



Welcome!

Medical Examiner
Information Session





Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we are meeting today; and for me, that is the Wadawurrung People. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.





INTRODUCTIONS

Melanie Simpson - Medical Examiner Lead

Jacinta Zurcas – Joint Medical Examiner Manager

Dr Hugh Seward - Clinical Lead (Medical) for TAC Clinical Panel

Jake Sanford – Claims Support Coordinator



Agenda

TIME	TOPIC	LEAD
5.30pm	▶ Introduction	Melanie Simpson
	▶ Overview of TAC ▶ What does the TAC do? ▶ What can you expect as a Medical Examiner?	Melanie Simpson
5.45pm	▶ Examinations & Reports	Dr Hugh Seward
6.30pm	▶ Quality Assurance	Kylie Bertram
6.40pm	▶ Complaints Process	Jacinta Zurcas
6.50pm	▶ What's next? ▶ Questions	Melanie Simpson





Overview of the TAC

Melanie Simpson



The TAC 2025 Strategy

The TAC 2025 strategy sets out how we support our clients and make our roads safer for everyone.

Among our key priorities, we will work more closely with our road safety partners to halve road deaths by 2030 and reach zero deaths and injuries by 2050.

We will continue to find and implement ways to improve the support our clients receive. work collaboratively with health care and service providers to implement reforms that improve our client outcomes

Our Purpose

To care for the lives of everyone who travels on Victoria's roads.

Our Vision

To be the safest place in the world for road travel.

Our Mission

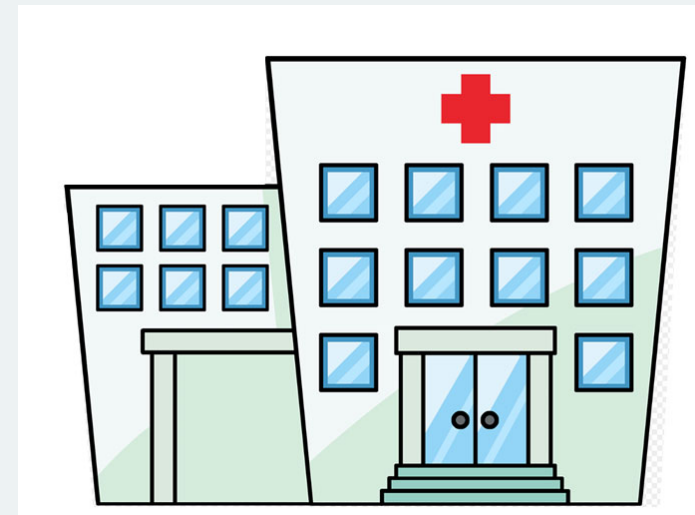
To champion road safety and help those injured get their lives back on track.

Our Values

1. We Value Life.
2. We make every conversation count.
3. We will find a better way, today.
4. We make the complicated simple.

What does the TAC do?

- Pays benefits to people injured in transport accidents
- Provides services for people injured as a driver, motorcycle rider, passenger, pedestrian, sometimes cyclists
- Pays for medical treatment, paramedical treatment, rehabilitation
- Income replacement Benefits
- Compensation may also be payable





What can I expect as an Examiner?

Melanie Simpson



Definitions: IME / JME

IME = Independent Medical Examination (this can also include requests for an Impairment Assessment)

- <https://iatraining.com.au/> - Visit this site for more information on doctors impairment training

JME = Joint Medical Examination

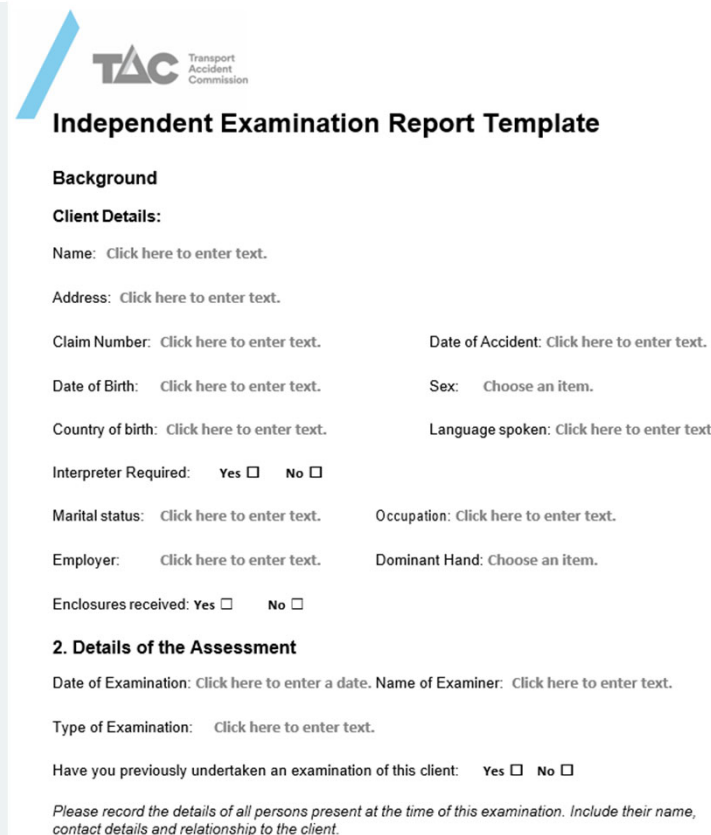
- An examination commissioned jointly by TAC and a plaintiff firm
- <https://iatraining.com.au/> - Visit this sit for more information on doctors impairment training


Independent Medical Examination (IME) Referrals

The purpose of an IME is for the TAC to seek your expert opinion.

