



Recovery & Return to work Awards 2007

*Recognising outstanding achievement
and excellence in recovery and return to work*

2007



Welcome

Welcome to WorkCover's inaugural *Recovery and Return to Work Awards*.

The awards are the first of their kind in South Australia because of their dedicated focus on recovery and return to work.

Our objective in creating these awards is to celebrate excellence in recovery and return to work, and inspire Scheme participants to strive for better outcomes and to share learnings of new and proven approaches in health recovery, injury and claims management.

We would like to thank our sponsors who, through their support, have enabled us to make this event so special for all involved.

I congratulate all the award finalists and winners on their nominations.

Julia Davison
CEO WorkCover SA



Awards



The WorkCover *Recovery and Return to Work Awards* recognise and celebrate the outstanding efforts of South Australian Scheme participants who have demonstrated excellence in recovery and return to work and/or the community.

A first in South Australia, the awards celebrate and reward excellence in injury management and return to work for injured workers and employers, as well as promote and raise awareness of best practice in the field – all leading to improved return to work outcomes.

WorkCover claim statistics indicate that when a worker stays away from work for more than three months after an injury they have only a 50 per cent chance of returning to work within the following three months. After two years, there is only 12 per cent probability of returning to work in the following three months.

That's why returning injured workers to safe employment, and the community, promptly, is so important.

Returning injured workers to work requires the sustained, dedicated effort of many parties, particularly the injured worker, but just as importantly the employer, health and rehabilitation providers, claims managers and WorkCover itself.

It also requires those involved in the Scheme to reach out and look for innovative solutions, best practice injury management and better ways of working together, which is precisely what the *Recovery and Return to Work Awards* acknowledge.

Recognising the achievements of those successful in returning to work, and those supporting injured workers back to work, is an inspirational way to share learnings and achieve better outcomes for all.



Awards criteria

Awards criteria

Individual achievement award



SA UNIONS

This award recognises an individual's successful and sustainable return to work and/or the community after rehabilitation from a work-related injury or disability in the past 12 months. The winner of this award will have demonstrated strong commitment, achieved sustained recovery which may have required personal sacrifice, and identified positive effects of employment on their life and others around them.

Small employer excellence award



BUSINESS SA

This award recognises a small employer's outstanding efforts in successful and sustainable return to work and/or the community of an injured worker. The winner of this award will have demonstrated strong commitment to recovery and return to work of an injured worker, demonstrated innovation in the workplace and maintained a positive relationship with an injured worker.

Large employer excellence award



Since 1910
Employers
Mutual

This award recognises a large employer's outstanding efforts in successful and sustainable return to work and/or the community of injured workers. The winner of this award will have demonstrated strong commitment, innovation in the workplace and maintained a positive relationship with injured workers.

Self-insured employer excellence award



This award recognises a self-insured employer's outstanding efforts in successful and sustainable return to work and/or the community of injured workers. The winner of this award will have demonstrated strong commitment, innovation in the workplace and maintained a positive relationship with injured workers.

Service provider achievement award

MinterEllison

This award recognises a health provider's best practice services in returning patients to work and/or the community. The winner of this award will have demonstrated strong commitment to improved health outcomes, recovery and return to work or the community of injured workers, demonstrated creative intervention strategies, shown excellence in implementation and taken an integrated or tailored approach.

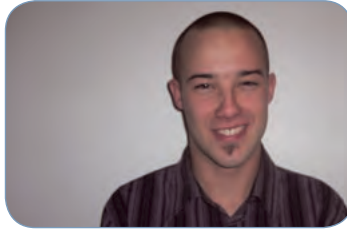
Claims manager excellence award



This award recognises a claims manager's successful and sustainable efforts in returning injured workers to work and/or the community. The award winner will have demonstrated strong commitment, innovation in claims management and maintained clear, consistent, ongoing communication with all parties.



