



WORKING WITH *YOU*  
ISSUE 48 | SPRING EDITION

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Australian Government

Comcare

PUTTING YOU *FIRST*

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## Welcome to the spring edition of *Working with You.*

This spring it was a pleasure to meet many of you at the Comcare National Conference. The conference was a great opportunity for us to come together and recognise some of the health programs and inspirational leadership that exist in the Comcare community.

The messages of the conference also reminded me once again of our important responsibility to federal workers. At Comcare, we're contributing to the Australian government's direction of creating a secure, stronger, fairer Australia, by promoting productivity and social inclusion, and improving the health and wellbeing of federal workers.

The importance of health and wellbeing in the workplace is a theme that runs through this month's edition. You will find an update on our recent Healthy@Work, Happy@Home campaign and the Work 4 Health Forum featuring Professor Dame Carol Black, National Director of Health and Work in the UK. Her message about the importance of employee health is very powerful.

We speak with Steven McNally from Border Express. He has won a Comcare scholarship and shares with us some insight into the significance of this prize for him and his organisation.

Demonstrating Comcare's own efforts to value employee health and wellbeing, we report on the recent announcement that we are again finalists for a National Australia Human Resource Institute award. The award recognises outstanding initiatives and strategies which promote employee health and wellbeing in the workplace.

## Comcare Executive announcement

Comcare has a new leadership team to support its strategic focus and help build a stronger Comcare scheme and organisation. The organisational structure changed from 1 July 2010 to implement the 2015 strategic plan:

You can now access our first interactive Comcare and Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission Annual Reports online. I also look forward to discussing our new strategic focus with you in the coming weeks. Our 2015 Plan is available online. It tells our story, conveys our vision and reflects the ideas and insight we've gained by listening to you.

I am thankful for the ideas and enthusiasm we receive from our community as we continue our journey to make a real difference for the federal workers we are here to serve. We're building a strong Comcare scheme that is reliable and sustainable, and represents real value for money for employers. Across all our activities, we'll be improving what we do.

Paul O'Connor  
CEO



**Paul O'Connor**—Chief Executive Officer

The Office of the CEO is responsible for audit and assurance, community engagement, governance and secretariat services, and organisational development.



**Steve Kibble**—Deputy Chief Executive Officer and head of the Scheme Integrity group which aims to strengthen and secure the future of Comcare and the Comcare scheme.



**Neil Quarumby**—General Manager, Work Health and Safety—accountable for the protection of the health, safety and welfare at work of workers through targeted education, assurance and enforcement with a focus on prevention as the primary means of reducing human and financial costs of injury and disease.



**Melissa Ryan**—General Manager, Project Harmony—responsible for preparing the Commonwealth's seamless transition to a new work health and safety legislative framework.



**Lesley Morrison**—General Manager, Recovery and Support—responsible for the primary determination of new workers' compensation claims and the ongoing management of accepted claims from Australian and ACT Government employees. The group also seeks to maintain and improve the operation of workers' compensation and rehabilitation frameworks in the jurisdiction.




**Marilia Mendes**—General Counsel—provides general counsel, legal services and advice. This includes reporting and accountability for all legal services to ensure Comcare meets strategic outcomes.



**Gaby Medley-Brown**—Chief Operating Officer—accountable for ensuring Comcare meets corporate responsibilities and delivers a highly capable workforce.



**Bruce Watson**—Chief Actuary—ensures the scheme is financially viable and sustainable into the future, with a focus on the efficient management of value at risk.



## 2010 Comcare National Conference wrap up

More than 550 delegates met at the National Convention Centre in September for Comcare's National Conference.



The three-day event gave delegates the opportunity to hear from leading industry experts, as well as many personal stories of courage, challenge and change.

The conference theme—*improve, include and inspire workplace wellbeing*—was broken into sub-themes including the injured worker, social inclusion and organisational wellbeing.

Through the exploration of system improvements, people development and organisational health, the conference examined holistic approaches and best practice models for injury prevention and management in the areas of safety, mental health and employee wellbeing.

The conference began with a performance by Melbourne Theatre company 'Somebody's Daughter'. The company explored the journey of an injured worker in their performance.

