

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE - PAEC Inquiry into the 2021-22 and 2022-23 FPO – WorkSafe Response

Monday 20th November, 2023

7. Provide a breakdown by department of mental health injury claims over the last 5 years? (WorkSafe)

(Asked by Nick McGOWAN Page 16 of the transcript)

Nick McGOWAN: Thank you. Page 23 of the 2022–23 WorkSafe annual report, under the heading ‘Public and administration safety’, shows mental health injuries within the public sector increasing – no surprise to anyone here, I am sure, sadly. Can you provide a breakdown of these claims over the last five years for each government department?

Ashley WEST: I am happy to provide the detail that we can. I will take that on notice. But, yes, we do have that information.

Nick McGOWAN: Thank you.

Response

Mental injury claims reported below are those where the primary injury is recorded as a mental injury. The below data varies year on year due to machinery of government changes. Note, statutory bodies are not represented in the data below.

Mental injury claim counts over the last five financial years for Government Departments

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Department Of Education & Training	267	254	244	266	337
Department Of Environment, Land, Water & Planning	8	10	18	11	16
Department Of Families, Fairness And Housing	64	54	31	49	43
Department Of Health	6	15	8	28	13
Department Of Justice & Community Safety	85	87	98	138	117
Department Of The Premier And Cabinet	4	4	4	1	2
Department Of Treasury And Finance	1	0		2	0
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	6	9	5	6	12
Department of Transport	1	7	10	8	11

8. Can you provide a percentage of mental health claims which came from the public sector vs private sector?

(Asked by Nick McGOWAN Page 16 of the transcript)

Nick McGOWAN: And just on the increase in the premiums, in a briefing we received from the minister they were explaining that the majority of the increase in the claims for the mental health area came from the government sector, not the non-government sector. In fact I think their wording was something in the order of 'more than the majority' or 'more than half'. Is that correct?

Ashley WEST: There has certainly been a material increase in mental health claims from the government sector, but there is also an increase in mental health claims from the private sector as well, so we are actually seeing both areas continue to increase in the mental health area, yes.

Nick McGOWAN: The majority of which comes from the government sector – is that right? That is what we were told, but I am just trying to verify that is correct.

Ashley WEST: Yes, that is correct. There has been a larger increase in mental health claims from the public sector; that is right, yes. I do not have the specific number in terms of percentage on me – I can take that on notice – but there certainly has been a material increase.

Response

Over the last two years the annual number of mental injury claims in the Government sector has increased by 43% compared to 38% in the non-government sector.

There are a number of possible reasons this is occurring due to the nature of work performed by the public sector and frontline exposure to hazards.

9. Are daytime running lights required on government vehicles?

(Asked by Nick McGOWAN Page 17 of the transcript)

Nick McGOWAN: If you could, that would be most useful. Thank you. Just a personal bugbear – for WorkSafe, are they required to have daytime running lights on the vehicles that any of your employees have?

Ashley WEST: I would have to take that on notice as well and look at our vehicle policy around that, but our vehicle policy does align to the Victorian –

David MARTINE: Sorry, what was the –

Nick McGOWAN: Daytime running lights – whether they are required to have daytime running lights on government vehicles.

David MARTINE: I am not sure of the answer to that question.

Ashley WEST: I am happy to take it on notice. As I said, our policy does align to the government policy around that.

Nick McGOWAN: If you could take that on notice also for the TAC, because I would be keen to know what they do.

David MARTINE: We are happy to take that on notice on behalf of the TAC.

Response

I can confirm that in relation to WorkSafe leased vehicles, all have daytime running lights installed.