

Media Release

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BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR WORKERS ON ITS WAY

New laws passed by the Parliament today will make it easier for Victorian workers to get treatment and support for work-related mental health injuries as soon as they need it.

Delivering on a key election commitment, the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Provisional Payments) Act 2020* removes barriers for workers seeking urgent mental health support.

The new laws mean that Victorian workers who seek compensation for a mental health injury under WorkCover will receive payments for reasonable medical expenses while they await the outcome of their claim.

Covering expenses such as GP visits, psychiatrist or psychologist appointments and medication, the payments scheme ensures workers will not have to delay getting the care they deserve, while covering stressful out of pocket costs.

Mental health injury claims can be complex and take longer to determine than physical injury claims. Prior to this scheme workers could wait up to five weeks before receiving payments to access treatment or support.

These important reforms come at a time when work-related mental injury claims are growing significantly – it's expected they'll account for a third of all workers' compensation claims by 2030.

Giving workers the support they need early increases their chance of recovery and a successful return to work.

The scheme, which commences on 1 July 2021, encourages all workers in need of help with a work-related mental health injury to make a claim and get the treatment they need.

Eligible volunteers – including Emergency Management Victoria volunteers, volunteer school workers and jurors – will also be covered, recognising their vital work and unique contribution to the community.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

"We're proud to be ensuring that Victorian workers can get the treatment they need quickly so they can return to work as soon as they can."

"All workers in Victoria can now be assured that if they're struggling - and put their hand up for help - they'll get the care and support they deserve."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"For anyone struggling with mental health issues, knowing that help will be available as soon as they need it is paramount. These reforms deliver just that – for all Victorian workers."