



**INJURED WORKER ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

# **POISED for PROGRESS**

**NEW MEMBERS, NEW PERSPECTIVES,  
INCREASED AWARENESS**





## WHO WE ARE

We are a committee of injured workers and surviving family members who use lived experience to help strengthen New Brunswick's workers' compensation system.

## OUR MANDATE

We provide WorkSafeNB with informed, solutions-focused advice grounded in lived experience.

We work to improve outcomes for injured workers and their families by identifying system-level opportunities, supporting modernization, and strengthening the client experience throughout the continuum of care.

# POISED for PROGRESS

In 2025, the Injured Worker Advisory Committee (IWAC) had the opportunity to meet with WorkSafeNB's board of directors to share insights from injured workers and families.

The discussion focused on emerging issues, including psychological health and safety, survivor benefits, and long-term outcomes for families affected by workplace tragedies. Board members expressed strong interest in IWAC's work and its role in informing future policy and system improvements.

This engagement reinforced the importance of lived experience at the highest levels of decision-making and highlighted IWAC's growing influence as a trusted advisory body.

As IWAC continues to grow in visibility and influence, this moment reflects a committee truly poised for progress.

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# Letter from the Committee

Paula Davant    Lisa    Lee Russell  
[Signature]    Pamela Butler    André Jobin

**As we reflect on 2025, we're proud of how far the committee (IWAC) has come – growing in both size and influence and deepening our role as a trusted voice for injured workers and their families.**

This year, we welcomed Lee Russell and André Jobin to the committee, adding valuable new perspectives shaped by decades of lived experience and advocacy. Their energy and insight have strengthened our discussions and reaffirmed our shared purpose: ensuring every injured worker in New Brunswick is heard, supported, and treated with dignity.

We also saw meaningful progress for workers, including important benefit improvements that reflect years of dialogue between IWAC, WorkSafeNB, and government partners. These changes demonstrate what can be achieved when lived experience guides policy and practice.

Throughout 2025, we continued to bring forward the voices and stories of injured workers through our consultations, outreach, and at this year's Health and Safety Conference, where our committee's video introduced thousands of New Brunswickers to the people behind the policy. The response was overwhelming, confirming that our stories have the power to drive understanding and change.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone at WorkSafeNB for their continued partnership, openness, and respect. Together, we're building a stronger, more compassionate compensation system for everyone it serves.

## **The Members of the Injured Worker Advisory Committee**



# Message from the **President and CEO**

**This year, IWAC continued to demonstrate why it is such a valuable and unique part of WorkSafeNB – the only committee of its kind in Canada.**

IWAC's members bring powerful perspectives rooted in lived experience. Their insight helps us understand how policies and programs affect real people, and their collaboration has contributed to meaningful progress – including improvements to benefits and ongoing enhancements to our services.

