

COMPENDIUM OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATISTICS AUSTRALIA 2005–06

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Australian Government

Australian Safety and Compensation Council

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Part C

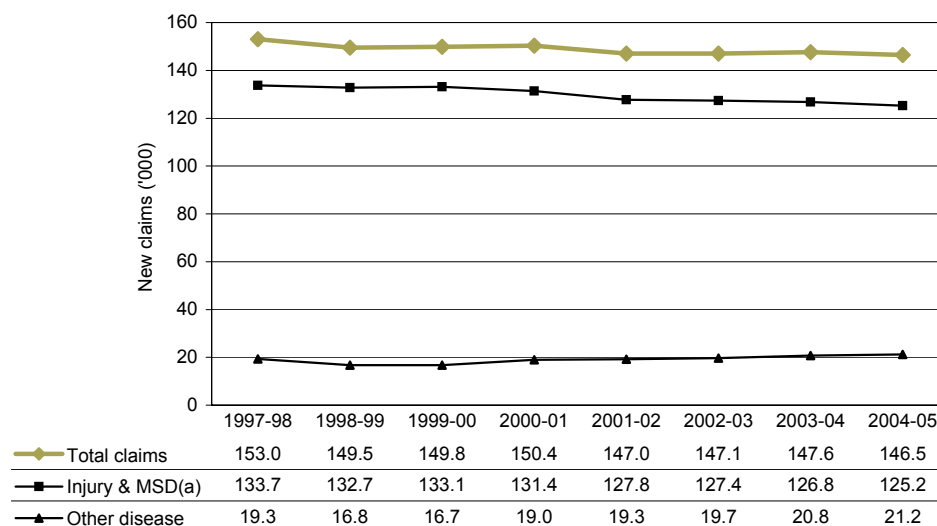
Trends over time, 1997–98 to 2004–05

Data for the most recent year, 2005–06, is not used in this analysis of trends because it is preliminary (denoted throughout the publication with the letter ‘p’) and likely to increase by up to 5% upon first revision. Instead, comparison is made to revised data for 2004–05 which, although still subject to further minor revision, provides a better reference point for identifying trends in the number and rate of workers’ compensation claims. The reader should also note that some of the changes in serious claim numbers and rates identified in this section may be related to changes to the workers’ compensation acts within the jurisdictions.

Comparing the number of serious claims (accepted claims involving either a death, a permanent incapacity, or a temporary incapacity involving one working week or more absence from work) lodged in 1997–98 (153 030) with the number lodged in 2004–05 (146 465) shows an overall decrease of 4.3% in the number of serious claims over the period.

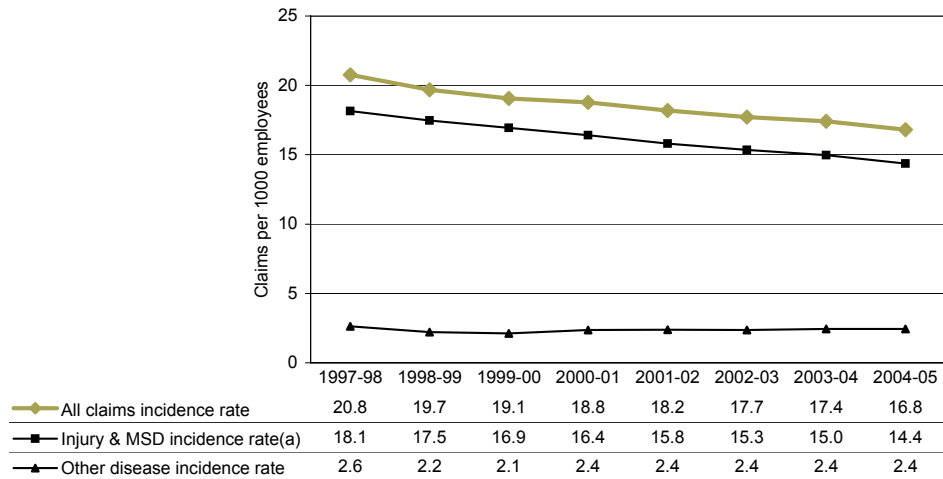
Serious workers’ compensation claims can be divided into claims involving injuries and those involving diseases. However, to allow comparison of this data over time claims involving musculoskeletal disorders are included under injuries rather than disease. This amalgamation of classifications is only made in this section (for further explanation see Appendix 1 — Explanatory note 8, p.78). Figure 14a shows that although the number of serious claims involving *Injuries and musculoskeletal disorders* decreased (from 133 680 claims in 1997–98 to 125 220 in 2004–05), the number of serious claims involving other disease (excluding *Musculoskeletal disorders*) has increased in recent years: rising from 16 685 claims in 1999–2000 to 21 240 in 2004–05. Part of this increase can be attributed to the increase in *Mental disorder* claims (approximately 3200 claims) over the period (see Table 11a).

