

## Dioxin claims accepted by ACC

**5:00AM** Thursday Feb 24, 2005

Two Taranaki people who fear they may have been injured by workplace exposure to dioxin have had their claims accepted by ACC.

The corporation said in a statement yesterday that the two people, along with four others, underwent medical examinations by an ACC occupational medicine specialist last year.

All six had alleged they had been taken ill as a result of workplace exposure stemming from their local Ivon Watkins-Dow chemical plant.

In September the Health Ministry said that tests had shown some long-term residents in the New Plymouth suburb of Paritutu had a higher than normal level of dioxin in their blood.

An interim report on the blood dioxin study said the higher levels were most likely to be from breathing emissions originating from a former Ivon Watkins-Dow plant in Paritutu.

Ivon Watkins-Dow - now Dow AgroSciences - made the pesticide 2,4,5-T from 1960 until the 1980s at the plant and Paritutu residents have long said emissions from the plant caused a variety of diseases.

The claims by the six former workers were assessed by ACC's PCP/Dioxin Panel which has been considering work exposure injury claims for chemicals containing dioxin such as PCP since 1997.

The panel found there was insufficient medical evidence of causal links in the four cases declined.

Five more people have now completed questionnaires and ACC is arranging for them to undergo medical examinations.

The results of those examinations will be considered by the panel and recommendations made on whether or not to accept any further claims.

Roy Drake, one of the unsuccessful claimants, said on TV One news last night that he was pleased that a government department had finally recognised dioxin exposure.

ACC said that several criteria have to be met for claims to be accepted.

These include that personal injury must have been suffered as a result of exposure, and the exposure must have occurred in the workplace.

- NZPA