

# Workers Compensation and Injury Management Bill 2021 (Consultation Draft)

## Submission Template

Bill Clause	Comments
General	<p>I have been advised that there is an intention to remove the Independent Registered Agents (IRA's) once the new legislation comes into effect. I have significant concerns with this action. I have worked in the industry for over 20 years, including working for an insurer, as an employed Workplace Rehabilitation Consultant for some of the larger agencies and a self-employed workplace rehabilitation consultant. My concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IRA's assist workers in their dealings with insurers and Workcover WA without the need for formal legal representation.</li><li>• There are very few services to assist workers to understand their rights and how the complicated process of Workers' Compensation in WA works, as most key parties are aligned with employer / insurer priorities. IRA's fill this gap.</li><li>• IRA's provide representation for workers at conciliation and arbitration services at Workcover WA. They do this at a capped fee which is significantly less than the fees for a legal representative would be.</li><li>• IRA's, in my experience, are more proactive and responsive to worker's needs than legal representatives. The liaise with workers directly (rather than via a law clerk or similar) and therefore have a better understanding of the worker's specific needs and tend to be more compassionate. They are therefore more responsive to worker's needs than solicitors.</li><li>• IRA's tend to assist workers in a more timely manner than solicitors as, again in my experience, many legal firms drag out proceedings. This is detrimental to worker's mental health and increases both claim costs and legal costs dramatically. IRA's tend to take matters to settlement more swiftly once it is deemed appropriate to do so. This reduces that length of time workers are unnecessarily on Workers' Compensation wage payments. Plus, they do this at a far reduced cost in terms of legal fees.</li><li>• I believe that removing IRA's will result in an increase of workers accessing legal practitioners, with an associated increase in costs for both workers and insurers.</li><li>• In summary my experience is that IRA's are more compassionate, assist in filling the gap in services provided to workers about how the Workcover WA system works, are more cost effective and more timely in their provision of services.</li></ul> <p>Losing IRA's will have a detrimental effect on the Workcover WA system.</p>