

20 April 2021

The Hon Grace Grace  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
Minister for Racing

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Minister

As President of AMA in Queensland I have been asked to offer my support for the psychiatrists working on tribunals within the Office of Industrial Relations, especially with Workcover. There are currently 39 psychiatrists who work in the tribunals of the Queensland Workcover scheme. They do 70% of the permanent impairment assessments for injured workers. Dr Josie Sundin is their advocate and representative.

Apparently, psychiatry is not recognised as a specialty in its own right and are subsumed under the title "General Medical Assessment Tribunal – psychiatric".

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the essential role of psychiatric services to the fore. The increasing rates of suicide in the general community are also causing some alarm. Bearing in mind the stresses often associated with work, loss of work and therefore loss of income and loss of assets, along with the increasing stresses of families where both parents work and kids still need support, the role of the psychiatrist in Workcover assessments is growing.

At the moment, psychiatrists have to work under Chairs without particular training in psychiatry. That can impact the agility of the psychiatric services which can impact negatively on patient assessments.

AMA Queensland strongly supports the change of regulations that will allow the psychiatry tribunals to be recognised as a specialty in their own right. I believe it will take your input into this decision Minister, to make this change in regulation a reality.

Many thanks for helping the psychiatrists under your ministerial oversight, to carry through their very important work to the best of their abilities and therefore for the best results for the workers of Queensland.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Prof Chris Perry  
President  
AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale  
Chief Executive Officer  
AMA Queensland

cc: Dr Josephine Sundin  
cc: Dr Kevin Lee See  
cc: Dr Sharon Kelly



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