

Question on Notice

No. 374

Asked on 16 April 2024

MR J BLEIJIE asked the Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (HON GRACE GRACE) –

QUESTION:

With reference to claims made to WorkCover in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 (year to date) financial years—

Will the Minister advise (reported separately by quarter) (a) the number of claims received, (b) the number of claims not decided outside the 20-day statutory timeframe required by the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*, (c) the longest time taken to decide a claim and (d) the average time taken to assess appeals?

ANSWER:

In relation to part (a), the number of claims received by WorkCover in each quarter was as follows:

- (a) 20,915 claims in the quarter ending September 2022;
- (b) 21,104 claims in the quarter ending December 2022;
- (c) 22,185 claims in the quarter ending March 2023¹;
- (d) 22,475 claims in the quarter ending June 2023;
- (e) 23,166 claims in the quarter ending September 2023;
- (f) 22,469 claims in the quarter ending December 2023; and
- (g) 23,222 claims in the quarter ending March 2024.

Data includes all registered claims however not all registered claims result in a claim decision. In some cases the claimant decides not to proceed with their claim, the claim was notification-only or the claim was entered in error.

In relation to (b), the number of claims decided by WorkCover within 20 business days in each quarter was as follows:

- (a) 14,599 in the quarter ending September 2022;
- (b) 16,757 in the quarter ending December 2022;
- (c) 16,915 in the quarter ending March 2023¹;
- (d) 18,395 in the quarter ending June 2023;
- (e) 18,574 in the quarter ending September 2023;

¹ Response to Question on Notice 263 of 2023 reported year to date figures as at the date the question was asked (28 March 2023).

- (f) 18,745 in the quarter ending December 2023; and
- (g) 18,531 in the quarter ending March 2024.

The data above excludes administrative decisions including cancellation, claim withdrawal and notification-only claims.

In relation to part (c), the longest decision duration by WorkCover in each quarter was as follows:

- (a) 373 business days in the quarter ending September 2022;
- (b) 310 business days in the quarter ending December 2022;
- (c) 467 business days in the quarter ending March 2023;
- (d) 324 business days in the quarter ending June 2023;
- (e) 507 business days in the quarter ending September 2023;
- (f) 330 business days in the quarter ending December 2023; and
- (g) 470 business days in the quarter ending March 2024;

During the time period September 2022 to March 2024, the average decision duration by WorkCover was 9.14 business days.

The figures listed in response to part (c) involve complex claims which have led to long decision durations. Delays to decision durations can be caused by the need to receive external information and reports such as coronial and police reports, as well as the need to ensure procedural fairness to all parties.

Psychological injury claims also take a longer time to decide than other claims. Following amendments to the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* in 2019, psychological injury claimants can access reasonable support services funded by the insurer (including counselling) on a without prejudice basis while their workers' compensation claim is being decided.

In relation to part (d), the average time to assess a review application by a review officer was as follows:

- (a) 16.8 business days in the quarter ending September 2022;
- (b) 15.8 business days in the quarter ending December 2022;
- (c) 16.4 business days in the quarter ending March 2023;
- (d) 15.9 business days in the quarter ending June 2023;
- (e) 14.8 business days in the quarter ending September 2023;
- (f) 14.6 business days in the quarter ending December 2023; and
- (g) 15.5 business days in the quarter ending March 2024;