

AUSTRALIA

GEB Network Partner: MLC Life Insurance

DISABILITY BENEFITS

ABOUT MLC Life Insurance

MLC Life Insurance was established over 130 years ago and is now part of the Nippon Life Insurance Group (as of 2016). MLC Life Insurance currently provides coverage for over 1.2 million insurance customers. An award-winning life insurer, MLC Life Insurance is widely recognized as an industry leader providing innovative solutions with a strong customer focus.

MLC Life Insurance provides group benefits including Disability, Life Insurance, and access to *Best Doctors* and *Mental Health Navigator* programmes.

CAUSES OF DISABILITY

Disability affects a significant proportion of Australians, with an estimated one in five in the population living with some form of disability.¹ The leading causes of disability² in Australia include:

- Low Back Pain
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Neck Pain
- Falls

Other causes of disability may include Ischemic Heart Disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder, and Stroke.³

Risk factors including tobacco use, poor dietary habits and high body mass index account for a significant degree of the disease burden leading to disability in Australia.

Many causes of disability can be managed through early intervention, education and lifestyle changes. For disorders that progress to disability and eventual absence from work, MLC Life Insurance offers Disability benefits and associated support services.

DISABILITY PLAN DESIGN

MLC Life Insurance offers Long Term Disability cover via Group Income Protection insurance. Following is a description of standard product features.

Income Protection Insurance (Group Salary Continuance)

Definition of Disability: 'Total Disability' or being 'Totally Disabled' means that as a result of injury or illness, the insured individual is continuously:

- unable to perform at least one of the important duties of his or her own occupation; and is
- under the care of and following the regular and continuous advice for treatment from a Doctor in relation to that illness or injury; and
- is not engaged in any occupation, paid or unpaid.

Benefits structure: Income Protection benefits are paid as monthly benefits (paying up to 75% of annual income) for each month of disability or partial disability up to: AU\$30,000 for all occupations.

Waiting Period, Elimination Period, Duration of cover: Claimants must satisfy a Waiting Period before they are eligible for coverage under the plan. The Waiting Period may be structured as 30, 60 or 90 days. After the Waiting Period, an Elimination Period must also be satisfied before benefits can begin. The standard Elimination period for Income Protection is typically 90 days.

The Duration of Cover under Income Protection can vary. Available options include a benefit period of two or five years, or a benefit period of up to age 65 or 70.

Claims process: Once an individual is diagnosed by a medical practitioner, notification of a potential claim should be provided to MLC Life Insurance as soon as possible, although there is no standard time limit on when claims must be reported. From receipt of claim and any other requested information, if approved, payment is typically made within 5-7 business days. Claim payments are made via EFT, further simplifying the payment process.

DISABILITY SUPPORT

MLC Life Insurance takes a holistic approach to disability claims management, supporting customers with a focus on early intervention, functional capacity, holistic case management, and rehabilitation and return to work planning.

Early intervention

MLC Life Insurance offers an early intervention and notification support programme called **MLC Enhance**. Through this programme, MLC Life Insurance works closely with employers to remain up to date on extended employee absences that may lead to a disability claim. By maintaining close contact with Employers, MLC Life Insurance is able to get involved in the early stages of disability and provide focused assistance, and potentially prevent a claim from progressing to full disability.

Dedicated support for claimants

MLC Life Insurance assigns **dedicated case assessors** to support the claimant throughout the data gathering and case review process. The assessor remains in contact with the claimant at every stage up to the final claim decision.

If the claim is approved, further support is provided by **case consultants and internal specialists who regularly confer to provide evidence-based case management solutions** for each claimant. A specialist team also supports customers with long-duration claims to ensure claimants receive ongoing assistance and guidance throughout the entirety of their disability. MLC Life Insurance is recognised as a market leader in claims management, with their claims team winning awards for service and performance, including the 2018 and 2019 ALUCA (Australasian Life Underwriting and Claims Association) Claims Team of the Year Award in recognition of their outstanding achievement and dedication to customers.

Rehabilitation & Return to work support

MLC Life Insurance assists claimants in identifying appropriate resources to help **support them throughout their rehabilitation process**, including direction to accredited counsellors, physical therapists and other healthcare providers.

Working closely with employers, claimants and Rehabilitation professionals, the MLC Life Insurance team **helps develop a tailored treatment and Return-to-Work programme** that incorporates realistic goals and milestones to support the desired health outcome and return-to-work plan. MLC Life Insurance continues to support claimants after their claim has closed. The MLC Assist programme (Insurance Asia Awards 2020 Claim Initiative of the Year - Australia), helps claimants meet their return to work and rehabilitation goals after the traditional claim period has ended.

MLC Life Insurance

Key Advantages

Access to expert Second Medical Opinions from Best Doctors

Disability claimants are further supported by the medical experts at Best Doctors.

Through **Best Doctors**, employees and their close family members have access to some of the world's leading medical specialists, providing second medical opinions, treatment plans and care alternatives.

As part of Best Doctors, **Mental Health Navigator** offers quick, virtual access to a network of leading clinical psychologists and psychiatrists in Australia. They can provide expert assessments of mental health conditions and a tailored treatment plan to help get individuals on the right path.

Employees and their close family members can access Best Doctors at any time.

Leveraging technology

MLC Life Insurance has invested in technology to develop a robust claims management framework to ensure accuracy, convenience for claimants, and compliance with legislation.

They have embedded a Claim Duration Management Framework and Contemporary Claim Model for consistent management of all Income Protection (IP) claims. Under these measures, claims are risk-profiled upon receipt to identify any potential issues which may impact duration of disability and/or possible return to health outcomes.

Claims are subject to frequent review by a lead claims consultant to ensure that disability claimants continue to move forward towards the appropriate return to health/return to work outcome.

MLC Life Insurance's claims system, *Claim Vantage*, is an industry-leading cloud-based claim management system providing all the required tools and data for ongoing monitoring of the claims portfolio. Built-in tracking and reporting tools further support the Life Industry Code of Practice (LICOP) compliance guidelines, ensuring that all claims are regularly reviewed by claims managers. All claim assessors also undergo monthly portfolio reviews with their lead consultant.

Note: When moving contracts, past liabilities and associated reserves remain with the prior insurer.

Please contact your GEB representative for more information on Disability plans available through MLC Life Insurance.