Individual achievement award 2007



Finalist 

Jared Lambert

Jared Lambert severed an artery and two tendons with a four-inch grinder blade while working as an apprentice tiler. Unable to perform simple functions like showering, Jared described his accident and time off work as the “worst experience of his life” during which he became depressed. He felt degraded by having to rely on family and friends to look after him.

During his recovery, he felt like people were judging him for being off work and felt he was no longer “contributing to society”. Jared was in regular contact with his employer, doctor, physiotherapist and WorkCover during his recovery and attributes his successful return to work in a large part to the support he received from his employer. He was pleased when he was able to return to work faster than his doctors had estimated or his employer had expected. Initially returning on light duties, Jared is now back working at full capacity at a job he describes as “part of who he is.”



Individual achievement award 2007



Finalist 

Clinton Sewell

In March 2007, while working as a boiler maker, Clinton Sewell's arm was crushed by the two-tonne side wall of a railcar. After surgery, the doctor's prognosis was that it might take up to two years for Clinton to recover and that he might only regain up to 80 per cent use of his arm.

Determined to overcome his injury and return to work, Clinton enrolled at TAFE to study CAD drafting "so (he) could still be useful at work". Five months later, Clinton is back at work three days per week and is confident he will achieve at least 80 per cent use of his arm.

Clinton has enjoyed strong support from his family and employer, who have been committed to supporting his return to work. Clinton attributes his rapid recovery to his employer having confidence in him to know that he would do his best, but the consideration to not force him to do too much too soon. Since returning to work, Clinton has not missed a day of work. Clinton celebrated every small improvement along his road to recovery as one step closer to returning to his "normal" life.



Individual achievement award 2007



Finalist 

Jordan Squires

While working as a carpenter, 25 year-old Jordan Squires injured his back and required surgery, leaving him incapable of performing “even the most basic of human functions”. After surgery, Jordan was told that the probability of him returning to his pre-injury employment, which he loved, was low.

Jordan suffered physical pain and depression as a result of his injury, but decided that the “future was in his own hands” and so he undertook a comprehensive rehabilitation program. Jordan even hired a personal trainer to help him get into shape prior to surgery and continued with the training after surgery to assist with his recovery. In an effort to address his depression, Jordan undertook a course in the construction industry and is now back at work full-time as an estimator.

Jordan believes the experience has given him a heightened appreciation of the value of work and he is determined to remain sustainably in the workforce. He has a renewed positive outlook on life, which he says has strengthened his relationships with the people he cares most about. Jordan thinks his life is now “back on track”.



Individual achievement award 2007



Winner

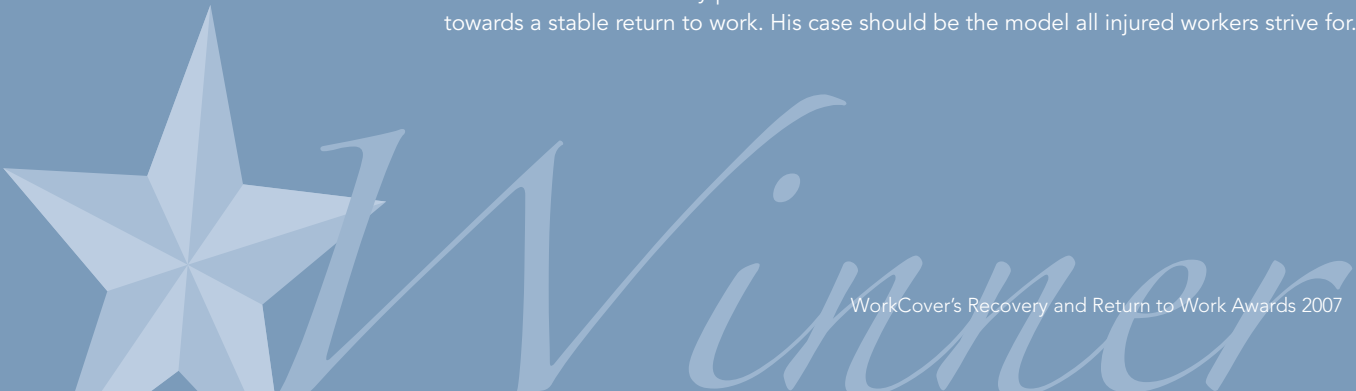


Sean Dutton

Sean Dutton injured his back while working on an oil rig – in a job he describes as “more of a lifestyle”. After surgery on his back, Sean says he avoided the depression he was beginning to feel by focusing and working hard on his rehabilitation and gym programs.

