

Assessment of Permanent Impairment & Approved Assessors

The *WCIMA23* provides for the continuation of an impairment assessment process in accordance with Guidelines issued by WorkCover WA and provides for a new modernised framework for approval and regulation of permanent impairment assessors.

Key Points

Act ref: Part 4 Division 3 and 4, s. 580

- WorkCover WA will continue to issue Guidelines for the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment.
- New Guidelines will be issued when the *WCIMA23* commences due to minor terminology changes, however there is no intention to make any substantive changes to the impairment assessment methodology or clinical assessment parts of the Guidelines at this stage.
- The 1981 Act provisions relating to the status of pre-existing diseases, secondary conditions, and multiple injuries from a single event are replicated in the *WCIMA23* with minor terminology changes for clarity.
- Approved medical specialists will now be referred to as approved permanent impairment assessors.
- A new framework for the approval and regulation of approved permanent impairment assessors will apply. The framework addresses:
 - approval criteria and conditions, duration of approval and registration of permanent impairment assessors
 - provision for compliance audits and investigations to ensure compliance with the Act, regulations, conditions of approval and the Guidelines
 - suspension or cancellation of permanent impairment assessors.

Key Points

- The Minister will fix maximum fees and charges for permanent impairment assessments undertaken by approved permanent impairment assessors.

Questions & Answers

Q. Will approved medical specialists under the 1981 Act have to reapply to become approved permanent impairment assessors when the new Act commences?

A. No. Savings and transitional provisions provide that an approved medical specialist under the 1981 Act is taken to be an approved permanent impairment assessor under the *WCIMA23*, and is subject to the new Act. This means approved medical specialists under the 1981 Act will be subject to the approval criteria, conditions, performance monitoring and compliance requirements in the *WCIMA23* and regulations.

