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OZ Workers Comp 2025

Australian Worker's Compensation Summit 2025

Innovating for a Resilient Future – People before Paperwork

12th and 13th November 2025, Sydney Central Hotel



Early Invited Speakers Includes:



Joanne Bartley
Injury Prevent Manager,
iCare NSW



Dave Burroughs
Chief Mental Health Officer,
Westpac Group



Kimberley WC Walker
National Workers Compensation
Tender Manager, Suncorp



Crystal Hornsey
Workers Compensation
Claims Specialist,
UBT Australia and New Zealand



Olivia Dowling
Workers Compensation
Specialist at Rio Tinto



Courtney Um
Recover at Work Coordinator,
Western Sydney Local
Health District



Jordan Landy
Branch Manager and Occupational
Therapist, AMP WorkCare



Meagan Moravcova
Customer Advisor
at WorkCover Queensland



Cameron Burge
Member Workers Compensation
Division, Personal Injury Commission



Peggy Cheong
WHS Commissioner,
WorkSafe ACT (SFC)



Warwick Ryan
Employment Law Partner,
Hicksons Lawyers



Sarah Ellis
National Portfolio Manager, Workers
Compensation, Guild Insurance



Tim Neylan
Team Leader,
WorkFocus Australia



Tessa Bailey
CEO and Principal Psychologist,
OPUS Centre for Psychosocial Risk



Alisha Jimenez
National Workers
Compensation Manager
Enablement Team, Lockton



Niru Tyagi
WHS Consultant, Kaizen Safety
Practitioner, Queensland Police
Service



Natalee Johnston
Director, Skillfull Decisions



Danielle Tansu
Senior Injury Management
Advisor, Westrac



Emma Hayes
National Operations Lead,
Workcom



Jason Perin
Safety, Wellbeing & Injury
Management, Keyton



Ryan Gallagher
Head of Data, AI & Research,
Honeysuckle Health



Karli Edgerton
Manager, Health & Wellbeing,
Eagers Automotive



Tim Neylan
Senior Consultant Claims &
Workplace Health Managed
Services, KPMG Consulting



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DAY ONE – 12 NOVEMBER 2025

COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION 1.0

09.00 Chair's opening remarks

09.10 OPENING NAVIGATING NATIONAL AND STATEWIDE REGULATIONS - SYNERGIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Regulatory differences across states create challenges for employers and insurers in implementing a consistent worker's compensation strategy. This panel will explore how organizations can align their policies, streamline compliance, and establish best practices that benefit both employers and insurers.

- How do national and state-level regulations impact the consistency of worker's compensation policies for employers and insurers?
- Discussing the biggest compliance challenges organisations face in multi-state operations, and how can they be mitigated?
- Discussing what role technology and data analytics play in improving regulatory compliance and best practice adoption?
- How can collaboration between insurers, employers, and policymakers drive more unified and effective worker's compensation frameworks?

Invited:

Darren Parker, Executive Director, State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)

09.50 FROM THE TOP DOWN: EMBEDDING EARLY INTERVENTION THROUGH CLEAR ROLES AND ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP

In this panel, industry leaders unpack the crucial role of early intervention in workers' compensation—and why its success hinges not only on process, but on people. As organisations grow and evolve, so do the complexities in how injuries are managed. This discussion explores how clarity in roles and responsibilities, combined with a proactive leadership culture, ensures early intervention is not just a policy, but a lived practice. From the frontline to C-suite, we'll explore how expectations are communicated, how responsibility is shared, and how governed processes are built to reflect real-world dynamics.

Q. In your experience, what does successful early intervention look like in the first 60 minutes or 24 hours, and who exactly should own that responsibility?

Purpose: To Unpack where the process begins, and clarifies who leads the charge at each point.

Q. How do you define and communicate the roles of regional managers, site leaders, and the central claims team in the early stages of an injury—and where do you see the gaps most commonly arise?

Purpose: To target clarity of responsibilities and challenges in communication and execution.

Q. What role should senior leadership play in setting the tone for a culture of early intervention? Can top-down leadership tangibly impact outcomes for injured workers?

Purpose: Ties leadership accountability directly to cultural and performance outcomes.

Q. How can organisations ensure their formal policies and governed processes reflect the actual lived experience of injured workers and managers? What's the feedback loop between process owners and the people using those processes?

Purpose: To bridges policy and practice, highlighting governance with adaptability and feedback.