Sean says he received great support from family and friends, his claims manager (who he described as “bloody fantastic”) and in particular, his employer, who he says kept him motivated and determined by reassuring him that his job would be waiting for him on his return. Sean describes his inspiration as his 12-year-old son who kept telling him he could do it! A great thrill for Sean was hearing his son tell complete strangers that his dad was his hero.

Back to full-time employment after five month’s recovery, Sean is doing his “normal duties, drilling holes in the desert...love it!” Sean was nominated by his claims manager who said, “Sean has been extremely positive and self-motivated. His actions have been all motivated towards a stable return to work. His case should be the model all injured workers strive for.”





Small employer excellence award 2007



Atlas Chem-Dry
Your Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning Specialists



Finalist 

Atlas Chem-Dry

When a worker injured his shoulder at work and required surgery, Atlas Chem-Dry provided support at every stage of his recovery. Atlas Chem-Dry made regular contact with the injured worker to keep informed of his progress and to reinforce that he was a valuable member of staff who had a job waiting for him when it was safe for him to return.

Atlas Chem-Dry worked with an occupational therapist to develop a sensible and achievable return to work program and supported the injured worker's return to work with alternative duties to help build confidence. The organisation used a tally board to write positive messages about the injured worker and to encourage support from other staff. The injured worker is now back at work full-time.



Small employer excellence award 2007

Howie & Organ
Engineering Pty Ltd



Winner



Howie and Organ Engineering Pty Ltd

Howie and Organ Engineering is a small firm that displayed significant support, flexibility and innovation in supporting an injured worker back to work. The proprietors encouraged and facilitated their injured worker to return to work in the office four weeks after a leg injury, initially at four hours' a day and gradually increasing to full-time.

The employer worked with the injured worker on a program of rehabilitation in consultation with treating practitioners. They provided the injured worker with the tools and equipment to reduce pain and discomfort to enable the worker to remain at work.

According to Howie and Organ, the injured worker's accident was their first that required lost time in excess of two weeks in 29 years of operation. The proprietors credit their success to the positive family relationships they have fostered with their workers, which have included "safety, personal goodwill and long working relationships".





Large employer excellence award 2007



Finalist 

Boandik Lodge

Boandik Lodge is a not-for-profit aged care facility with approximately 310 staff. The injury management program within Boandik Lodge includes providing an injury management pack to the injured worker and treating doctor, which contains a letter to the medical practitioner outlining the organisation's commitment to rehabilitation. The pack includes a list of alternative duties that are available and the capacity required to undertake the various duties. The organisation's rehabilitation coordinators are responsible for maintaining contact with the injured worker, ensuring rehabilitation programs are implemented and that injured workers are psychologically and physically coping with the program.

Designated staff in the organisation's Peer Support Program play an important role in maintaining contact with the injured worker and providing support on their return to work. Boandik Lodge was described as "bending over backwards" to support its injured workers.



Large employer excellence award 2007



Finalist 

MTA Group Training Scheme

MTA Group Training is a training and education group with approximately 450 apprentices and trainees. In July 2006, a second-year apprentice was seriously injured and hospitalised for five weeks, after he was crushed between a vehicle and a four-post vehicle hoist. Recognising that new and inexperienced workers are potentially at higher risk of being injured at work, MTA ensures its workers are trained in workplace safety and awareness. All students complete 20-hours of training in first week of employment, via the organisation's 'Apply Safe Working Practices' training course.