CEO Paul O'Connor presented Comcare's new strategic objectives and citizen-centric approach. Paul also shared his insights into the connection between work and health. He described how helping injured people stay in work, or return them to work as soon as possible means they have a greater chance of making a full recovery. This means the need for a more robust, flexible and collaborative work environment has never been greater.

The conference was also designed to raise awareness of the importance of organisational health and effective people management as critical success factors in managing employees with injury or illness. Focusing on people's abilities and continually striving to enhance systems and behaviours that drive positive culture were emphasised as factors for future success and long-term sustainability. Keynote speakers Rhonda Galbally AO, Chair Victorian Disability Council and Management Consultant Avril Henry reinforced these messages in their presentations.

Mental illness was a large focus of the conference. Professor Patrick McGorry AO, 2010 Australian of the Year, spoke of the need for early intervention, mental health first-aid and peer support, as these factors help to diminish the stigma related to mental illness.

Providing people with disability a socially inclusive workplace benefits both their health and life. This message was reinforced by David Crosbie, CEO of Mental health Council of Australia.

The conference offered a great opportunity for people in the industry to network and to hear and share relevant information, ideas and strategies to assist them and their organisation to include, improve and inspire workplace wellbeing. Three social events ran in conjunction with the conference. Welcome drinks were held in Kings Hall at Old Parliament House which included the debut performance of the ComChoir. The SRCC Safety Awards were held in the Great Hall at Parliament House, and the Great Safety Debate concluded the conference on an entertaining high.

An interactive trade display was an integral part of this year's conference. More than 25 rehabilitation and health and safety industry exhibitors showcased their latest products.

The 2011 Comcare National conference will be held in Melbourne. Details will be available early in 2011.

## WISE occupational rehabilitation

Our rapid response means a faster return to work!

For injured workers and their employers the ideal outcome is a swift return to sustainable employment.

By supporting workers to recovery, employers foster loyalty and trust in the workplace and save time and money.

WISE Occupational Rehabilitation is a dedicated team with wide-ranging skills and qualifications.

We focus on a range of services that facilitate a timely and suitable return to work, including:

- Initial needs assessment
- Ongoing case management
- Ergonomic assessment
- Vocational assessment
- Task analysis.

We pride ourselves on early intervention, rapid response to referrals, proactive case management, driving the return to work (RTW) process and thinking outside the square.

For more information on our proactive approach or to refer a case contact us on 1800 728 769 or email:

[occrehab@wiseemployment.com.au](mailto:occrehab@wiseemployment.com.au)

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# 2010 SRCC Safety Award winners

The winners of the 2010 SRCC Safety Awards were announced on Thursday 23 September at a gala dinner event at the Great Hall, Parliament House.

The awards are granted by the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. They recognise and reward employers and employees in the Comcare scheme who have displayed excellence in work health and safety, rehabilitation and return to work.



The winners in each of the categories are:

## CATEGORY 1: BEST WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

- > Centrelink—Area Pacific Central for *LivWell—Life Works*

## CATEGORY 2: LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR INJURY OR DISEASE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

- > There were no finalists in this award category

## CATEGORY 3: BEST WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- > Visionstream for *Effective Health and Safety Management System*

## CATEGORY 4: BEST SOLUTION TO AN IDENTIFIED WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE

- > CSIRO Livestock Industries for *Liquid Nitrogen—Dewar Filling Station*

## CATEGORY 5: BEST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

Sub-category 5a) An employee (e.g. Health and Safety Representative)

- > Bruce Hansen, Department of Defence

Sub-category 5b) An outstanding contribution by a person with responsibility for OHS as part of their duties

- > Jo Oliver, Centrelink

Mr Peter Henneken, Chairperson of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, said the entries across several award categories confirmed that organisations in the Comcare scheme were developing new and innovative ways for improving worker health and safety.

Comcare is an AHRI Award Finalist three years in a row

The National Australia Human Resource Institute (AHRI) conducts an annual awards program to recognise, reward and promote professional standards. The program aims to identify organisations that have contributed to and achieved business results through innovative and sustainable Human Resource (HR) practices.



Comcare was a finalist for the first time in 2008 for the *AHRI Human Resource Impact Award*, and in 2009 was recognised as the winner of this award. The award recognised the ability of Comcare's HR team to work collaboratively with all stakeholders and achieve significant results through a wide range of initiatives, long-term approaches to people priorities, a focus on workforce planning, and strong measurement practices.

