

Best practice in rehabilitation and return to work

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Early intervention at NAB

Getting team members back to work—in some capacity—quickly after illness or injury has positive impacts on their quality of life and reduces the financial liabilities for employers. Realising these cost and productivity benefits, NAB is investing in a best practice Early Intervention (EI) program to help get their people back to work, faster.

NAB's EI program demonstrates a strong commitment to their injured workers that is resulting in reduced claim incidence, time lost and associated costs.

The program provides all employees in Australia with fast, fair and accessible injury or illness management and EI services—regardless of whether the injury/illness is work-related or not. This approach allows:

- > barriers to be identified during the initial stages of the injury or illness
- > expectations of return to work to be explained
- > faster identification of potential workers' compensation claims and more effective management
- > managers to be assisted in identifying suitable duties and return to work strategies.

Return to work and claims management are treated separately. Rehabilitation is initiated before any decision is made regarding liability. The expectation is employees will cooperate and participate in rehabilitation to assist with their recovery and return to work.

When an employee is injured, Injury Management Consultants (IMCs) access incident or injury reports and contact relevant parties to provide injury management, rehabilitation advice and guidance to managers within

24 hours of the injury or illness being reported. They may also recommend a referral to NAB's preferred external rehabilitation partner for an early intervention or ergonomic assessment.

To support the IMC's decision-making process and assist in determining rehabilitation requirements, the IMC complete an 'Injury Management Triage Checklist' when a worker submits a claim. Furthermore, a 'New Claim Acceptance Checklist' is completed when liability is accepted to further support the rehabilitation decision process.

NAB's Early Intervention Assessment is designed to meet the criteria of a section 36 Rehabilitation Assessment under the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (SRC Act). Therefore, if liability is accepted for a claim during the return to work process, the IMC can seamlessly transition to manage the case under the SRC Act.

The success of the program has resulted in a large proportion of injured workers returning to modified or full time duties, without requiring formal rehabilitation. In all cases the NAB IMC retains delegation for rehabilitation decision-making, while the external rehabilitation partners facilitate the pre-claim early intervention assessment and return to work planning.

The NAB's focus on best practice in early intervention to support their ill or injured workers has led to a reduction in claim incidence and cost. The program provides immediate support after an incident, resulting in less demand on a formal rehabilitation process and a faster return to work. This leads to a significant reduction in submitted claims, time lost and associated costs.

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