MTA has a policy that all injured workers' recovery and return to work programs are managed through the training centre. Duties include supervising less experienced trainees/apprentices performing practical tasks to boost the injured worker's confidence whilst being closely monitored. The trainees can also use the time spent in the office completing their 'off-the-job' or theoretical training.

Four months after the accident the injured worker was able to return to work on light duties for four hours a day, five days a week, gradually returning to his pre-injury duties full-time in May 2007. The claims manager, who nominated MTA, described the organisation as a "model employer".



Large employer excellence award 2007



Finalist 

NASANSB

NASANSB is a nursing recruitment agency that has adopted the principles of early intervention and a 'worker first' policy. Personal contact is made with every injured worker and information provided about the workers compensation process to ensure injured workers are comfortable with, and understand, the process.

The organisation has developed a job dictionary for all positions that is provided to treating medical practitioners to assist them to identify suitable alternative duties. The workers rehabilitation coordinator meets with the host employer to identify possible duties and agree the return to work process. The organisation provides extra support to injured workers by way of, for example, arranging transport for workers incapable of driving themselves to and from work each day.



Large employer excellence award 2007



Winner

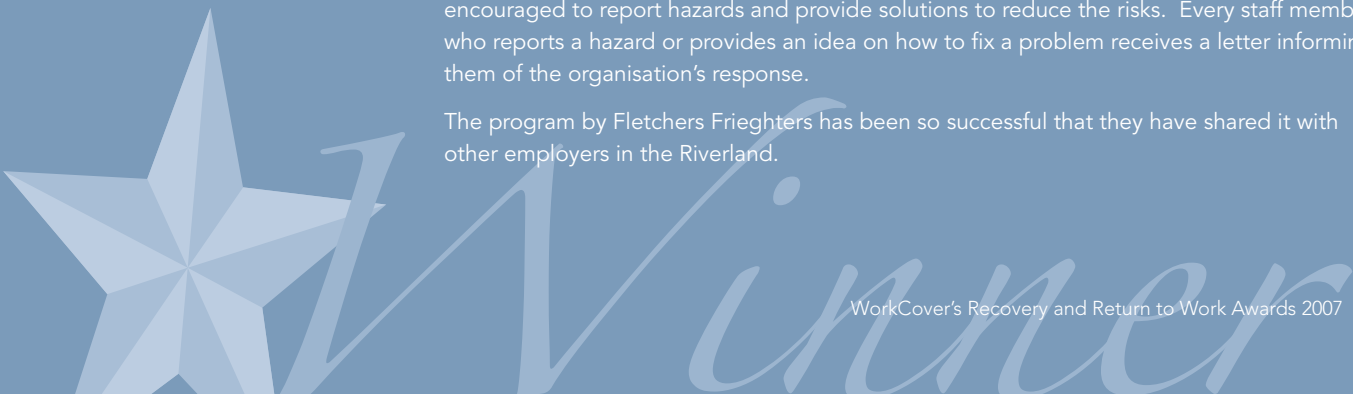
Fletcher's Freighters



Fletcher's Freighters is a transport company with a fleet of 80 linehaul prime movers and 135 trailers. Fletcher's Freighters has a policy of early return to work. The organisation has shown creativity in providing modified duties to accommodate injured workers' medical restrictions. Workers are encouraged to document physical difficulties they may be experiencing and to meet regularly with the manager of the injured worker program to monitor progress. Supervisors play an active role in the program, visiting workers on modified duties to track progress and provide reassurance. Weekly reports are provided to all supervisors outlining the status of injured workers in their recovery, any restrictions that apply and duties the injured workers can perform.

The organisation has undertaken a range of safety improvements including ensuring job descriptions were developed and risk assessments in place for all roles. Workers are encouraged to report hazards and provide solutions to reduce the risks. Every staff member who reports a hazard or provides an idea on how to fix a problem receives a letter informing them of the organisation's response.

The program by Fletcher's Freighters has been so successful that they have shared it with other employers in the Riverland.



