



SYNOPSIS

EXPLORING A ROLE FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN WORKERS COMPENSATION

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Key words: restorative justice, workers' compensation, scheme design, harm reduction

Purpose of your paper: To present work being done by RMIT University Centre for Innovative Justice and WorkSafe to develop restorative justice responses in a workers' compensation setting.

Synopsis: This presentation will examine the potential role that a restorative justice response might play as a complement to workers' compensation dispute systems, in order to acknowledge harm/wrongdoing and meet workers' needs for non-pecuniary outcomes. Whilst a seemingly novel setting within which to introduce restorative justice practices, the overarching statutory objectives of most workers' compensation schemes are to support the recovery of injured workers and their return to work in an effective and sustainable way. However due to its complexity and the protracted nature of compensation processes, some injured workers' attempts to recover and return to work are thwarted, causing additional harm and contributing to delay and cost across the scheme.

This paper outlines some of the work RMIT University's Centre for Innovative Justice and WorkSafe have recently undertaken to develop restorative justice responses as a way of ensuring that the design of the scheme's dispute system is more effectively meeting the needs of all participants and achieving its statutory objectives.