Figure 14a Serious claims: number of claims by year



(a) Comprises claims involving injuries, poisoning and musculoskeletal disorders. Other disease claims therefore exclude disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue.

Figure 14b Serious claims: incidence rate by year

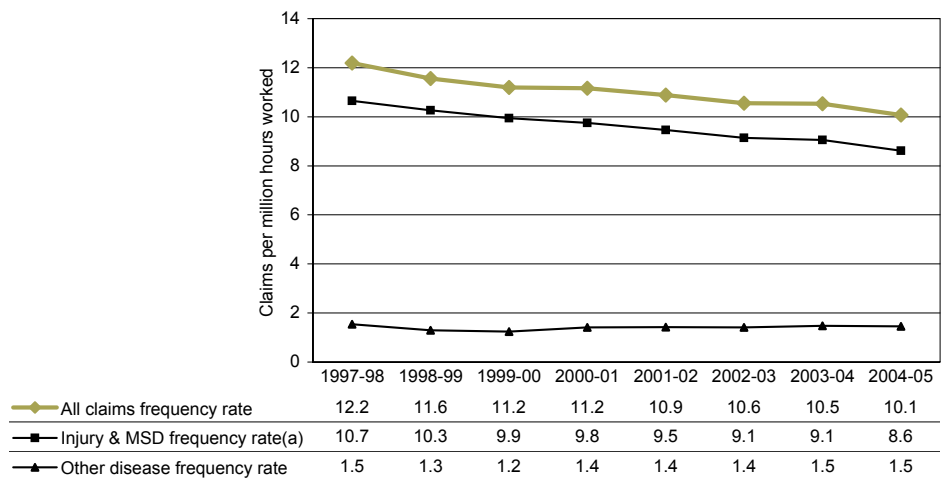


(a) Comprises claims involving injuries, poisoning and musculoskeletal disorders. Other disease claims therefore exclude disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue.

Rates

The overall decrease in the number of serious claims over the eight-year period has seen the incidence rate for compensated work-related injury or disease fall from 21 serious claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to 17 in 2004–05 (Figure 14b). Similarly, the frequency rate, measured in serious claims per million hours worked by employees, has fallen from 12 to 10 over the same period (Figure 14c). For both measures, the increase in the number of disease claims in recent years (shown in Figure 14a) is reflected in slightly increased disease-related rates.

Figure 14c Serious claims: frequency rate by year



(a) Comprises claims involving injuries, poisoning and musculoskeletal disorders. Other disease claims therefore exclude disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue.

Serious claims by gender

Table 8 presents the number of serious claims, the incidence rates and frequency rates by gender for Australia from 1997–98 to 2004–05. Across the eight years, *Injury, poisoning and musculoskeletal disorder* claims represented on average 87% of all serious claims.

Whereas the total number of serious claims decreased by 4.3% over the period, the number of serious claims for female employees increased by 11% (from 42 965 claims in 1997–98 to 47 730 claims in 2004–05) while the number of serious claims for male employees decreased over the same period by 10%. Consequently, the proportion of all serious claims where the employee was female increased

Table 8 Serious claims: number of claims, incidence rate and frequency rate by nature and gender by year