Self-insured employer excellence award 2007



Finalist 

SA Ambulance

SA Ambulance employs a dedicated rehabilitation manager with 15+ years' experience as a paramedic to manage, support and implement injured workers' rehabilitation. It recently overhauled its injury recovery and management program via an employee review process. SA Ambulance engaged physiology expertise to help with identifying areas for improving service delivery to the organisation's shift workers. The program has gained widespread support of staff.

Employees who sustained work-related injuries are assessed for risk of re-aggravation and are encouraged to participate in the injury recovery and management process. The program offered to employees includes gym membership, personal trainers, massage therapy and an advice hotline to ensure workers are supported at all times. Regular communication is maintained with injured workers via the rehabilitation and return to work plans, monthly online progress questionnaires and quarterly assessments.

The organisation has also developed a 'Road to Recovery' pack for injured workers designed to explain how the injury recovery and management program can assist their recovery, and how best to participate.



Self-insured employer excellence award 2007



Finalist 

United Water

United Water's injury management system has evolved and been continuously-improved over eight years and results in sound performance and low disputation rates.

In employee surveys, seven out of 10 injured workers and eight out of 10 supervisors reported being actively involved in return to work planning. This work has culminated in a culture that is accepting of, and supports, injured workers to return to work.

United Water uses an electronic notification tool to report injuries early and supervisors are encouraged to contact the organisation's preferred rehabilitation providers directly. Supervisors are regularly trained in the importance of their role in the rehabilitation process using real life case studies. A claims kit was introduced in 1999 and has been modified to suit the needs of individual locations. It includes an injury management process flowchart, claim and incident report forms, internal return to work plan, supervisor checklist and letter to the treating doctor explaining United Water's commitment to providing modified duties.



Self-insured employer excellence award 2007



Winner

ECH Inc

ECH is an aged care residential organisation that has shown leadership in the aged care industry, sharing learning of best practice initiatives and proven successes. Over the past few years, ECH has employed a full-time workers compensation manager to provide dedicated support to injured workers. It has implemented a more inclusive rehabilitation system involving manager, injured worker, rehabilitation provider and medical staff which has provided positive outcomes. ECH has sought expertise from WorkCover evaluators and via injured worker feedback surveys to continuously improve.

ECH has developed an Early Medical Assessment Process (EMAP) to support and assist injured workers to return to pre-injury status. ECH has developed a list of suitable duties, which is provided to the treating doctor at the first consultation. An external rehabilitation provider is allocated on all claims that exceed four weeks and meetings are held regularly with the treating practitioner to ensure each stage of the rehabilitation is agreed to by all parties. Where necessary, ECH engages an independent psychologist to assist with resolving any issues that may be barriers to achieving a positive return to work.

Winner



Service provider achievement award 2007

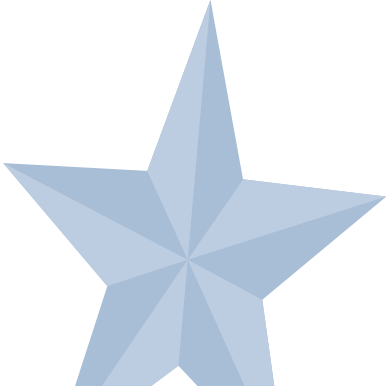


Finalist 

Jan Scott

Jan Scott provides rehabilitation services to the Repatriation General Hospital. Jan has been responsible for the rehabilitation of injured workers for three years and upon her appointment, said she had never experienced such hostility to rehabilitation or had a case-load with so many workers off work for such extended periods of time.

Despite those challenges, Jan established a systematic approach to the assessment and categorisation of cases, which enabled her to develop individual intervention strategies for each case. Her changes have resulted in a reduction in long-term cases and an increase in workers returning to work with full clearance. Jan has also embarked on a culture-changing training and education program for supervisory staff.





