

# Transport Workshop

## Supporting truck drivers with injury or ill-health: Key takeaways

Returnto  
**WorkSA**



### Overview

The workshop discussions highlighted critical challenges in managing injuries and health conditions among truck drivers in the transport sector. A key theme that emerged was the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to support workers while ensuring sustainable business operations.

Moving forward, it is essential to focus on practical solutions that integrate better communication, proactive engagement, and policy adjustments to ensure that both workers and employers are adequately supported. A collaborative and dynamic approach will be key to overcoming these challenges and fostering a healthier, more resilient workforce in the transport sector.

### Session 1 - Return to work data

Amanda Sadauskas, Healthy Workplaces Advisor, ReturnToWorkSA

Musculoskeletal disorder claims among truck drivers cost over twice as much as in the broader Return to Work scheme, due to factors like prolonged income support, lack of suitable duties, and psychosocial risks. Screening tools like the Örebro musculoskeletal pain questionnaire can help assess these risks, while early intervention strategies (as demonstrated in the Australia Post Early Matched Care case study) provide effective solutions to reduce costs.

[View presentation slides](#) | [Örebro Questionnaire](#) | [Early Matched Care Case Study](#)

### Session 2 - Industry specialist mobile claims managers

Brenden Bishop, Gallagher Bassett and Rudy Timoteo, Employers Mutual Limited (EML)

Transport industry work injury claims benefit from industry specialist mobile claims managers at both claims agents, who have allied health backgrounds and provide critical support to GPs who may be unfamiliar with transport industry-specific injuries. Establishing relationships with GPs and allied health professionals, alongside early reporting and communication with workers about preferred providers, can improve recovery outcomes. Suitable duties remain a challenge, but programs like the Work Hardening initiative (developed collaboratively by SARTA, Symons & Clark, Randstad, and Gallagher Bassett) help address these barriers.

Maintaining regular contact with injured workers and addressing both work and non-work issues are crucial for effective return to work outcomes. If things outside of work are impacting your workers, ReturnToWorkSA has a number of services that can help. Speak with your claims agent about accessing these services (links below):

[View presentation slides](#) | [Surgery Assist](#)

[ReCONNECT](#) - Available at any stage during your claim

[Facilitated conversation](#) - For industrial issues at work

[Mental Health Support Service](#) - For workers and their families who are finding the claims process stressful. Can be accessed prior to a claim being approved

## Session 3 - Common health conditions among transport workers and available services for non work-related conditions

Amanda Sadauskas, Healthy Workplaces Advisor, ReturnToWorkSA

Truck drivers face high rates of chronic diseases such as back pain (34%), high blood pressure (25%), and mental health disorders (20%), along with significantly higher rates of obesity (54%) and smoking (20%) compared to the general population. Young drivers also experience severe psychological distress at nearly double the rate of their peers. To address non work-related health issues, employers can access a range of resources at the links below:

[View presentation slides](#) | [Employer obligations](#) | [Care plans \(via a GP\)](#) | [Better Health Coaching](#)

[Mental Health Programs](#) | [Insomnia Program](#) | [Chronic Pain Program](#) | [MindSpot](#)

Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs - [Quit Smoking & Vaping](#) | [Alcohol & Drug Foundation](#) | [Alcohol & Other Drugs in the Workplace](#)

## Session 4: Steering Healthy Minds

Aynsley Patterson, Program Manager, Steering Healthy Minds

Steering Healthy Minds provides free, industry-specific Mental Health First Aid training twice a year in South Australia. They are also expanding to offer workplace advisory services and create a community of practice for the transport industry.

[View presentation slides](#) | [Register for Mental Health First Aid](#) | [Contact](#)

## Session 5: Fitness for work and supporting workers with non work-related conditions

Dr Thanh Ha, ReturnToWorkSA Medical Advisor and Occupational GP

### Return to Work plans

It is important to have return to work (RTW) plans for both work-related and non work-related conditions, as having a written plan increases the likelihood of returning to work. For work-related conditions, your mobile case manager will assist in developing the plan, while freely available templates can help for non-work-related conditions.

[Develop a RTW plan](#) | [Supporting RTW](#) | [RTW plan template](#) | [Tools and downloads](#) | [Contact Healthy Workplaces](#)

### Fitness for work

Fitness for work assessments rely heavily on worker disclosures, and while they may identify issues, they do not organise referrals or coordinate care. The worker is responsible for seeking further assessments, such as sleep studies or hearing corrections, which may delay fitness certification if they lack access to necessary resources or equipment.

### Working with GPs

Before an injured worker's initial GP consult, it's helpful for the Return to Work Coordinator to send an introductory email to the GP (often via the clinic reception) outlining their RTW plan and providing any relevant job-related materials. During the consult, present suitable duties before the doctor makes recommendations, and after the consult, follow up with a summary email and RTW plan for feedback. It's important to use positive, recovery-focused language and encourage collaboration between all parties to support the worker's return to duties.

[View presentation slides](#) | [Physiotherapy management plan](#)