Nature / gender	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Number of serious claims								
Total claims	153 030	149 495	149 810	150 380	147 025	147 080	147 580	146 465
Male	110 070	106 315	105 995	104 215	100 870	100 055	99 385	98 735
Female	42 965	43 180	43 815	46 160	46 155	47 025	48 200	47 730
% Male	71.9	71.1	70.8	69.3	68.6	68.0	67.3	67.4
% Female	28.1	28.9	29.2	30.7	31.4	32.0	32.7	32.6
Injury & MSD^(b)	133 680	132 735	133 125	131 400	127 765	127 405	126 830	125 220
Male	95 495	94 350	93 980	91 095	87 895	87 265	86 055	84 805
Female	38 185	38 385	39 145	40 305	39 870	40 140	40 775	40 415
% Male	71.4	71.1	70.6	69.3	68.8	68.5	67.9	67.7
% Female	28.6	28.9	29.4	30.7	31.2	31.5	32.1	32.3
Other disease^(c)	19,350	16,765	16,685	18,980	19,255	19,675	20,755	21,240
Male	14 570	11 970	12 015	13 120	12 975	12 790	13 330	13 930
Female	4 780	4 795	4 670	5 855	6 280	6 885	7 425	7 310
% Male	75.3	71.4	72.0	69.1	67.4	65.0	64.2	65.6
% Female	24.7	28.6	28.0	30.9	32.6	35.0	35.8	34.4
Incidence rate (serious claims per 1000 employees)								
All claims	20.8	19.7	19.1	18.8	18.2	17.7	17.4	16.8
Male	27.4	25.8	25.0	24.3	23.5	22.9	22.1	21.5
Female	12.8	12.4	12.1	12.4	12.2	12.0	12.1	11.6
Injury & MSD^(b)	18.1	17.5	16.9	16.4	15.8	15.3	15.0	14.4
Male	23.7	22.9	22.2	21.3	20.5	19.9	19.1	18.4
Female	11.4	11.1	10.8	10.8	10.5	10.2	10.2	9.8
Other disease^(c)	2.6	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
Male	3.6	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0
Female	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.8
Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)								
All claims	12.2	11.6	11.2	11.2	10.9	10.6	10.5	10.1
Male	14.1	13.3	12.8	12.7	12.3	11.9	11.7	11.3
Female	9.1	8.8	8.6	8.8	8.7	8.5	8.7	8.3
Injury & MSD^(b)	10.7	10.3	9.9	9.8	9.5	9.1	9.1	8.6
Male	12.2	11.8	11.4	11.1	10.7	10.4	10.1	9.7
Female	8.1	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.4	7.0
Other disease^(c)	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5
Male	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6
Female	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

(b) Comprises injury and poisoning claims, and disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue.

(c) Comprises all disease claims excluding disorders of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue.

from 28% in 1997–98 to 33% in 2004–05. The 11% increase in the overall number of serious claims for female employees is related to the 30% growth in the estimated number of female employees over the period (from 3.3 to 4.3 million): the net effect of these shifts was a slight decrease in the incidence rate of serious claims for female employees over the period — from 13 claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to 12 in 2004–05.

Examining disease-related serious claims only (excluding *Musculoskeletal disease*), the proportion of claims involving female employees shifted by a greater amount than for all claims: increasing from 25% of all disease-related claims in 1997–98 to 34% in 2004–05. This was due to the increase in disease-related serious claims among female employees over the period (from 4780 in 1997–98 to 7310 in 2004–05), while the number of disease-related serious claims for males decreased slightly (from 14 570 to 13 930 claims). This increase in the number of disease-related claims among female employees has exceeded the increase in female

employee numbers already described. The consequence of these shifts is a slight increase in disease-related incidence and frequency rates for female employees, while those for male employees have remained relatively static.

Serious claims by age of employee

Table 9 presents information for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 by the age of employees who had a serious claim. The age used in this report is the age of the employee on the date on which the injury occurred or, if the claim involved an occupational disease, when the disease was first reported to the employer. The employee age group in which the largest number of claims occurred in 2004–05 was the 40–44 years age group: this age-group accounted for an average of 13% of serious claims over the period. The two age groups with the smallest number of claims across the period were 65 years and over (reflecting the limited availability of workers' compensation to employees in this age group), which accounted on average for less than 1% of claims, and 60–64 years, which accounted on average for 3.4% of claims.

Reflecting Australia's ageing labour force, over the eight-year period the distribution of claims across the age groups shifted towards the older age groups: the proportion of claims for employees aged 45 years or more increased from 33% in 1997–98 to 39% in 2004–05.