Service provider achievement award 2007



Finalist 

Proactiv People Solutions

Proactiv People Solutions claim a holistic approach to injury management and return to work, meeting the needs of stakeholders and achieving reduced timeframes and cost-effective outcomes for the Scheme. The organisation's philosophy is to provide the best injury management services.

Proactiv People Solutions is results focused, based on service models to deliver effective return to work services. Its Rapid Response Rehabilitation Model is implemented at referral, maximising the opportunity for early intervention. Proactiv People Solutions displays significant investment in its staff, actively encouraging staff to participate in training courses and up-skilling opportunities.



Service provider achievement award 2007



Winner

Corporate Health Group

Corporate Health Group has provided services to South Australian employers and workers for more than 30 years. Its vision is "innovation and excellence in work-related health services". Corporate Health Group was the first quality-endorsed occupational health service in South Australia and is active in industry improvement initiatives.

Corporate Health Group uses an integrated model and inter-disciplinary workforce which it states is the key to successful outcomes. The organisation claims to be one of the first provider organisations to realise and embrace the importance of employers in the recovery and return to work of injured workers. It also emphasises the importance of effective communication with all parties to a claim and has developed protocols and clinical guidelines to ensure effective communication occurs across relevant stakeholders.

Corporate Health Group is a joint winner in this category.



Service provider achievement award 2007



Winner



MS Vocational Services

MS Vocational Services' policy is to adopt a holistic approach to individual workers and to actively involve injured workers in all aspects of the return to work process. MS Vocational Services has a job bank of occupations noting physical and mental demands in order to assist the process of determining realistic job goals – sustainability being the key outcome.

MS Vocational Services has adopted early-intervention strategies such as use of the Orbroscore Pain Questionnaire to assess psychological issues that may act as barriers to return to work. The company invests in research and has participated in various pilot programs testing new approaches.

MS Vocational Services is a joint winner in this category.





Claims manager excellence award 2007



Since 1910
Employers
Mutual



Finalist 

Shelley Mellett

Shelley Mellett is a claims manager with Employers Mutual and has managed a portfolio of seriously-injured claims since September 2006. Shelley has taken a back-to-basics philosophy, working on building trust, respect and honesty with claimants. She undertakes significant research on advancements for serious injury claims, much in her own time.

Shelley believes that her approach has enabled her claimants to achieve more in the time she has been managing their claims than they have previously. She believes that she has motivated her claimants and assisted them to become independent and socially-involved within the community.



Claims manager excellence award 2007



Government of South Australia
Central Northern Adelaide
Health Service

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital



Finalist 

Leanne Wilmshurst

Leanne Wilmshurst is the senior claims manager at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Leanne manages a large case-load but remains responsive and available (including across shift work times) to address issues. She says she provides fair and direct decisions that support employees in early and successful return to work.

Leanne adopts a collaborative and consultative approach with injured workers and treating practitioners and acts in both a claims manager and rehabilitation provider role. She believes this is advantageous in providing consistent, timely services and it enables her to directly encourage return to work at all times. Leanne's return to work performance has been solid and particularly good for long-term claims. Leanne's manager has stated that she is a "direct, open and honest communicator who is enthusiastic and has a genuine intent to achieve the best return to work in the interests of both the workers and the employer".



Claims manager excellence award 2007



Winner



Tricia Kaukas

Tricia Kaukas has been the risk manager at Drake Foodmarkets for 18 months, in which time she says she has earned the trust and respect of her employer and colleagues. Tricia's approach is both systematic and personal and she strongly believes in the benefits of solid relationships and trust in helping return people back to work. Tricia says her case management style is about "balancing empathy for injured employees with the needs of the business".

Tricia has extensive experience in injury management and at Drake Foodmarkets, she actively engages and promotes injury management with the management team, including in the training of managers. Tricia believes in early intervention and ongoing regular contact with injured workers and has received highly-positive feedback in the employee surveys undertaken by Drake Foodmarkets. Tricia's efforts go beyond the requirement of her role – she often meets with injured workers out of hours and out of the workplace and actively participates within the industry.





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