



SEACARE AUTHORITY QUARTERLY REPORT

Report 01/2000

Outcomes of Seacare Authority Meeting of 24 May 2000

As part of its commitment to improve communication with industry and stakeholders, the Seacare Authority agreed at its May 2000 meeting to produce a short report to the industry and stakeholders after each meeting. The main purpose is to keep the industry and interested parties informed of decisions taken by the Authority. This is the first report. We hope you find it useful and informative. Comments are welcome by e-mail to seacare@dewrsb.gov.au.

Seacare Authority Workplan

The Authority's 2000-2001 Workplan was endorsed. The major issues on which the Authority will focus during 2000-2001 include:

- Seacare **scheme performance** monitoring and reporting. Improved performance reports will enable the Authority to identify areas of strong performance, which can be encouraged and promoted, and weak performance for which remedial strategies will need to be developed;
- ongoing work to continuously improve **rehabilitation and return to work outcomes**;
- ways to improve **communication** with industry and other stakeholders;
- development of proposals to streamline Seacare scheme **administration**; and
- maintaining a watching brief on the **operating environment** to position the Authority to be able to rapidly respond to changes as they occur.

Participation in the National Return to Work (RTW) Monitor

The Authority agreed to participate in the RTW Monitor aimed at independently gathering data on seafarers' return to work experience. The Monitor is a national survey in which all but one workers' compensation schemes participate. The Authority believes the data will provide a useful measure to assess how the industry addresses the transition from injury to durable re-engagement in the workforce.

Further details on this initiative will be reported in future reports.

Comparative Performance Monitoring (CPM) Report

The Authority noted the second CPM report released by Workplace Relations Ministers in April 2000, and that Seacare scheme performance is reported against some indicators for the first time. Notwithstanding data reliability issues (which the Authority is comprehensively addressing before the third CPM report) which impact on comparability with other schemes, and that trends are heading in the right direction, the report highlights that the industry has some of the highest rates of injury of any industry and high premium rates.

Rehabilitation and Return to Work

At the last two meetings, the Authority has endorsed the development of a rehabilitation strategy aimed at developing a better understanding of rehabilitation practice and opportunities and assisting industry to improve return to work outcomes for seafarers. The strategy involves a number of initiatives, including: collection of improved data on claims duration, rehabilitation and return to work; participation in the national Return to Work Monitor (details below); development of a new brochure; placing relevant information on the Seacare website; and a plan of industry briefings comprising a symposium of key decision makers and industry experts to pool available information on industry practice and port-based briefings to generate stronger interest at the workplace.

Claims management

The Authority has agreed to commence a review of claims management practices in the industry. The purpose of the review is to analyse steps that the Authority may take to support employers and insurers in making improvements to claims and case management processes and practice. Details are yet to be developed.

Claim form and claim update form

The Authority endorsed in-principle a revised *Claim for Rehabilitation/Compensation* form making minor improvements after the first year in the field. Importantly, the Authority also agreed to introduce a new *Claims Update* form aimed at capturing full claim details including duration, costs and rehabilitation. This will enable the Authority to better understand issues in the scheme's operation. The industry will be separately advised about the new forms when finalised and printed.

Occupational health and safety representatives training

The Authority noted that arising from an AMMA survey of operators on the current distance learning course, there is a need to ensure a range of training delivery and course options are available. In particular, there appears to be growing recognition of the need for more face to face training options to supplement the distance learning delivery method. AMMA respondents to the survey observed that the training should more closely reflect the needs of operators such as inclusion of content which addresses different flag state requirements.

The key message appears to be the need for flexibility in both course delivery arrangements and in the courses that are available. The decision of the Authority at its March 2000 meeting to adopt new course accreditation procedures would appear to be timely, opening up the opportunity for more employers to develop tailored courses for accreditation by the Authority.

Employer Guide to reporting under the legislation

The Authority endorsed a new Guide to Reporting aimed at assisting employers comply with their reporting obligations under the Seafarers and OH&S(MI) Acts and Regulations.

The Guide is expected to be published and circulated in early July.

Service Charter

The Authority adopted a Service Charter setting out what you can expect in terms of service standards in dealing with the Authority. The Service Charter will be published on the Authority's website by end June 2000.

Exemption Policy and Procedure

The Authority agreed to a revised form for applying for exemption from the application of the Seafarers Act. The new form is designed to capture better and improved particulars, which will ensure the Authority can respond to applications without delay. The new form will be posted on the Authority's website by end June 2000.

Information Brochures

The first of a series of 5 new information brochures has been approved for publication by the Authority. This brochure will be circulated to industry later in June and will be available on the website from 16 June 2000. The first brochure addresses employer obligations under the Seafarers Act. Others in the series will address: rights and obligations of employees; benefits available under the Act; occupational health and safety; and rehabilitation and return to work.

Next Seacare Authority meeting

The next meeting of the Authority will take place in Sydney on Thursday 24 August 2000. If you wish that a matter be placed on the agenda for discussion, please forward your item to the Seacare Authority Secretariat by e-mail at seacare@dewrsb.gov.au or telephone on (02) 6121 7120.

Improving Communication in the Industry

We encourage you to replicate this Report in part or in full in your organisation's newsletter or journal. No permission is required to publish but it would be appropriate to acknowledge the source.

Another way in which you can ensure your organisation improves communication is by creating a direct link between your website and the Authority's website.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SEACARE AUTHORITY

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