

**Vic Claims Discussion Group Inc.**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**For the financial year ended  
30 June 2016**



**Vic Claims Discussion Group Inc.**

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## ABOUT US

The Vic Claims Discussion Group Inc. (VCDG) is a not for profit professional educational and networking organisation.

Our aim is to provide practical and focussed seminars and panel discussions to engage professionals involved across all stages of the insurance claims process, at little to no cost to attendees and participants. In most cases, the seminars will attract CPD / CIP points.

All our seminars and panel discussions are delivered by experienced industry professionals who are enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge and experience.

The VCDG is operated by a committee of volunteers across all areas of insurance. Participation in seminars and panel discussions is open to professionals from all spheres of insurance – be it claims managers, brokers, lawyers, underwriters, loss adjusters, relationship managers and any associated professionals.

*Come join the discussion!*

## OUR MISSION










The VCDG mission is to provide educational and networking opportunities for free or at limited cost to the Victorian insurance claims community. The VCDG aims to foster a network of educated, up to date, and supportive group of people striving towards best practice and industry excellence, ensuring all those who work in some capacity connected to insurance claims are well equipped to achieve fair and timely claim investigations and settlements for policyholders and claimants. We provide access to expertise on various aspects of claims, and the resources necessary to facilitate that goal.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It is beyond doubt that VCDG have a bright future. VCDG continue to seek sponsorship to ensure its events maintain the level of sophistication that our network has grown accustomed to, but we will continue to call in favours and leverage out networks to ensure knowledge is imparted, information shared, and support networks grown.







## OUR PEOPLE – COMMITTEE MEMBERS

		
<p><b>Monique McKinery</b> President/Global Specialty Markets Manager, Cunningham Lindsey</p>	<p><b>Ken Harry</b> Vice President/ Client Relationship Manager, Vero</p>	<p><b>Madeleine Whiteaker</b> Secretary/Solicitor, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers</p>
		
<p><b>Vrisha Bhagat</b> Joint Treasurer/Claims Consultant, CHU Underwriting</p>	<p><b>Mark Rochman</b> Joint Treasurer/Director, Veritas Adjusting</p>	<p><b>David Kneipp</b> General Committee Member, National Claims Distribution Manager, QBE</p>
		
<p><b>Marini Mann</b> General Committee Member/Special Counsel, Gilchrist Connell</p>	<p><b>Craig Wilson</b> General Committee Member/Claims Manager, Sportscover</p>	<p><b>Diane James</b> General Committee Member/Claims Manager, McLardy McShane</p>



## OUR SUPPORTERS

Platinum Sponsors	
	
	
Gold sponsors	
<p>Are you interested in sponsorship of the Vic Claims Discussion Group?</p>	
Acknowledgements	
<p>Our thanks must also go out to those who have supported us by way of providing gratuitous services, venue space, catering sponsorship, or gift sponsorship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Cunningham Lindsey</li><li>➤ Experts Direct</li><li>➤ Finity Consulting</li><li>➤ GoldSeal</li><li>➤ Marsh Global Claims Practice</li><li>➤ Pattersons Insurerbuild</li><li>➤ QBE Insurance</li><li>➤ Veritas Adjusting</li><li>➤ Wotton Kearney Lawyers</li><li>➤ Black &amp; Krant</li></ul>	





**Monique McKinery**  
**President**

[monique.mckinery@clglobal.com](mailto:monique.mckinery@clglobal.com)

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

What a year we have had! With six educational seminars held in the financial year ended 30 June 2016 and three more events planned before the end of the calendar year, VCDG has worked hard to bring about our goal of fostering a network of educated, up to date, well networked, and supported Victorian claims community, by coordinating topical educational seminars and networking opportunities at little or no cost as set out in the Activities section of this report.

Currently VCDG has approximately 450 insurance claims professionals on our distribution list, some 280 people following VCDG on LinkedIn with valuable contributions to online discussions, and an average of about 70+ attendees at events. To say that I am thrilled with the traction that VCDG is an understatement.

The time commitment to bring about our events is significant, and I am enormously grateful to be supported by a committee of passionate, likeminded individuals who so deeply care about the claims proposition as much as I do, and for the sharing of ideas amongst our network, fostering interconnectedness in an area that can at times can be undervalued in the insurance industry.

