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A new approach to health-related work incapacity

Sue Weston – CEO Comcare



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National work health safety and workers' compensation authority

- Government regulator
- Workers' compensation insurer
- Claims manager
- Scheme administrator



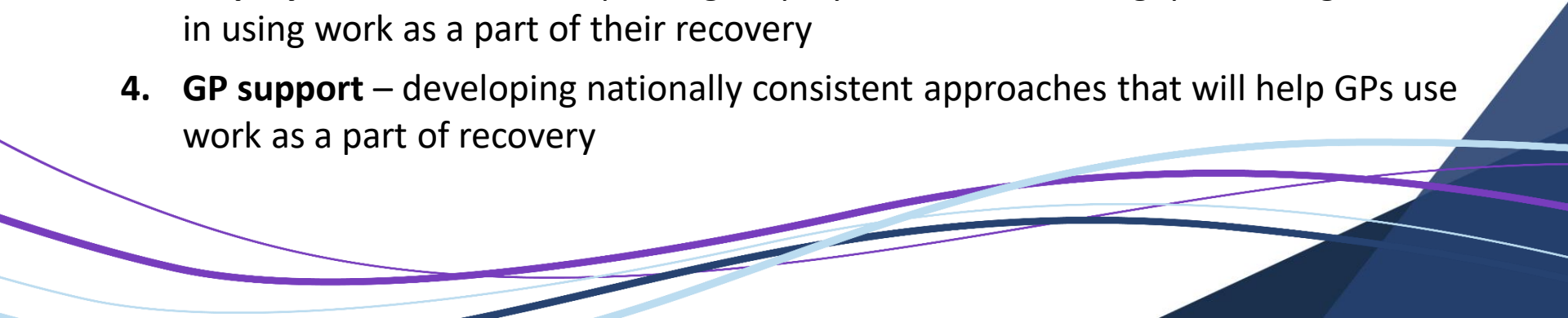
the
COLLABORATIVE
Partnership
to improve work participation

A national effort by public, private and not-for-profit organisations to improve work participation

Partners



Four priority areas

1. **Cross sector system** – examining data and services across compensation and benefit systems, identifying the flow of people through systems, finding opportunities to improve services
 2. **Employer mobilisation** – examining attitudes and barriers and improving employers' capacity to provide work opportunities for people with health conditions
 3. **Employee awareness** – improving employees' understanding, promoting their role in using work as a part of their recovery
 4. **GP support** – developing nationally consistent approaches that will help GPs use work as a part of recovery
- 

Work participation is critical



Australian performance in employment of people with disability and return to work following ill health or injury has stagnated



What starts off as temporary ill health can turn into long term disability and worklessness



The longer that someone is off work, the more likely they are never to return



Societal costs include poor health, financial insecurity, social isolation, higher premiums, higher absenteeism, lost productivity and higher health and welfare costs

Research findings – Cross-Sector Systems

In Australia, during 2015-16*

786K

people who were unable
to work due to ill health,
injury or disability received
income support

6.5M

additional people accessed
employer provided
entitlements for short
periods of work incapacity

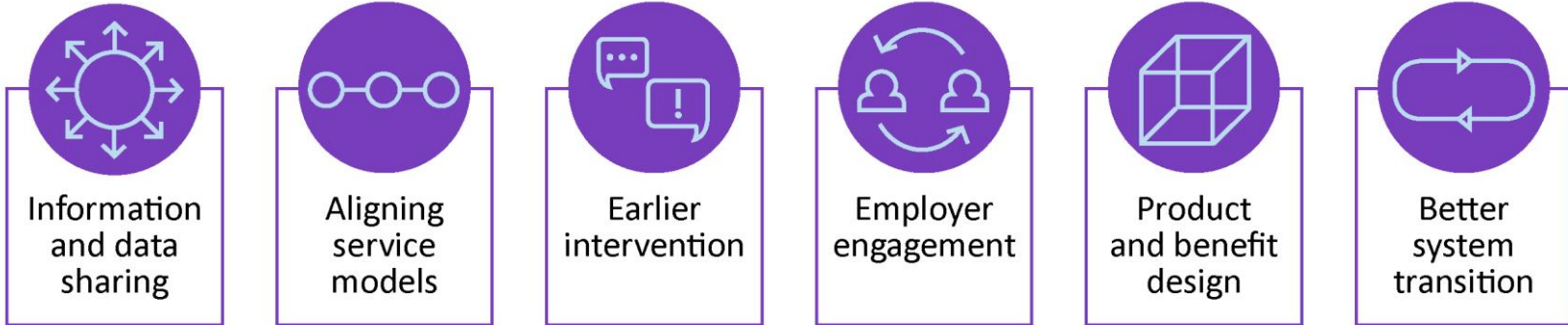
\$37.2
BILLION

was spent on income
support for these people
during the year

*Estimates by Monash University

Opportunities for improvement

There are opportunities to improve work and health outcomes through greater cross sector collaboration.



Employer Mobilisation

- Explores employer attitudes, motivations and experiences towards recruiting, supporting or accommodating people with a physical or mental health condition, illness or disability
- Survey of 2,457 managers Australia-wide
- Included businesses of all sizes, public and private



GP Support

- Provide support to GPs regarding work participation
- Development of a set of national principles of the role of GPs in supporting work participation
- The GP's role can vary in each case, and a consistent understanding is required

Mental health in Australia

- **1 in 2 Australians** will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives
- **1 in 5 Working Australians** are experiencing a mental health condition
- **3 million people** in Australia live with **Anxiety & Depression**

65% of affected Australians are still not receiving evidence based care and remain untreated


Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance

Supporting workplaces in creating mentally healthy environments



Early intervention

Helping employees recover from mental health challenges

- NewAccess: low-intensity cognitive mental health coaching service
 - Early Intervention Pilot: clinical guidance to workers, access to early medical supports
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