

## **PFWA Position Paper - Injury Management and Workers' Compensation**

### Preamble

School leaders make up a small percentage of the total Department of Education workforce, and an even smaller percentage of the liability associated with workers' compensation. However, for school leaders, the workers' compensation, injury management and return to work processes currently employed by the Government and Department of Education do not effectively support those school leaders who have had the misfortune to be injured (physically or psychologically) while performing their duties. The workers' compensation cap applied by Government penalises school leaders earning in excess of \$146 000 per annum, by capping their payments at below their salary level. In terms of injury management and return to work programs, there is a glaring lack of understanding of the role of the school leader among third party agencies, and a seeming inability to effectively work with claimants in partnership so that an outcome satisfactory to the claimant is reached. Where it is deemed that "light duties" are specified as a requirement of the return to work, what does that mean in terms of a school leader's role? Do the current policies at regional level governing appointment of acting/relieving Principals, work in the context of a graduated return to work? The PFWA believes that, for school leaders, these processes need to be urgently reviewed.

### The PFWA Position

- The workers' compensation cap must be lifted to be commensurate with the salary of the highest paid Principal.
- The injury management process requires a focus on the needs of the claimant who should be a partner in the process, rather than an employee who has a process done to them.
- A return-to-work program for a school leader must take into account the complexities of the role, and, where a graduated return to work is being considered, the relationships that need to exist for effective leadership of the school.
- Policies relating to the appointment of acting or relieving school leader positions must align to the above.