

ACC Advocacy/Navigation Service (Miriam Dean review)



To	Hon Iain Lees-Galloway, Minister for ACC	Priority	Low
From	Withheld under S9(2)(a) Policy Manager	Reference	PS18/064
Date	6 April 2018	Security rating	In confidence

Purpose

1. Further to your discussion with Scott Pickering and Dame Paula Rebstock, this aide-memoire informs you of the ACC Board's decision to implement a new navigation service in response to the recommendations of Miriam Dean QC's *Independent Review of the Acclaim Otago (Inc) July 2015 Report into Accident Compensation Dispute Resolution Processes*.
2. The service will provide clients with support to navigate ACC processes up to the point of review. Attached is a set of A3s outlining the proposed high-level service design for your information. ACC intends to proactively release these A3s and this aide memoire, given stakeholder interest in this work.

Clients have helped shape proposals for a navigation service...

3. Over the past 18 months, ACC has worked with clients and sector experts to progress recommendations made by Miriam Dean QC to improve advocacy services for ACC clients. Advocacy is one of the final substantive recommendations from Ms. Dean QC's independent review of ACC dispute resolution processes to be fully addressed.
4. Through a series of co-design workshops, focus groups, and face-to-face interviews with clients, ACC developed a concept for a navigation service aimed at providing accessible, responsive support for clients to understand and engage effectively with ACC's processes, and resolve disputes without the need to progress to review. ACC will be proactively contacting participants and stakeholders to inform them of how their contributions have been used to inform the design of the new service.
5. Direct engagement with clients included one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Focus groups were undertaken with participants from Voice of the Customer groups including the Serious Injury Advisory Group and Older Persons' Advisory Group; and the Hawkes Bay Brain Injury Association. Interviews were conducted with clients representing of a broad range of ages, ethnicities (including Māori), regions, life circumstances and injury types. Some of these clients' comments are provided on **slide 2 of the attached A3s**. Those interviewed individually contributed to the development of the navigation service concept through a human-centred design process.
6. Groups who contributed to design workshops included the Government Centre for Dispute Resolution, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Community Law, the Health and Disability Commission's Advocacy Service, the Workplace Injury Advocacy Service (WIAS – ACC's current sole advocacy provider), Linkage Trust, FairWay, the New Zealand Law Society, Acclaim Otago, Forster and Associates, accredited employers, the Disabled Persons' Assembly, and Te Puni Kōkiri,
7. As a result, the ACC Board has recently endorsed a high-level design for a navigation service which is expected to provide free support to about 4,300 ACC clients each year – a more than four-fold increase over the numbers currently served by ACC-funded advocacy services. The newly-funded service will work with the client, ACC, and other relevant parties to enable effective, accurate, early

resolution of disputes without the need to progress to review. Resolving disputes without a review saves clients significant time and distress, and can also save ACC money.

...which will complement existing initiatives and provide clients with choice

8. The design of the navigation service reflects and supports other internal changes ACC is making, such as Whāia Te Tika (ACC's Māori strategy), the rollout of Resolution Services and Next Generation Case Management (**see slide 1**). These changes are a significant part of ACC's work to become more customer-centric and easier to deal with. An effective independent navigation service can play an important role alongside existing dispute resolution pathways by providing a "feedback loop" of crucial insights about the effectiveness of internal changes. There is support across the business for the value of this complementary role.
9. Effective navigation services will also directly support two of the three focus areas of Whāia Te Tika – **Te Arotahi Kiritaki** (customer focus) and **Whakawhanaketia te Kaha** (developing capability) by providing clients with a choice in how they resolve disputes with ACC, and by empowering clients to engage with ACC in ways that feel safe, appropriate, and aligned with their own culture and values.

Why navigation?

10. ACC has chosen to use the term "navigation service" in preference to "advocacy service" in order to clearly reflect the fact that the service will not represent clients at review. This will ensure the service remains focused on the central goal of early resolution of issues, thereby saving clients time and distress, and reducing the costs of resolving disputes (the average cost of navigation support is expected to be about a sixth of the average cost of a review). Where cases do proceed to review, pre-review navigation support can equip clients to engage effectively with the review process, and seek appropriate representation if required.
11. Subject to more detailed service design through the procurement process, the service will likely be a mixture of face-to-face, phone and web based delivery and could be delivered by a single national provider or a number of providers with regional coverage and/or a focus on particular client groups or injury contexts (e.g. in the workplace).
12. While ACC's new Resolution Services is already receiving positive client feedback and increasing the number of withdrawn review applications, clients have told ACC that our existing dispute resolution pathways can be difficult for clients with learning disabilities, literacy challenges, poor computer skills or other high needs to access.
13. Māori and other client groups who experience persistent disadvantage in accessing ACC entitlements may also prefer to seek help from an independent source. For these client groups, a high-quality navigation service may be a more accessible, acceptable means of resolving disputes than dealing with ACC directly. As noted by Miriam Dean QC, greater availability of free, competent advocacy may reduce the risk that these clients will turn to "poor-performing and privately funded advocates".
14. ACC's past experience funding advocacy services (currently provided by the Workplace Injury Advocacy Service – WIAS) indicates high effectiveness and customer satisfaction, even among client groups with complex needs (**see slide 3**). Similarly to the proposed navigation service, WIAS provides support only up to the point of review.

Next steps

15. The ACC Board endorsed the proposed navigation service on March 29 (**see slides 4-6** for detail of options considered). The new service is expected to cost approximately \$ **Withheld under S9(2)(i) of OIA** million increase on ACC's current investment in WIAS advocacy services – and provide support to about 4,300 clients a year (currently WIAS serves about 1,000 ACC clients each year).

16. Following the Board's endorsement, a project team will develop a more detailed service design, and work through a procurement process over the next six months (an ambitious but viable timeframe). Once procurement commences, there are a range of ways in which the market could supply the services needed. There is likely to be significant interest from existing support services.
17. Detailed service design work will establish ACC's expectations for the accessibility of services (including to Māori, disabled people, and those with language or literacy needs), as well as how the service will link to appropriate support for clients who do need to proceed to a review.
18. In order to ensure that the navigation service is achieving good outcomes for clients and operating effectively alongside Resolution Services and Next Generation Case Management, the service will be evaluated after two years of operation to inform future investment in the service.
19. In order to communicate the Board's decision to interested stakeholders and clients who contributed to this work, ACC is planning to:
 - a. Contact customers who participated in the work and let them know a new service will be established and provide them with a summary of the feedback from customer interviews
 - b. Contact stakeholders who participated in the workshops with the outcome of the Board's decision
 - c. Proactively release the attached A3s and this aide memoire on ACC's website and prepare an accompanying media statement.