Ken Harry (Suncorp) has again performed outstandingly in his role as Vice President. The VCDG would not function without the organisational skills of Madeleine Whiteaker (HWL Ebsworth) as Secretary. Mark Rochman (Veritas Adjusting) and Vrisha Bhagat (CHU Underwriting) have again jointly been diligent Treasurers. David Kneipp (QBE) and Marini Mann (Gilchrist Connell) must also be acknowledged for their ongoing contribution to the committee and thought leadership. We also welcomed Craig Wilson (Sportscover) and Diane James (McLardy McShane) to the committee, two very well regarded claims and industry professionals who have complimented the VCDG team exceptionally well.

The association would not be able to offer the events it has but for the support of our platinum sponsors TurksLegal, Gilchrist Connell, Maincom Services, and Cowan Restoration. Each of these organisations have been integral in ensuring that the VCDG can operate and meet expenses for events that are topical and engaging.

Our sponsors have become integral to the operations of VCDG, offering us more than just financial support. We are pleased that this year we have been able to deliver in excess of that promised in our sponsorship packages – because we value their contribution and what it means for the broader industry. For anyone interested, contact me via email if you would like to be added to our distribution list or would like a copy of our sponsorship package. And of course, *come join the discussion!*



## OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Our major objective this year was to build momentum with VCDG and educate and connect as many claims professionals as possible, and this objective has been achieved.

The financial year ended 30 June 2016 commenced with a panel session on Catastrophes and **Claims Management in an era of Natural Disasters**. The 2014 – 2015 year saw a phenomenal number of events declared as catastrophes including the Brisbane Hailstorm, the Adelaide Hills Fires, the Sydney ANZAC Day hail storm, Cyclone Marcia, Cyclone Olwyn, and the New South Wales and Queensland storms and flooding. The impact on the insurance industry was significant.

The panel, chaired by David Kneipp (QBE), Andrea Bedggood (Marsh Global Claims Practice Pty Ltd), Lee Cooper (Insurance House Group), Jonathan Hubbard (Cunningham Lindsey) and Stuart Patterson (Pattersons Insurerbuild) discussed insights gained and what can be done by the insurance industry and in particular claims professionals to ensure best practice into the future. Aside from sharing meaningful insight, this event afforded attendees the opportunity to further speak with panellists and attain supplementary information over networking drinks held at The Royal Hotel sponsored by Stuart Patterson. With 90+ people in attendance from all spheres of the insurance industry, this event was a huge success.



The CAT panel offered insight into catastrophe claims management and best practice going forward.

Its second event, **The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Claims Management** covered inflated claims, claims that lack merit, are opportunistic or are simply questionable. Another panel session, we invited panellists and attendees alike to contribute their thoughts on insurance fraud, on fraud detection and deterrence, and the cost of investigating and defending suspect claims. The seminar explored whether positive working relationships can be maintained with intermediaries and honest policy holders, and how we, as an industry manage our reputation. Our expert panellists included David Lamb (Sportscover), Allison Prince (Guild Insurance), Ann Mackay (Cunningham Lindsey), Paul Angus (TurksLegal), and Andrea Bedggood (Marsh). The 90+ attendees left with a better understanding of how best to handle similarly dubious situations.

Following the success of its two previous seminars, VCDG held a third panel discussion on Workers compensation issues - **Worlds Collide: Can public liability and worker's**



**compensation ever be friends?** Which explored practical issues which arise when liability insurers, their clients and lawyers are involved in claims by workers against employers. Worker's compensation is often seen as a very different world to general liability. Attended by over 100 insurance claims professionals, our panellists: Jason Newman (Gilchrist Connell), Gavin Macrae (Hall & Wilcox), Lillian Rizkalla (Hall & Wilcox), Margarita Yerusalimsky (Zaparas lawyers) and Rosalind Gilsean (independent mediator), and moderated by John Macdonell (QBE Insurance) effectively explained the nuances of Workers Comp, how it fits in with general liability in practice, and how those outside that world can successfully navigate it.



Worlds Collide panellists break down the barriers between workers' compensation and general liability

For its fourth seminar VCDG together with Finity Consulting hosted **Why Claims matter: Claims Trends and Insights** at Vero Insurance. With the insurance market stagnant in terms of premium growth, most insurers have championed claims transformation as the way forward. Finity's Jacob Mamutil and Raj Kanhai provided attendees with an overview on the current state of the market, discussed the claims environment, and provided their commentary on profitability across both commercial and personal lines. They also offered several insights on 'mega-trends' and what they suggest for the future of insurance and claims. In a jam-packed hour, this session explored potential increased risks on the horizon, the industry's (past and present) utilisation of technology, reducing claims leakage, using big data as well as claims analytics to maintain a competitive edge. This breakfast seminar, sponsored by Veritas Adjusting, attracted over 80 attendees, with valuable insights imparted.