In October 2010 AHRI announced that Comcare was again shortlisted for an award as a 2010 finalist for the *Martin Seligman Award for Health and Wellbeing*. This award recognises outstanding initiatives and strategies which promote employee health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Comcare's annual Health Month is at the centre of the organisation's health and wellbeing program. In 2009 the theme of Comcare's Health Month program was *Healthy Body—Healthy Mind—Healthy Organisation* and the aim was to host activities and seminars that would help address issues and health risks that were identified as being prominent among Comcare staff.

Throughout Health Month, Comcare employees relaxed with tai chi classes, attended core stability, posture and flexibility classes, ate


fresh fruit delivered directly to offices, gained knowledge about cancer awareness, heard an account from a survivor of breast cancer, attended QUIT smoking seminars, had their hearing checked, and much more. Information sessions were provided on financial health, self care and emotional resilience, dealing with teenagers, developing compassionate boundaries and dealing with conflict.

The year's Health Month activities are being run in conjunction with the Comcare campaign—*Healthy @ Work, Happy @ Home*.

Comcare is delighted to be a finalist for the *Martin Seligman Award for Health and Wellbeing* and looks forward to the AHRI Award Ceremony in November 2010. Director of People and Place, Simon Cooke said, "The success we have achieved is due to the leadership commitment to safety that is shown by Comcare leaders who understand that a healthy and safe workforce is paramount to business success".

**Finalist**  
HR Impact –  
Most Effective  
HR Department  
AHRI NATIONAL Awards 2008

**Winner**  
Most Effective HR  
Team of the Year

AHRI NATIONAL Awards 2009 

## Healthy@Work, Happy@Home



Comcare launched the Healthy@Work, Happy@Home campaign in October as part of work health and safety month. The campaign highlighted the important issue of health, safety and wellbeing while exploring three core areas: My Work, My Self and My Community.

More workplaces are recognising how important health, safety and wellbeing are to the productivity and sustainability of organisations. The campaign website encouraged agencies to use the available resources, participate in events, and profile health and wellbeing initiatives.

Throughout the month Comcare employees participated in the campaign through a range of activities including juice bars, health assessments, seminars and walks. These activities were designed to build emotional resilience and prevent health issues that can be associated with sedentary based occupations. The activities were also about Comcare employees having some fun and getting involved.

## Work 4 Health Forum featuring Dame Carol Black

On 26 October 2010 the Work 4 Health Forum was held in Canberra with Professor Dame Carol Black, National Director of Health and Work in the UK. Government and industry leaders attended the forum hosted by Medibank Health Solutions, the Australian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) and Comcare.

Dame Carol Black shared her experience and insights from developing and implementing the Health, Work and Wellbeing strategy. She also discussed the evidence, tools and benefits that have evolved from the strategy for workers, organisations and their communities.

Being employed in a fulfilling job can have psychological and physical benefits. Conversely, unemployment, under-employment and stressful working conditions can have an adverse impact on a person's health. Dame Carol Black's work sends a powerful message that good health translates to good business.

The day gave delegates the opportunity to hear from organisations who are demonstrating the gold standards of leadership, culture, people and process to structure and measure wellness program success.

## Work is central to health and productivity

Work—paid or voluntary—is a key determinant of self worth, family esteem and identity. It provides a sense of purpose, material progress, social participation and fulfilment. Job quality, employee health and an employee's ability to perform productively at work, are closely linked.

Work is good for health when:

- > it is conducted in a safe environment—physical and psychosocial
- > it is meaningful and employees understand how what they do contributes to the organisation
- > employees feel respected for their contribution
- > employees have a say in decisions that affect them
- > employees have good relationships with their colleagues and managers.

Working adults spend more time at work—approximately one-third of their day—than in any other setting. Workplaces designed to protect and promote health and wellbeing are therefore essential for preventing harm arising from work. Workplaces also have the opportunity to assist workers to improve and maintain their personal health and slow down chronic disease. This boosts workforce participation and productivity and reduces costs of ill health for employers.

Work which is appropriate to an individual's knowledge, skills and circumstances and undertaken in a safe, supportive environment also plays an active part in helping people recover from illness and preventing unnecessary disability. Under federal legislation, the workplace is at the centre of rehabilitation and recovery. Employers are given the responsibility to provide suitable duties and enable return to work following injury or illness. Much of the variability in return to work outcomes is the result of what occurs in the workplace. The way workplaces are designed, the policies and systems in place to respond to injury or illness, and the culture of the workplace are all critically important to promote recovery and return to work.

