

BRANCH E-BULLETIN

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MEMBERS URGED TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF MY HEALTH RECORD

Thursday October 18, 2018

Under a new Federal Government initiative, every Australian will shortly receive an online digital record of their medical history.

The *My Health Record* system, by default, records all interactions between patients and their medical practitioners, including test and pathology data, and is accessible by any health care provider who may be involved in your care. This would include employer nominated doctors who may be conducting pre-employment medical evaluations, but, concerning, those who may be examining sick and injured workers for the purpose of determining a workers' compensation claim – including medical information unrelated to the claimed illness or injury.

Today, should an employer seek to access medical information unrelated to the injury or illness claimed as workers' compensation, they must first obtain explicit permission from the employee with a medical release authority. Therefore, your Union is strongly urging all members to carefully consider how this access to your medical information may impact employment related matters in the above scenarios.

Your Union believes access to this crucial medical information should not be permitted for employment related matters, full stop.

Submissions to a recent Parliamentary Inquiry in to the *My Health Record* heard from experts about concerns related to employment along with governance and privacy overall, along with a criticism of the technology being used to underpin the system and the lack of public communication about being able to opt out of having a digital record created.

A range of privacy and security controls allows individuals to restrict access to certain information contained within their digital record.

Your Union is urging all members to carefully consider those access controls. Information on available restrictions and how to enable them can be found at this web page: <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-you-your-family/howtos/set-privacy-and-security-controls>

For members who wish to opt out of having a digital record altogether, you have until 15 November 2018 to do so. Following this cut-off, every Australian will get a *My Health Record*. To opt out, visit the following web page: <https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/for-you-your-family/opt-out-my-health-record>

If you require any further information, please contact your State Branch Official.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Townsend".

Nick Townsend
Branch Secretary