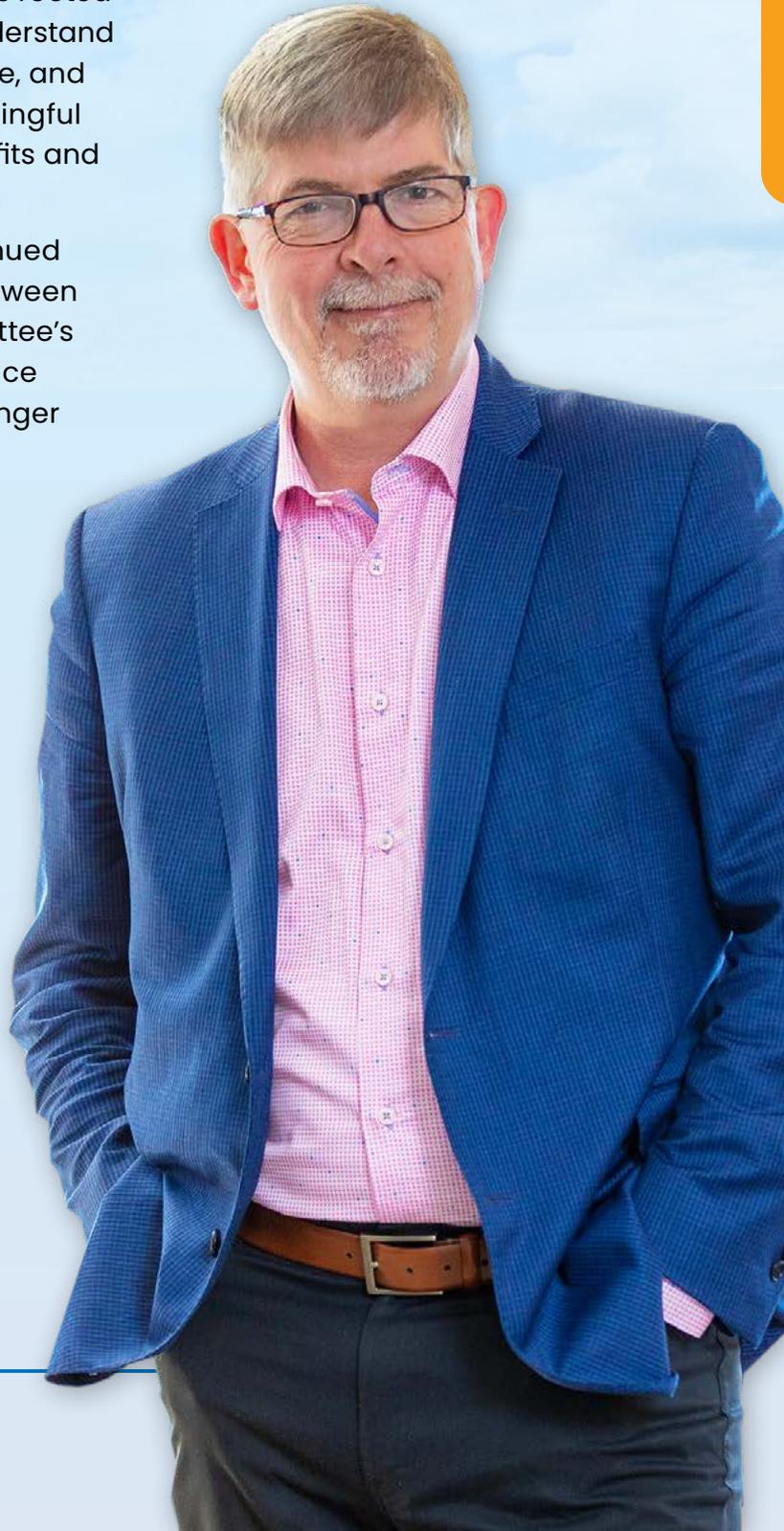
I'm especially proud of how IWAC has continued to raise awareness and strengthen trust between injured workers and WorkSafeNB. The committee's presence at the Health and Safety Conference and in our communications has given a stronger voice to those we serve.

As we look ahead to 2026 and the ongoing review of legislation, IWAC's role will be more important than ever. I want to thank each member for their honesty, courage, and commitment to building a fairer and more compassionate system for New Brunswick's injured workers.



**Tim Petersen**

President and CEO, WorkSafeNB





# IWAC Across New Brunswick: **Connecting Voices, Driving Change**

**IWAC meets regularly throughout the year in communities across New Brunswick, ensuring injured workers' voices are heard where they live and work. Members bring diverse perspectives from every region, helping shape policies and programs that make a difference.** In addition to in-person meetings, IWAC holds virtual sessions as needed to discuss emerging issues and keep progress moving forward.



**IWAC Website**



## Welcoming **New Voices to the Table**

**In 2025, IWAC welcomed two new members — Lee Russell and André Jobin — each bringing deep personal experience and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for injured workers and their families.**

Lee Russell is known for her advocacy and community involvement following a workplace tragedy that changed her life and inspired her to help others navigate the compensation system with compassion and understanding.

André Jobin joins IWAC following a 30-year career as a paramedic, during which he played a key role in advancing recognition for paramedics as medical professionals in New Brunswick — a first in Canada. Now retired, André continues to focus on well-being, recovery, and supporting others, often alongside his service dog, Roscoe.

