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Jury awards Victorian worker \$250,000 for broken ankles

A Victorian woman was awarded \$250,000 in the Country Court last week after the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) refused to offer any compensation for her broken ankles.

Slater & Gordon, WorkCover lawyer, John Karantzis said his client was forced to take the matter to trial after VWA refused to make an offer of compensation for pain and suffering for the workplace accident.

Mr Karantzis said his 57 year old client was employed as a sales person in 2006 when she had a severe fall down a set of carpeted stairs at her workplace in south-eastern Melbourne.

“My client suffered injuries to her back and neck and broke both of her ankles in the fall. She had been descending down the stairs at a normal pace before slipping and falling,” he said.

“The injury highlights the need for employers to provide their employees with a safe workplace.”

Mr Karantzis said his client was hospitalised, had surgery to both ankles and had to undergo rehabilitation before being able to return home.

“She was limited to a wheelchair for about two months after the accident and then had to take part in exhaustive and demanding physiotherapy so she could learn to walk again.”

“To this day she continues to need treatment for pain to her ankles, back and neck,” he said.

Prior to last week’s judgement the VWA would only grant his client a Serious Injury Certificate in recognition of her pain and suffering but refused to offer any damages.

“But last week the jury of six unanimously awarded her \$250,000 for pain & suffering damages after a five day hearing,” Mr Karantzis said.

“This win was worth the fight and demonstrates that a worker will receive fair compensation if they are injured in a workplace that is not safe.”

Please note the client in this matter does not want to be identified.

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