Raj and Jacob discuss the impact of BIG data on claims handling





With the goal of improving the soft skills of our network relevant to both insurance and our day to day lives VCDG hosted a fifth seminar, **Negotiating to Win/Win** in collaboration with GoldSeal's Sheila Baker. This session taught techniques in dealing effectively with obstacles and opposition, and conveyed tactics and strategies which could be utilised for successful outcomes using integrity, assertive communication styles and the "win-win" philosophy. This seminar highlighted understanding the needs and challenges within the negotiation process; analysing the instinctive communication skills we use during the negotiation process; the importance of the various stages of negotiation including planning, proposing, bargaining and agreeing; as well as developing key interpersonal skills to facilitate a negotiation. In excess of 40 attendees were later treated to drinks in Wotton Kearney's foyer to continue the discussion.



Gold Seal's Sheila Baker discusses techniques to "get to yes"

For its sixth seminar, VCDG held a session on **Moral Dilemma: Insuring Bikies, Gangsters, and Other Colourful Characters**; with Paul Angus' presentation providing much interesting food for thought. Considering the case of Stealth Enterprises Pty Limited trading as *The Gentleman's Club v Calliden Insurance Limited* [2015] NSWSC 1270, Paul delved into the ramifications for insurers and those insureds with 'colourful' pasts. This seminar explored what past history or current associations a 'reasonable person' in the position of the insured ought disclose to an insurer; whether an insured's activities or associates change the risk equation for an insurer; what moral risks are 'known' to an insured; and what underwriting or other evidence is required in order to reduce an insurer's liability in respect of a claim to nil in the context of pre-contractual non-disclosure.



Paul Angus (TurksLegal) highlights that an Insured's moral integrity matters.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial year ended 30 June 2016 was a strong year for VCDG. VCDG received a total of \$8,500 in sponsorship funds from four Platinum sponsors. This is considered an excellent result and places VCDG in a good position over the coming year.

VCDG plans to maintain its sponsorship packages for the foreseeable future; though it is anticipated that a 20% increase in sponsorship funds over the coming year is achievable, which assumes retention of our current sponsors at comparable levels.

Expenses during the year were relatively minimal, the most significant being Association Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance policies.

Notwithstanding, as the Group does not have a constant income stream (memberships, ticket sales to events, etc.) a prudent approach is to be maintained towards expenditure over the next 12 months.

It is forecast that spending may increase slightly with funds allocated toward items such as website development which is in progress. Funds may also be required for venue hire given delegate numbers to our events could continue to increase and VCDG may outgrow some of the venues offered free of charge to date.

The financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2016 have been completed. VCDG have allocated approximately 28.5% of net profit for financial year ended 30 June 2016 towards anticipated tax liability.



**Mark Rochman**  
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## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The certified VCDG financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2016 are annexed from page 14 of this report.

## HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED

### Attend Our Seminars

The VCDG is an inclusive group. We encourage all professionals involved in the insurance claims process to attend our events, and contribute to the discussion.

Participation is open to professionals from all spheres of insurance – be it claims managers, brokers, underwriters, relationship managers, investigators, loss adjusters and any associated professionals.

### Suggest Seminar Topics and Speakers

We aim to provide our network with seminars on areas of interest to you and the broader community. If you have a topic that you are eager to discuss, please do let us know.

### Follow us on LinkedIn

Increase our social media presence by contributing to discussions.

### Become a Sponsor

Support the industry group that supports you. The benefits of sponsoring Vic Claims Discussion Group Inc. include:

- Support and be affiliated with a growing organisation that has a network of over 450 insurance industry professionals across various claims capacities in Victoria.
- Leveraging the active and well received presence of Vic Claims Discussion Group Inc. on LinkedIn with a considerable capacity for social media reach into the wider insurance industry.
- Allows the opportunity to place your brand directly in front of approximately 50 attendees per event (attendance numbers to date include a minimum of 30 attendees and a maximum of 100 attendees due to venue capacity).
- Opportunities to incorporate product launches, placements, or brand awareness campaigns into events.
- Adding value to your brand by supporting the on-going professional development of Victorian claims professionals.
- Corporate Social Responsibility – assist in both recruiting people into our industry as well as retaining talent.
- Enabling free access to educational events for the Victorian claims community.
- Proving staff with opportunities to develop valuable expertise and cutting edge industry knowledge.
- Promoting and fostering unparalleled client relationship opportunities for your staff and clients.



## CONTACT US

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