Invited Panelists:

Michelle Barratt, Head of Innovation, Arriba Group

Regulatory body, TBC

Jason Perin, Safety, Wellbeing & Injury Management, Keyton

Emma Hayes, National Operations Lead, Workcom

Bethanie Sutton, Early Intervention Manager, Client Services, Gallagher Bassett

10:50 Morning Tea & Networking

11.20 SCALING SUPPORT: INTEGRATING COMPASSION AND COMPLIANCE IN A RAPIDLY GROWING WORKFORCE

This session led by Natalie will illustrate how Viva Energy Retail scaled its workers' compensation framework following rapid acquisition and growth. Natalie will share practical strategies for integrating diverse injury management practices and organisational cultures and demonstrate the importance of early intervention and psychological support in injury management. Natalie will offer a roadmap for empowering operational leaders to take shared responsibility for workplace safety and recovery.

- Navigating workforce expansion - Viva Energy's journey from 1,400 to 15,000 employees
- Creating scalable policies and procedures for workers' compensation
- Acquisitions of Coles Express and On the Run: Insight on impact of systems, culture, and workforce management
- Adopting and adapting Coles Express's "First 60 Minutes" ethos
- Creating a compassionate response to injury across diverse entities
- Aligning policy, compliance, and return-to-work across self-insured and insurer-managed states
- Training and upskilling regional and site managers to drive active participation

Natalie Marya, National Workers Compensation Manager, Viva Energy Retail

PSYCHO SAFETY

12.00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS: ADAPTING YOUR STRATEGY FOR MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED CLAIMS

Psychological injury claims are on the rise and this session will assess the impact of psychosocial factors on claims and recovery and what strategies can be adopted for early intervention in workplace mental health issues and the legal implications and evolving responsibilities of employers. Dave Burrough has over 17 years' experience in psycho safety and how work influences psychological outcomes. This session will delve deep into:

- Understanding how workplace mental health issues translate into compensation claims.
- Learn early intervention strategies to mitigate psychological injury claims.
- Gain insights into your responsibilities and best practices as employers.

Dave Burroughs, Chief Mental Health Officer, Westpac Group

12.40 Networking Lunch

13.40 THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, WHS, AND MENTAL HEALTH

With increasing regulatory focus on psychological safety and mental health, organizations must stay ahead of compliance requirements while fostering a supportive work environment. This discussion will address evolving legislation, employer obligations, and the future of regulation in this space.

- How have regulatory requirements around psychological safety and WHS evolved in recent years, and what's on the horizon?
- Discussing the key legal and financial implications for employers who fail to meet new mental health and WHS regulations?
- How can employers effectively implement regulatory changes without disrupting business operations?
- What best practices can be adopted from regulatory frameworks to improve psychological safety compliance?

Panelists:

Joanne Bartley, Injury Prevent Manager, iCare NSW

Peggy Cheong, WHS Commissioner, WorkSafe ACT

14.20 ADDRESSING PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS: A NEW ERA OF WORKPLACE SAFETY & WELLBEING

With a stronger regulatory focus on psychosocial risks, businesses must adapt to new standards that recognise the impact of workplace stress, bullying, and mental health on workers' compensation claims. This session will explore recent legislative shifts, strategies for managing psychosocial risks, and best practices for fostering a mentally healthy workplace that minimises compensation claims and supports long-term workforce wellbeing.

- What proactive steps can be taken to better understand the business, legal, and cultural imperatives driving the shift toward proactive psychosocial risk management?
- What practical strategies would you give for identifying and mitigating psychosocial risks in the workplace?
- Do you have any real-world evidence or case study examples you could give where organisations have successfully integrated mental health and wellbeing into their workers' compensation strategies?

Panelists:

Karli Edgerton, Manager, Health & Wellbeing, Eagers Automotive

Crystal Hornsey, Workers Compensation Claims Specialist, UBT Australia and New Zealand

Tessa Bailey, CEO and Principal Psychologist, OPUS Centre for Psychosocial Risk

PANEL DISCUSSION



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15.00 Afternoon Tea

INNOVATION - REVOLUTIONISING CLAIMS PROCESSING

15.30 INSIGHT: OPTIMISING CARE NAVIGATION THROUGH THE DATA LENS

This session will touch on how to apply data to optimise care navigation for individual workers. We will assess claims patterns and the correlation and the impact of data to better stratify risk.