Healthy, safe workplaces are more resilient when presented with change and adversity. A workplace with culture, values and practices that facilitate worker health and wellbeing, will have improved organisational productivity and performance.

## Rehabilitation case managers network forum

Employers work in partnership with Comcare to support injured workers through recovery and return to work. With the aim of improving communication with rehabilitation case managers in particular, Comcare relaunched the network forums with a great turnout to the Canberra event on 12 October and the Melbourne event on 20 October.

The rehabilitation case managers who attended were provided with a range of informative and engaging presentations geared towards their needs and interests. Lesley Morrison, General Manager of Comcare's Recovery and Support group opened the forum with an update on the goals of Comcare's 2015 strategic plan and the drivers for change, including the results from the injured worker survey conducted in 2010.

The second presentation on claims development and the factors that influence premium calculations highlighted the impact an injured employee's time off work can have on claim cost. It also reminded all present how effective rehabilitation can have a positive effect on an agency's overall performance.

A practical workshop encouraged the rehabilitation case managers to review the tools, systems and strategies available to manage their workload and get the best outcome for their injured workers. The following presentation focused on Comcare's Customer Information System (CIS) and the assistance it can provide with effectively managing rehabilitation and return to work. Attendees were advised that Comcare is currently redeveloping CIS, with the new system available early 2011.

Finishing up the program, a presentation was given on the connections between work and health, the role of proactive health awareness in the workplace, and how identifying and promoting beneficial work can aid in recovery from illness.

Comcare will organise these network forums regularly to provide rehabilitation case managers with an opportunity to share ideas, build networks with peers and access Comcare's available training and tools.



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Comcare's  
*FIRST* hand stories

### Welcome

Welcome to Comcare's Annual Report for 2009-10. This is the organisation's first interactive online annual report. With this format Comcare has aimed to improve communication with the community, enhance accessibility, simplify usability and reduce the organisation's carbon footprint. You can navigate through different sections by using the blue menu bar above. On each page you will find links to content in that section.

### About this report

The Comcare Annual Report documents the activities and performance of Comcare from 1 July 2009



## Comcare's new online interactive annual report

The Comcare and Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (SRCC) Annual Reports for 2009–10 are available online in a new interactive format. The new interactive versions of the Comcare and SRCC Annual Reports have improved accessibility, simplified useability and helped to reduce our carbon footprint.

The 2009–10 Annual Reports have been designed to be consistent with Comcare's new look website and branding. Providing a clear and easy to read format is another step we have taken to improve our communication with the community we are here to serve.

The Comcare Annual Report includes several case studies. In the online version, you can access the case study information through animation on the homepage. Here you can read stories from both injured workers and Comcare employees.

The online version also has two columns on each page to capture key points on one side. You can therefore access highlights without reading large amounts of content.

Some of the other improved features include:

- > drop down navigation bar
- > secondary navigation bar for clicking between pages
- > custom animations
- > interactive zoom
- > ability to print individual pages.



Name:  
Steven McNally

Organisation:  
Border Express

Role:  
Return to Work  
Coordinator/  
Operations Manager

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO APPLY FOR THE CERTIFICATE IV IN INJURY REHABILITATION MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP?

I wanted to facilitate my personal growth and promote my skill development so that I can work more effectively as part of the Comcare scheme.

WHAT DOES REHABILITATION MEAN TO YOU?

Rehabilitation means returning an employee to normal duties as soon as practical. It also means taking the injured employee's needs into account throughout the process.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING CHOSEN AS A WINNER OF THE SCHOLARSHIP?

I feel extremely privileged to be chosen for such an important opportunity.

This course will enhance my understanding of the Comcare scheme, and in particular our responsibilities as a self insured organisation. In turn, I will be able to pass the knowledge I gain on to the other Return to Work Coordinators at Border Express.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST IN STUDYING THE CERTIFICATE IV IN INJURY REHABILITATION MANAGEMENT?

I am actually looking forward to the entire course as it will help me understand rehabilitation in the Comcare scheme. I believe the course will help me achieve the best result possible for injured employees.

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