

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I wish to bring your attention to an item in The Journal. When reading your editorial *The Woodhouse Report 22 years on* in Volume 2, Number 2, 1996. I was concerned at what I see as an important omission from the last paragraph.

Your article reads: *One means to achieve this end would be to advocate for a "compensation summit", bringing together governments, insurers, rehabilitation provider and peak bodies representing the medical community...*

Where are the consumers' representatives the injured workers support groups? And possibly, but questionably based on their lip service to date, the unions.

In the Hunter we have two injured workers' support groups, the well established Hunter Action Group Against Workcover and the newer Workers Compensation Action Group. The former has been named as a participant in a number of studies (D. Kenny) and inquiries (Industry Commission), and the latter has had a considerable impact on the current limited inquiry into WorkCover Cost Pressures. Both are important self-help and information services for injured workers. Both would want to be included in a "compensation summit" along with their counterparts from other parts of the country.

Both groups are beginning the process of linking up with similar groups internationally through the Internet. A search using "Injured Workers Support Groups" reveals a multitude of mainly USA and Canadian groups. The obvious question then is 'Where is the support for Australian injured workers?' Self-help groups have demonstrably important benefits for participants and their families. A look through MIMS reveals hundreds of support groups for relatives and suffers from multiple sclerosis, diabetics, stroke etc. but nothing for the thousands of injured workers. Why not?

I believe that active support and promotion of any injured workers' self-help groups is fundamentally within the philosophy of rehabilitation counselling, and should be a stated aim of our Society.

Yours sincerely,

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