification or medical specialist opinion is required in relation to the assessment undertaken by the audiologist.

WorkCover Queensland's medical advisory panels include:

- the Medical and Allied Health Advisory Panel, which has two ENT specialists; and
- the Independent Medical Examination Panel, which has six ENT specialists.

WorkCover Queensland also has an Audiology panel of five external providers to deliver audiology services in Queensland.

ENT specialists are also in private clinical practice and are not employed by WorkCover Queensland.

The following table contains workers' compensation scheme claims data (includes WorkCover Queensland and self-insured employer data) as at 30 June 2021 for where the primary injury is industrial deafness:

Year	Claim decided		% Accepted
	Accept	Reject	
2016–17	879	115	88.4%
2017–18	893	114	88.7%
2018–19	1004	116	89.6%
2019–20	1021	84	92.4%
2020–21	977	85	92.0%