Together, Lee and André strengthen IWAC's collective voice — ensuring the lived experience of injured workers and families continues to inform WorkSafeNB's policies, programs, and approach to care.



**LEE RUSSELL**



**ANDRÉ JOBIN**

# Why We Serve: Sharing Our Story Through Film

**In 2025, IWAC took a major step forward in helping New Brunswickers understand who we are – and why we serve.**

Working with WorkSafeNB’s Communications team, the committee produced a three-minute video that introduces each member and shares the personal experiences that drive our work. Through authentic storytelling, the video highlights the compassion, resilience, and determination that define IWAC and the injured worker community.

The film premiered at WorkSafeNB’s annual Health and Safety Conference, where it received an overwhelmingly positive response. Many attendees said it helped them see the human side of compensation and reminded them why this work matters.

Since then, the video has become a powerful outreach and awareness tool, featured on WorkSafeNB’s website, social media channels, and in presentations to staff and stakeholders. It continues to open doors for dialogue, empathy, and change – giving voice to those whose experiences guide the system toward better care and fairness.



[Watch the video](#)



# Brexton Never Met His Uncle – But He Knows His Story

**Brexton never met his uncle Jordan. He knows only that something terrible happened at work, and that it should never have happened at all.**

Through his relationship with his grandmother, IWAC member Leica Gahan, Brexton is learning about safety in ways that feel natural and unquestioned. At just 5-years-old, he proudly wears his hard hat and safety vest, and understands that protective equipment is part of everyday activities. For him, safety is not a rule. It is simply how things are done.

Leica's loss of her son Jordan in a preventable workplace accident in 2014 continues to shape her advocacy, and it was the focus of WorkSafeNB's 2025 *Day of Mourning* campaign. By introducing safety early and consistently, she is helping ensure the lessons learned through tragedy are passed on to the next generation.

Brexton may not know all the details of what happened to his uncle, but he already understands the most important truth. Safety is about protecting the people you love. Through stories like this, IWAC continues to highlight why prevention matters, not just for today's workers, but for the generations who follow.

**At right: Kirk lays a wreath on behalf of IWAC during the Day of Mourning ceremony at Lily Lake in Saint John on April 28, a first for the committee.**

**"I never met my uncle Jordan because his job wasn't safe. That's why I'm careful and want you to be careful too."**

Let's help Brexton keep New Brunswick workers safe on the job. **Please join us in observing a National Day of Mourning on April 28, 2025.**

To read a special article by Leica Gahan about Jordan's story and the importance of workplace safety, scan the QR code:

[WorkSafeNB.ca/dayofMourning](https://www.worksafenb.ca/dayofmourning)

#DayOfMourning

WORK SAFE NB  
TRAVAIL SÉCURITAIRE NB

SAFE ON THE JOB





## Building Connections at the Health & Safety Conference

**This year, Kirk, Leica, Paula, and Lee attended WorkSafeNB’s annual Health and Safety Conference, joining hundreds of delegates from across the province.**

For the committee, it was more than a professional development opportunity. It was a chance to engage directly with workers, employers, and safety professionals, and to have meaningful conversations about IWAC’s purpose and impact.

The committee’s three-minute film was featured early in the conference and helped set the tone for the opening of the first day. Seen by all attending delegates, the film introduced IWAC members and the lived experiences that guide their work, creating a shared moment of reflection at the start of the event.

Following the screening, IWAC members connected with delegates during sessions and on the conference floor, answering questions, sharing perspectives, and encouraging feedback on how the compensation system can continue to improve.

Through conversations on the floor and during sessions, IWAC members helped raise awareness of the committee’s role and encouraged others to share feedback or ideas to improve the compensation system. It also led to new opportunities to share IWAC’s message more broadly. Shortly after the event, Kirk Westfield was invited to appear on the Safety Services podcast, where he spoke about his personal journey, the committee’s growing influence, and the importance of giving injured workers a voice in shaping policy.

These outreach moments, in person and on air, continue to strengthen understanding, empathy, and trust between injured workers and the wider safety community.