- Explore data's role in personalised recovery.
- Understand how data can improve injury support outcomes.
- Gain insights from real-world data-driven strategies to support the customisation of care models

Ryan Gallagher, Head of Data, AI & Research, Honeysuckle Health

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

16.00 INSIGHT: BEYOND COMPLIANCE: EMBEDDING PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY INTO PROACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

This insight session will focus on how leaders can embed safety and well-being into workplace culture to engage employees in injury prevention initiatives and discuss the role of proactive leadership in reducing compensation claims.

- Define leadership's role in injury prevention
- From Safety-I to Safety-II: Why the shift from reactive to proactive safety models is critical for psychosocial risk management.
- Pre-empting Harm, Not Just Managing It: Strategies for early identification and prevention of psychological injuries in the workplace.
- Building holistic, cross-functional approaches that embed mental health into safety and injury processes.
- Leveraging both qualitative and quantitative data to assess emerging psychosocial risks.
- A review of psychosocial safety regulations and what organisations must do to move beyond baseline compliance.
- Failing forward: Why many organisations miss the early warning signs of mental health claims—and how to fix it.
- Practical steps for leaders to create psychologically safe environments that support wellbeing and performance. What are your best practices for fostering a safety-first culture

Niru Tyagi, WHS Consultant, Kaizen Safety Practitioner, Queensland Police Service

16:40 BEYOND THE BLACK BOX: HUMAN FACTORS, SYSTEMS THINKING, AND THE FUTURE OF SAFETY LEADERSHIP

Drawing from a 24-year career in military aviation and safety leadership, this session explores how lessons from high-risk environments can transform organisational safety and wellbeing strategies. With a focus on human factors, non-technical skills, and systems thinking, the session challenges the traditional, reactive, compliance-driven approach to safety. Instead, it advocates for proactive leadership, better decision-making, and creating cultures where the preconditions to harm are addressed—before an incident ever occurs.

Key Talking Points:

- Applying lessons from military aviation—like crew resource management and human performance limitations—to corporate safety.
- The critical role of leadership, communication, and decision-making in preventing harm.
- Why focusing solely on legislation misses the systemic factors that contribute to injuries and incidents.
- Identifying organisational and personal preconditions (fatigue, stress, pressure, resourcing) that often precede incidents.
- Ask “Why,” Not Just “Who” or “What”: Shifting safety investigations from blame to understanding root causes.
- Overcoming fear of liability and encouraging psychological safety for early intervention.
- Practical ways to improve safety outcomes by asking the right questions and redesigning systems, not just processes.

Natalee Johnston, Director, Skillfull Decisions

17.20 Chair's closing remarks

17.30-18:00 Networking drinks reception

DAY TWO – 13 NOVEMBER 2025

COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION 2.0

09.00 Chair's opening remarks

09.10 A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, WHS, AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Psychological safety, workplace health & safety (WHS), and mental health are critical components of an effective worker's compensation strategy. This session will examine how insurers and employers can work together to develop comprehensive, proactive programs that reduce claims and improve employee well-being.

- How can insurers and employers better collaborate to foster a workplace culture that prioritises psychological safety?
- What innovative approaches are organisations using to integrate mental health support into workplace safety programs?
- How do early intervention and proactive well-being strategies impact worker's compensation claims and costs?
- What role does leadership play in ensuring the success of mental health and well-being initiatives in the workplace?

Panelists:

Joanne Bartley, Injury Prevent Manager, iCare NSW
Peggy Cheong, WHS Commissioner, WorkSafe ACT

09.50 ENSURING COMPLIANCE—TIMELINES, LIABILITY DECISIONS, AND RISK MITIGATION

Timely and accurate compliance with worker's compensation regulations is essential to avoid penalties, reduce litigation risk, and ensure fair outcomes for employees and employers. This session will explore best practices for meeting timeframes, making liability decisions, and managing compliance challenges.

- Discussing the critical timeframes employers and insurers must adhere to when handling worker's compensation claims?
- What steps can organisations take to streamline liability decision-making to improve claim resolution and minimise disputes?
- What are the biggest compliance risks facing employers today, and how can they be proactively managed?
- How can technology and automation improve compliance tracking, reporting, and decision-making processes?

