

Case Study of an Injured Tasmanian Worker

Matthew Harrison

Truck driver Matthew Harrison enjoyed an extremely active lifestyle, regularly running to work, attending the gym, cycling and playing golf.

Working for a transport company in May 2002, Matthew was loading his truck when he tripped on a lump of steel and severely injured his back.

There were no lights in the back of the truck and the lights on the adjacent dock were inadequate. In fact, a number of workers had previously complained about the lack of lighting in both the trucks and loading area. The dock lights were apparently turned off to save money

Matthew suffered an injury to his disc and he underwent fusion surgery twice in 2003 and once in 2004.

Although he is undertaking some rehabilitation duties for limited hours, Matthew is unable to drive trucks. He continues to experience acute pain in his back and has difficulty bending, lifting, standing for more than 10 minutes and sitting for more than 20 minutes.

Matthew is also unable to participate in any of the sporting activities he enjoyed before he was injured.



Despite his ongoing problems, Matthew was not assessed as having suffered 30 per cent whole person impairment and was therefore unable to pursue common law damages under Tasmania's workers' compensation laws.

"The hardest thing is the loss of independence and the ability to do something without pain," Matthew says. "I have been significantly injured but don't meet the threshold, although I have pain every day. I have a dog that I can't even walk because of my injuries."

For more information visit www.taslawsociety.asn.au/tort

Fairer Compensation for Injured Workers

