

Accident Compensation Policy

The Green Party will ensure that Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) functions ethically and equitably to provide community responsibility, comprehensive entitlements, complete rehabilitation, real compensation, and administrative efficiency. ACC will be expanded into income support and treatment for injuries, disability and illnesses, no matter their origin.

Vision

A holistic social security, health and disability system focuses on promoting good health, reducing the risk and impact of illness, disability and injury, and improving quality of life.

Values and Principles

Decisions relating to accident compensation must be consistent with the following values and principles:

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: Accident compensation and rehabilitation should ensure that whānau, hinengaro, tinana and wairua are upheld through those processes.
- *Social Responsibility*: Rehabilitation and compensation should be equitably applied for all people suffering impairment, regardless of whether that impairment has been caused by injury, illness or other disability.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Assessments about health and quality of life should be based on expert advice, plus the lived experience of the individual and their whānau, which includes mātauranga Māori.
- *Non-Violence*: Health promotion, and prevention of illness and injury through violence, should be a priority for health investment.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: Living and working within healthy ecosystems is part of preventing illness, disability and injury.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

"High quality healthcare (...) will be available to all."

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Amend the Accident Compensation Act to bring the operational detail of ACC into line with its purpose and the Woodhouse Principles of community responsibility, comprehensive entitlements, complete rehabilitation, real compensation, and administrative efficiency. (1.1.1)
- Extending the ACC scheme to include income support and treatment for injuries, disability, and illnesses, regardless of origin. (2.1.2)

- Revoke requirements of co-payments to treatment providers. (2.3.1)
- Providing earnings-related compensation until a claimant can realistically obtain and sustain suitable work. (2.4.2)

Connected Policies

The Accident Compensation policy sits within the overall framework of the [Health](#) Policy. It is also connected to [Livelihoods](#) and [Disability](#) Policies.

Specific Policy Points

1 Overall ACC Policy and Funding

Issues

Cost-control incentives, amid increasing claims and delays, encourage an insurance-focused culture over a wellbeing-centred approach at ACC. Privacy breaches and poor case management are long-standing barriers to a client-centric, ethical approach.

Actions

- 1.1. Amend the Accident Compensation Act to:
 - 1.1.1. Bring the operational detail of ACC into line with its purpose and the Woodhouse Principles of community responsibility, comprehensive entitlements, complete rehabilitation, real compensation, and administrative efficiency;
 - 1.1.2. Prioritise obtaining the best outcome for clients over the best financial outcome for ACC; and
 - 1.1.3. Provide all people with care in a fair and equitable manner.
- 1.2. Fund ACC using:
 - 1.2.1. Levies sufficient to fund today's expenses and a reserve that is sufficient to cover cost 'shocks' and enable predictable levies;
 - 1.2.2. Specific risk-based levies to encourage injury prevention where appropriate;
 - 1.2.3. An equitable mix of levies on employers, employees, motor vehicle usage and general taxation; and
 - 1.2.4. Ethical investment in enterprises with net positive social and environmental impacts.

2. Comprehensive Entitlements for Personal Injury

Issues

There are discrepancies in ACC payout and cover for Māori, Pasifika and women. Furthermore, people who have non-injury health treatment needs often miss out on the comprehensive care that they need. ACC currently prioritises a rapid exit of clients rather than restoring a claimant's full independence, health, and participation in society.

Actions

- 2.1. Ensure income support and rehabilitation support for injured, ill, and disabled people are promptly and equitably provided based on need, by:
 - 2.1.1. Providing all claimants from marginalised groups with access to independent claimant advocates; and
 - 2.1.2. Extending the ACC scheme to include income support and treatment for injuries, disability, and illnesses, regardless of origin.
- 2.2. Ensure that ACC's specialist assessments are prompt, consistent, and operate in the best interests of the client, by:
 - 2.2.1. Requiring all staff who interpret clinical records to have sufficient expertise to do so; and
 - 2.2.2. Enabling client choice of assessor, to the greatest extent practicable.
- 2.3. Ensure that claimants can financially access treatment by:
 - 2.3.1. Revoking requirements for co-payments to treatment providers; and
 - 2.3.2. Developing alternative methods for controlling the cost of treatment to claimants.
- 2.4. Ensure rehabilitation to the greatest extent practicable, including by:
 - 2.4.1. Placing the burden of proof on ACC, not the claimant, to suspend ACC support;
 - 2.4.2. Providing earnings-related compensation until a claimant can realistically obtain and sustain suitable work;
 - 2.4.3. Reorient Vocational Independence Assessments towards functional independence in daily activities, not just paid work; and
 - 2.4.4. Reporting on rehabilitation outcomes for long-term claimants whose earnings-related compensation has ended.
- 2.5. Integrate ACC compensation with other income support programmes, by:
 - 2.5.1. Treating ACC payments the same way as earned income when considering eligibility for income-tested welfare payments.
- 2.6. Ensure that complaints are promptly and effectively recorded, investigated and resolved, including by:
 - 2.6.1. Reporting promptly to the claimant about the result of an investigation; and
 - 2.6.2. Strengthening the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights in order to provide meaningful redress for breaches of the Code.
- 2.7. Ensure that no ACC claimants are denied the ability to appeal an ACC decision in the courts, including by:
 - 2.7.1. Preventing ACC from seeking legal costs from claimants; and
 - 2.7.2. Eliminating case filing fees on ACC appeals.