Panelists:

Alisha Jimenez, National Workers Compensation Manager - Enablement Team, Lockton

10.30 Morning Tea

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND COLLABORATION 2.0

11.00 EMPLOYERS PANEL DISCUSSION: CLOSING THE GAP: STRENGTHENING EMPLOYER-INSURER COLLABORATION IN MANAGING CLAIMS AND SUPPORTING RETURN TO WORK

This session explores the critical importance of a strong employer-insurer relationship in managing the growing volume and complexity of psychological and physical injury claims. Drawing on deep experience across occupational rehab, corporate injury management, and government, the panelists will share real-world challenges and strategies for improving communication, aligning compliance processes, and driving better return-to-work outcomes. Our panel discussion will touch on:

- Why collaboration is essential for effective psychological and physical injury management and claims.
- How can we strengthen the relationship between employers, insurers, and other stakeholders for better outcomes?
- How can we overcome system limitations to meet mandatory injury notification timeframes?
- How can we embed a holistic approach to early intervention approaches to prevent escalating psychological and physical injury claims?
- What steps can be taken to align goals, timelines, and communication between stakeholders for sustained success?

Panelists:

Courtney Um, Recover at Work Coordinator, Western Sydney Local Health District
Jordan Landy, Branch Manager and Occupational Therapist, AMP WorkCare
Invited: Representative, Suncorp

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11.40 PRESENTATION: CREATING FAIR & EFFICIENT WORKERS' COMPENSATION SYSTEMS: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYER & INSURER COLLABORATION



A well-functioning workers' compensation system requires strong partnerships between employers, insurers, and other stakeholders. This session will explore strategies for fostering collaboration, streamlining claims processes, and ensuring fair outcomes for injured workers. Attendees will gain insights into how improved communication, shared responsibility, and best practices can enhance the claims experience for all parties involved.

- Understanding the benefits of stronger partnerships between employers and insurers in claims management.
- Exploring collaborative approaches to improving efficiency and fairness in compensation outcome with holistic reasons and data to support
- Assessing responsibility – how can we improve case management and learning how to resolve disputes effectively while maintaining transparency and trust.

Sarah Ellis, National Portfolio Manager, Workers Compensation, Guild Insurance (with Rehab provider)

12:30 Networking Lunch

MEASURING IMPACT AND ADOPTING FRAMEWORKS

13.30 PROACTIVE SAFETY, SMARTER COSTS: LINKING WORKPLACE WELL-BEING TO WORKERS COMP PREMIUMS

PANEL DISCUSSION

How do proactive safety initiatives and employee well-being programs influence workers compensation premiums? This session explores the tangible financial and cultural impacts of investing early in injury prevention, workplace support, and mental health. We'll discuss the critical role of early intervention, meaningful engagement with healthcare providers, and how to educate key stakeholders like GPs and practice managers to align with best outcomes for workers and employers alike. Practical experiences and challenges around fraud prevention, claims management, and regulatory compliance will also be unpacked.

Panel Discussion Questions:

- How have you seen proactive workplace safety measures and well-being investments impact workers compensation premiums in real terms?
- What strategies have been most effective in keeping injured workers engaged, productive, and connected to their workplace during recovery?
- How can employers better collaborate with GPs and medical providers to ensure decisions support both worker health and sustainable return-to-work outcomes?
- What more could be done at an industry or regulatory level to tackle systemic challenges, such as fraud or inefficiencies, that drive up claim costs unnecessarily?

Invited panelists:



Invited: *Representative, Suncorp*
Danielle Tansu, Senior Injury Management Advisor, Westrac
Kate Di Biase, National Claims, Rehabilitation and Return to Work Specialist, Randstad
Tim Neylan, Senior Consultant Claims & Workplace Health Managed Services, KPMG Consulting

14.10 SESSION RESERVED



Warwick Ryan, Employment Law Partner, Hicksons Lawyers

15.10 NAVIGATING RISING OPERATIONAL COSTS & COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION

PANEL DISCUSSION

The cost of workers' compensation is rising due to stricter compliance requirements, increased legal liability, and evolving workplace risks. This session will help employers and insurers understand cost drivers, adjust their strategies to maintain compliance, and implement cost-effective approaches to injury prevention, claims management, and return-to-work programs.

- Analysing the key factors driving up workers' compensation costs and legal liabilities.
- Discussing strategies for optimising cost management without compromising compliance or worker support.
- Exploring ways to enhance efficiency in claims processing, premium management, and regulatory reporting.

15.50 Chair's closing remarks and Afternoon Tea



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