

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Purick to the Minister for Health

Health Department Staff

1. **How many staff in the health department are on workers compensation leave and from what facility, clinic or hospital?**

As at 8 November 2023, there are 156 open claims

Locations of Open Claims	
Site or region	Claim Number
Administration	9
Alice Springs rural	1
Alice Springs Hospital	18
Ass Sec Acute Care	1
Barkley Region	1
Central Australian Health Service	5
Community Care	1
East Arnhem Region	1
Health System, Policy, Strategy	2
Hospital Networks	4
Hospital Services	4
NCCTRC	3
Nursing Services	4
Operations Central	3
Operations North	1
Public Health Clinical Excellence	2
Perform & Resource	2
Public Affairs - THS	1
Royal Darwin Hospital	4
Service Provision	2
Southern Region	5
Top End Health Services	50
Hospital Services (Temp)	3
Workforce Division	1
Other (see note 2)	28
Grand Total	156

Coding within the claims management systems for locations have varied over the years.

2. What is the longest period for a staff member to be on workers compensation leave?

Over 70% of the open workers compensation claims relate to injuries that occurred in the past 3 years.

The longest standing open claim for workers compensation relates to a worker with a permanent injury that covers medical treatment since 1987, in accordance with the *Return to Work Act 1986*.

All claims are subject to mandatory claim review periods to review current medical evidence and future entitlements.

3. What is the average length of time for a staff member to be on workers compensation leave?

Of claims received in the last 5 calendar years, the average days a claim is open is 220.

4. How many staff members are on workers compensation leave for over 5 years and from what facility, clinic or hospital?

31 claims remain open for 5 years or more. To provide a breakdown by facility, clinic or hospital is too administratively onerous and to undertake this would result in undue diversion of resources from service delivery.

5. How many staff members are on workers compensation leave for over 9 years and from what facility, clinic or hospital?

18 claims remain open for 9 years or more. To provide a breakdown by facility, clinic or hospital is too administratively onerous and to undertake this would result in undue diversion of resources from service delivery.

6. Has the department settled any agreements under section 78A under the *Return to Work Act 1986*? If so, how many? If no agreements have been settled, why not?

In the period between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023, there have been three settlements by agreement for the Department of Health under section 78A of the *Return to Work Act 1986*.

The objectives of the *Return to Work Act 1986* provide for effective rehabilitation and compensation of injured workers, effective management of workplace injuries and assisting injured workers to return to work.

A settlement by agreement is subject to confidentiality provisions and only considered as a last resort and may not be necessary, reasonable or appropriate for most claims.

- 7. How many of the section 78A agreements have been lump sum payments and how many have been structured settlement? If there has been no lump sum or structured settlement agreements, why not?**

Please see above response to Question 6.