Independent Medical Examiners are **not** expected to make a decision.

(Picture to the right is Page 1 of our IME Report Template available on our website. Link is in the resources page of this pack)



 **Independent Examination Report Template**

Background

Client Details:

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Claim Number: [Click here to enter text.](#) Date of Accident: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date of Birth: [Click here to enter text.](#) Sex: [Choose an item.](#)

Country of birth: [Click here to enter text.](#) Language spoken: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Interpreter Required: Yes No

Marital status: [Click here to enter text.](#) Occupation: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Employer: [Click here to enter text.](#) Dominant Hand: [Choose an item.](#)

Enclosures received: Yes No

2. Details of the Assessment

Date of Examination: [Click here to enter a date.](#) Name of Examiner: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of Examination: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Have you previously undertaken an examination of this client: Yes No

Please record the details of all persons present at the time of this examination. Include their name, contact details and relationship to the client.

Client Choice: Seeking Review

A client may choose to review a decision made by the TAC

VCAT is the review body for decisions about TAC 'no fault' benefits.

Protocols were established in 2005 by agreement between TAC, Australian Lawyers Alliance and Law Institute of Victoria.

The County Court or Supreme Court may hear matters concerning common law damages

Protocols have improved benefit delivery to claims and have reduced legal costs, disputes and lengthy litigation



Examinations and Reports

Dr. Hugh Seward



Objectives

- Understanding the IME's role
- Understanding sound clinical practices to assess a compensable injury
- Ability to produce clear, consistent and unbiased reports
- Service and Quality

Independent Medical Examiners play a critical role in ensuring the TAC provides the right treatment and benefits to injured Victorians

Understanding the role

Why IME?

- We believe the IME process is very important
- We want to make the best decisions for our clients
- We want to make fair decisions

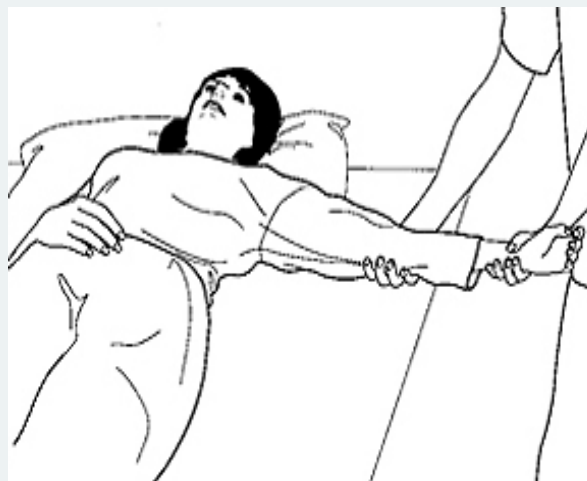


You have vital expertise to help us understand how we can get our clients lives back on track

The IME Examination

History

- Personal
- Accident (client and written material)
- Injuries and Treatment



The IME Examination

The Physical Examination or Mental State Examination

- Nature and Consequence of injury
- Functional Capacity
- Relationship to the history
- Please document abnormal findings and relevant normal findings.

Know what
you need to
test and
make sure
you test it.



The IME Examination

Investigations and Reports

- Try to be organised and pre-read ahead of the examination
- Make mention of the investigations you have been provided with.
- Clearly state if you personally viewed radiology studies or not.

What if you haven't been provided with what you need for your examination?

Call the referring party on the letters of instruction.

Make clear mention in your report of what else you need.

You might need to make your opinion provisional or you may not be able to express an opinion until you get what you need.

The IME Examination

Questions and Conclusions

- Pre-read the questions you have been asked so you examine what is relevant.
- Reproduce the questions in your report with the answers.
- Plainly address any inconsistencies between reports and/or your findings and opinions.
- Provide an explanation with the answer.

End users of your reports need to see the logical steps that caused you to form your opinion.

Explain, Explain, Explain.....

The IME Examination

Things to remember...

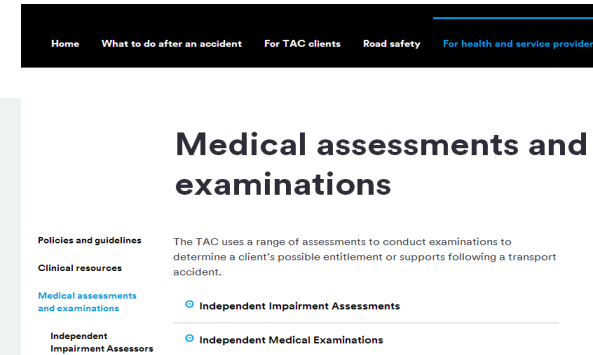
- TAC clients don't choose to have a claim or to attend IMEs.
- All persons should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Client may be anxious. Take time to reassure the person and explain the process.
- Avoid causing unnecessary pain.
- Protect the person's privacy – gowns, screens.
- Recording start and finish time to demonstrate the time you have spent with the client



IME Reports

The TAC website has a part dedicated to IMEs

- There is a template.
- Use it or use your own but make sure the same points are covered.
- Have you covered off everything that is relevant to the exam??