# Collaboration in Action: **Supporting Psychological Health & Safety**

**This year, IWAC member Kirk Westfield played an active role in strengthening WorkSafeNB's approach to psychological health and safety.**

Building on his lived experience and deep understanding of recovery challenges, Kirk met one-on-one with members of WorkSafeNB's Psychological Health and Safety Team through a series of virtual discussions, and again in person during the committee's Q1 meeting. These conversations provided valuable insight into the real-world experiences of injured workers navigating psychological injuries and the return-to-work process.

Kirk's input helped shape the team's ongoing strategy to better support workers facing mental health challenges, emphasizing empathy, communication, and early intervention.



## **EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION**

**Kirk also attended the Atlantic Conference for First Responder Mental Health, the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada, reinforcing the IWAC's focus on psychological health and safety in high-risk workplaces.**





## By the Numbers: **Putting Workers First**

**In 2025, we continued to strengthen our role as a trusted advisor to WorkSafeNB, ensuring every policy and process reflects the needs, realities, and dignity of injured workers and their families.**

Over the past year, the committee submitted five formal position papers, each grounded in lived experience and focused on improving fairness, clarity, and access to support.

### **POSITION PAPERS SUBMITTED IN 2025**

- **Occupational Hearing Loss**
- **Home Modifications to Assist with Functional Access**
- ***Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission & Workers' Appeal Tribunal Act***
- **Accident Reporting and Application for Benefits**
- **Traumatic Mental Stress**

**Each submission was guided by IWAC's core principle:** putting workers first. Whether advocating for more timely reporting, accessible home modifications, or fair treatment of psychological injuries, IWAC's recommendations help ensure policy decisions are informed by real experiences and focused on better outcomes.

By combining personal stories with practical solutions, IWAC continues to shape a compensation system that reflects compassion, accountability, and respect for those we serve.

# A Milestone for Fairness: **Benefit Enhancements & Legislative Updates**

**No report on 2025 would be complete without recognizing the significant benefit and legislative improvements that came into effect this year – reforms that IWAC long advocated for on behalf of injured workers and their families.**

WorkSafeNB took a major step forward in strengthening New Brunswick’s workers’ compensation system with a suite of enhancements and updates now passed into law, improving financial security, fairness, and clarity.

Building on last year’s progress (which increased loss of earnings benefits and raised the maximum annual earnings threshold) **the latest changes include:**



**Simplified and enhanced survivor benefits, providing clearer, more stable support for spouses and families.**



**Stronger protection for young workers, ensuring fair compensation for those pursuing education or training.**



**Improved retirement security through larger lump-sum annuities for eligible workers.**



**Modernized impairment ratings that align with current medical standards.**



**Inclusive, plain-language legislation that better reflects today’s workforce and values.**

IWAC members were proud to see the voices of injured workers reflected in these outcomes – proof that respectful, sustained dialogue can create lasting change.

These reforms mark an important milestone in the evolution of New Brunswick’s compensation system and set the stage for IWAC’s next chapter: contributing to the ongoing legislative and policy reviews that support meaningful improvements for injured workers and their families.



## Parting Thoughts:

**As 2025 comes to a close, IWAC is proud of the progress made – and even more inspired by what lies ahead.**

In 2026 we look forward to continuing our involvement in legislative and policy discussions, ensuring the voices of injured workers and their families are heard in shaping the next generation of policy. This process will be an opportunity to build on what's been achieved and to keep the focus on fairness, recovery, and prevention.

Beyond policy, IWAC remains committed to strengthening its connection with injured workers across New Brunswick – listening, learning, and ensuring that real experiences continue to inform system improvements.

**Together with WorkSafeNB, we'll continue to build a system grounded in empathy, respect, and shared responsibility – one that truly reflects the people it serves.**

# LOOKING AHEAD

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Looking ahead to 2026, IWAC is preparing for the next phase of its work, **continuing to bring the voices and lived experiences of injured workers and their families into legislative and policy discussions.**

The committee looks forward to advising on reviews that help strengthen fairness, recovery, and prevention across New Brunswick's workers' compensation system.



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