

COMPO BOARD PAYS OUT €220M

Massive surge in claims over €100k

By ROBERT COX



AWARDS: Patricia Byron, chief of InjuriesBoard.ie

CASE STUDY 1

ANDREW was killed in a road accident. He was survived by his wife and two young children. InjuriesBoard.ie assessed his family's claim and the total award for bereavement, financial loss and other expenses amounted to more than €560,000. The claim took nine months and the administration cost was just €1,564.

CLOSE to €220 million was paid out last year to nearly 9,000 people who suffered personal injuries, according to new figures.

The Personal Injuries Board revealed a total of €217m in compensation was paid out to 8,845 people in 2008 — compared to €181m the previous year. The board said high value claims

over €38,000 rose by 47 per cent and over €100,000 surged by a whopping 87 per cent — with such claims now representing one in every three made.

The number of claims under €38,000 — which are typically

soft tissue/minor bone injuries — rose by a modest 4 per cent in 2008. Due to these increases the average award has risen 11 per cent to €24,552.

Savings

The board — which has been renamed InjuriesBoard.ie — said the speed and efficiency in which the claims are dealt with outside of a courtroom has led to significant cost savings.

"We have now made over 23,500 awards since we opened our doors in 2004, amounting to almost €530m in compensation," said

CASE STUDY 2

MARIA is retired and was involved in a serious road crash in 2006. She sustained serious spinal injuries and fractures to her ribs and skull.

She spent a prolonged period in hospital and had intensive treatment. Maria was awarded €229,000. The claim took nine months and cost just €1,100 in administration costs.

Patricia Byron, the chief executive of InjuriesBoard.ie.

"By delivering these awards four times faster and with a low administration charge, the InjuriesBoard.ie model has delivered direct and indirect savings of between €200m and €250m to the economy.

"At a time when the country is facing enormous challenges, the need to maintain and, if possible, expand these savings was never greater.

"Evidence available to the Board

suggests that as confidence in our non-adversarial model grows, a greater number of the more serious or complex injuries are assessed by us," she added.

The board also said they had no evidence that personal injury claims were increasing due to the recession.

"From our point of view, it is simply too early to draw the same conclusion... To date in 2009, we have no evidence of an increase in claims volumes," Ms Byron added.