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To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir / Madam,

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1974, I was incinerated in a freak accident and 40% of my body was deeply burned. After five months recuperation, ACC forced me to go and find work, as their medical advisors could not offer me any more help, palliative care, or any cure for the severe pain in my scar tissue. At this time I was unable to sit at a desk, wear shoes, or even stand still, as I had to walk on the spot constantly, while standing.

ACC could neither offer me, nor find me a job so I could support my wife and four pre-school children. They told me to go and find a life for myself; as from their medical advice it would be at least three years before they could have any idea as to what impairment would remain. Having lost our livelihood in the fire, I was destitute and desperate. I begged ACC to assist me with a premature disability payment so I could get a reliable and appropriate vehicle. They gave me \$3,000 on the condition that my file would be closed. It was this, or literally starvation. Thus began a ten year horror journey. At the end of this period, every part of me was scarred.

Three years after the accident, one of the ACC officers, Laurie Ennor, revisited me. He was so shocked and stunned that he insisted that I prepare a submission for ACC to reconsider my position. I did so and was flatly turned down—"file closed".

In the years that followed I worked with every erg of energy to support my family. Some days, after four or five hours work, I would return home, collapse in the doorway, and literally weep with the pain. However, I did succeed in establishing a viable green house horticulture business, but the cost health wise was very high. Whilst I believed I had been poorly treated, I was too destitute to contest the ACC ruling. I endeavoured to get on with life, with an attitude as positive as possible. On numerous occasions I am sure God impressed people to help feed our children.

Twenty six years later, on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2001, at the Turoa ski field on No 3 slope, whilst stationary on the left hand side of the ski run, I was hit and knocked unconscious by an "out of control" snow boarder. For three days I literally saw white stars-all day long! The diagnosis of my injury was as follows:

EZAZ Post Concussion Syndrome S 570 Sprain Spine.

I received extensive physio and myofacial physio treatment. A neurosurgeon did a complete examination due to constant severe headaches. After two months off work, the pain subsided and ACC directed me back to light work. However, this was a retrograde step, as within a couple of days, I was again in pain.

I was referred then to Dr Dale Speedy for assessment. He concluded I needed to get out of my present employment, or face continued health deterioration, An occupational therapist from Leesen Meene concurred with Dr Speedy.

I was then told by ACC, "Unless you quit your business, we can do nothing for you. Until you get out, you must manage your own pain, but we will give discretionary physio treatment." For this, I was thankful, however, over a three year period I have had months off work with no remuneration from ACC at all. This has seriously eroded my business viability.

Since October, 2001, apart from one week, I have had not had a pain free day.

Then, on 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2005, (while in low-moderate pain) I walked into a clean plate glass door with no vision rail. As a result, two extensor tendons on my Right Hand index finger were severed, as was the radial nerve. I resumed work on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005, with difficulty.

I find constant, low to medium pain a distraction to my concentration, and it is so easy to make a judgement error that results in further exacerbating my injury.

Since Dr Speedy's assessment, I have been seriously trying to sell our business, recuperate, and retrain for appropriate employment. However, due to our property being subject to a Franklin District Council initiated land zoning dispute, the above plans have been temporarily frustrated.

Subsequent to my accident of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001, my Case Manager gave me to understand that ACC would accommodate what physiotherapy was necessary to assist in my pain management, so I could keep working at an appropriate level. However, this arrangement has definitely not worked out as I was given to understand it would.. Since 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001, I have not had one week in which I have been able to function in the manner I was able to prior to that date. Since 13-10 -2001, cumulatively I have had months off work due to pain, with no ACC compensation.

The basic dynamic I face is this; To be pain free, I need 7 to 8 weeks of total rest. Any physical work of the nature that my business demands, will result in the pain returning again. It is in this painful condition that I have had to function since 13-10- 2001. If the pain level goes above 4, and I have to work on, the ability of my back muscles to hold my spine in place is severely degraded, and results in my spine periodically slipping out of alignment. The resultant pain can be quite sudden and severe. (7-9) When this happens, I need immediate physiotherapy just to be able to function. Whilst immediate physiotherapy reduces the pain level, it takes time and further physiotherapy to restore me to a lower pain level. Each recovery time can vary greatly.

Each time this happens, I am faced with going through the ACC paperwork all over again. My injury is of such a nature that it doesn't fit into the standard ACC profile of treatment time. This, my case managers have admitted. Surely it is time for ACC to accept that my physiotherapist is better qualified to judge the level of treatment I require, than somebody whose portfolio it is to fit my case into a predetermined stereotype, and tick the appropriate boxes.

In conclusion, as a self employed person, ACC has not facilitated my recovery in my two major accidents. (4-4-74, & 13-10-2001) The best that can be said, is that I've fought with all my strength to barely exist, as quality of life is concerned. Thirty three years of pain, surely isn't a success story. If ACC had facilitated my recovery in the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1974, by giving me a two to three year recovery time, then the subsequent thirty years would have been quality years, and infinitely more productive, instead of much of it being a living hell.

As two of my case managers have said, quote, "ACC is not designed for the self employed."

Malcolm Hood, my physiotherapist, is intimately acquainted with my case history, and can see the "modus operandi" of the ACC is seriously flawed. Surely it is time that the "modus operandi" of the ACC was overhauled and that fair and quality service was given to the self employed.

Yours faithfully,



Nyron M Chick.