A report is an important document. It may potentially be used by a court or tribunal.

TAC – IME Service Standards

- Service Standards provide great guidance to successfully completing IME assessments on behalf of the TAC.
- Professional standards and the applicable law is of utmost importance.
- Clients are to be treated with professional care and courtesy.
- IME's must be the person who performs the examination and writes the report.



TAC – IME Service Standards cont.

- **Conflict Of Interest:** Medical Examiners must not accept referrals or undertake an examination if a conflict of interest might arise or be perceived to arise, unless the IME/ IIA has notified the referring case manager and agreed, in writing, on a process to manage the conflict.
It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of situations where a conflict of interest might arise, but some examples are:
 - (a) if the IME/ IIA has provided treatment or services to the person previously (other than in their role as a medical examiner); or
 - (b) the IME/ IIA has a financial relationship or other involvement with the person's employer.
- **Contact With Treating Healthcare Professional:** Should not make contact unless have permission from client.
- **Time For Completion:** 10 working days.
- **Notification & Registration:** You must notify TAC immediately of any formal complaint made in a professional capacity or any court proceedings (timelines apply).
- **Fees:** Refer to IME Fee Schedule.

Practical Advice to Avoid Complaints

Explain, Explain, Explain

- Don't do provocative tests unless you need to.
- Explain what you are going to do before you do it.
- Note the time your start and finish with the TAC client.
- Gowns – even if there is gown on the bed, point it out as people get flustered.





Quality Assurance

Kylie Bertram





Quality Assurance

The service you provide is fundamental to the TAC delivering services and benefits

In TAC's current QAP, feedback is important

Feedback from:

- TAC Staff
- TAC clients

Ensures there is a focus on the client experience

TAC remains committed to continually improving our Quality Assurance Program for Independent Medical Examiners

TAC's QA Approach


The approach in our QAP will depend on the QA issue identified.

Feedback channels

- Phone
- Email
- Rooms visit
- Peer review

Who will provide feedback:

- Member from the Medical Examinations team and or
- A member from the TAC Clinical Panel



TAC retains its long standing more formal QA process that involves review of de-identified reports by peers.

Quality Assurance – needs of end users

Non Medically Trained people will commission and read your reports....

The end users of your reports need to be able to understand how you formed your opinion.

You must consider the preferred TAC Independent Examination Report Template

Please contact the TAC if you don't have what you need to assess.

Please consider any specific issues raised in the referral documentation.

Explain the logic that led you to your conclusions.

Please include an analysis of the medical evidence used in formulating your opinions or conclusions.

Who will ask you to examine a client?

Various staff at the TAC will commission a report for a specific purpose

You may be asked to examine by

- TAC claims staff who may be considering liability for a condition or reasonableness of treatment
- TAC staff assessing impairment
- TAC staff considering a 'serious injury' application
- The TAC's informal review team who may be managing a dispute
- TAC lawyers who may be managing a dispute or preparing a damages case for court

You will get referrals from multiple areas of the TAC as different people consider different aspects of a client's claim.

Please answer any specific issues raised in the referral documentation along with addressing all aspects of the TAC Independent examination report template.



Complaints Process

Jacinta Zurcas



Complaints Process

- TAC takes all Independent Medical Examiner (IME) **complaints** very seriously.
- TAC reviews and responds to each complaint received from an injured TAC client.
- As part of the complaints process, TAC seeks information and a response to the complaint from the IME.
- IME is required to provide a written response (which may be read by a third party).
- TAC record and monitor all complaints received from injured clients.



Types of Complaints

What our clients have said...

"English is not my first language - I felt the examiner was asking questions very fast. I didn't feel I was given time to absorb and respond to the questions".

"The examination was 'terrible'. The place looked run down and the gardens were not kept".

"The examiner kept cutting me off when I was trying to answer..... I honestly didn't feel like it was a fair examination".

I found the medical examiner to be extremely 'impersonal' and 'rude'.

The examiner kept telling me that I was not suffering from a 'medically defined' condition.

I was refused a support person to accompany me into my scarring assessment.



Feedback vs Complaints

- TAC takes all Independent Medical Examiner (IME) **complaints** very seriously.
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- IME is required to provide a written response (which may be read by a third party).
- TAC record and monitor all complaints received from injured clients.

What's next?....

- All current IME Agreements end on 30 June 2025.
- The Medical Examinations team will be in touch tomorrow via email to confirm your details and booking preferences

*thank
you*

Contacts & Resources

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If you have any general queries, please don't hesitate to contact us at medical_examiners@tac.vic.gov.au

External Resources: <https://www.tac.vic.gov.au/providers/resources/independent-medical-examiners>

