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INJURING OUR SENSE OF RIGHT

EXCLUSIVE LAUREN WILSON

INJURED public servants are taking music therapy, tai-chi lessons and receiving life coaching sessions from unregistered counsellors, all on the public purse.

The Commonwealth's workplace compensation system has now become so generous that public servants are claiming all sorts of dubious therapies.

Employment Minister Eric Abetz has flagged a crack-down, declaring taxpayers "have the right to expect that their money is being used in the best possible way."

"It's important that we do all we can to ensure safe and productive workplaces, and where people are injured that they receive appropriate rehabilitation support," Senator Abetz said.

"However the appropriateness of the taxpayer funded support needs to be evidence based."

The Sunday Mail has con-

firmed that under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, public servants are able to request music therapy, long-term massage, life coaching, meditation retreats, one-on-one yoga lessons and tai-chi.

They are also able to claim supervised personal training sessions, by trainers without full qualifications, and the long-term provision of home help, according to information provided to News Corp by the Department of Employment.

A spokeswoman for Comcare said there were "provisions under the Act that allow for the treatments outlined to be compensated, either as part of medical treatment for a workplace injury, or as part of a rehabilitation program".

The Comcare spokeswoman said advice from the injured worker's doctors about "what

is reasonable to treat their compensation condition" is taken into account when approving medical treatments.

The agency also has a panel of professionals who can advise on claims and discuss recommended treatments. Rehabilitation programs are a matter for the injured worker's Commonwealth employer.

"Depending on their injury, their employer may accept components that include alternative approaches - like those outlined - that would benefit the injured worker's return to work," the Comcare spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman confirmed payments have been made for tai-chi, life coaching, meditation retreats, music therapy and private yoga classes, but would not provide details of individual claims because of privacy reasons.

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