Incidence rate

The incidence rate, measured as serious claims per 1000 employees, can be used to compare the relative likelihood of work-related injury or disease at different ages and in different years. This measure negates changes over time in the number of employees in each age group.

The general pattern of incidence rates increasing with employees' age was observed in all years over the period examined. In 2004–05, the lowest rate of 10 claims per 1000 employees occurred among the youngest group: those aged less than 20 years. The equal highest incidence rate, 21 claims per 1000 employees, was recorded by employees in the 55–59 years and the 60–64 years age groups.

Over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 there was a steady decline in incidence rates in all age groups. The largest decline (34%) occurred among employees aged 60–64 years: the rate fell from 31 serious claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to 21 in 2004–05. The smallest decline (11%) occurred among employees aged 40–44 years: their rate decreased from 21 serious claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to 19 in 2004–05. Notably, the incidence rates in the three youngest age groups all decreased by around 25% over the period, perhaps providing an indicator of changing attitudes to workplace safety among younger employees.

Frequency rate

Another way to examine workplace injury and disease is in relation to the total time employees spent at their workplaces. This negates differences in the proportion of workers who are part-time in each of the age groups and changes in those proportions over time. While the incidence rate showed a marked increase with age (Table 9), the increase in frequency rates with age was smaller — reflecting the effect of removing the differences in hours worked.

Table 9 shows that there was a decrease in the frequency rate for serious claims in every age group over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05. The largest decrease (34%) occurred among employees aged 60–64 years: from 19 claims per million hours worked to 13 over the period. The smallest decrease in frequency rate (10%) occurred among employees aged 40–44 years, moving from 12 serious claims per million hours worked to 11.

Table 9 Serious claims: number of claims, incidence rate and frequency rate by age by year

Age group	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Number of serious claims								
15–19 years	7 545	7 375	8 000	7 060	6 610	6 960	6 885	6 845
20–24 years	16 820	16 055	15 720	14 595	13 880	13 990	14 165	13 885
25–29 years	19 710	19 225	18 580	17 285	16 100	15 510	14 805	14 175
30–34 years	19 230	18 440	17 975	18 185	18 205	17 910	17 460	17 015
35–39 years	20 255	20 320	19 945	19 835	18 855	18 030	17 870	17 710
40–44 years	19 510	19 405	19 635	20 635	20 490	20 585	20 160	20 030
45–49 years	18 525	18 320	18 200	18 855	18 880	19 035	19 550	19 440
50–54 years	15 715	15 625	16 205	17 645	17 210	17 245	17 360	17 095
55–59 years	9 875	9 370	9 780	10 230	10 795	11 545	12 300	12 535
60–64 years	4 780	4 440	4 740	4 945	4 835	5 020	5 445	5 870
65 years & over ^(b)	960	855	970	1 095	1 150	1 230	1 410	1 590
Total claims	153 030	149 495	149 810	150 380	147 025	147 080	147 580	146 465
Incidence rate (serious claims per 1000 employees)								
15–19 years	12.8	11.9	12.2	10.7	9.9	10.2	9.8	9.6
20–24 years	17.7	16.7	15.8	14.7	14.7	14.4	14.0	13.2
25–29 years	19.2	18.3	17.6	16.4	16.3	15.7	15.1	14.2
30–34 years	20.9	20.0	19.1	18.8	18.5	17.4	17.0	16.4
35–39 years	21.5	21.2	20.5	20.6	19.2	18.6	18.4	18.3
40–44 years	21.3	20.6	20.1	20.7	20.1	19.9	19.4	18.9
45–49 years	22.5	21.3	20.7	21.0	20.4	19.9	19.8	19.1
50–54 years	24.8	22.9	22.3	23.1	21.5	21.0	20.8	19.7
55–59 years	28.3	24.8	23.6	22.7	22.1	21.5	21.5	20.5
60–64 years	31.2	27.6	27.9	27.1	23.3	21.8	21.4	20.5
65 years & over ^(b)	14.8	13.3	13.3	15.0	13.5	14.6	15.0	14.7
All claims	20.8	19.7	19.1	18.8	18.2	17.7	17.4	16.8
Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)								
15–19 years	12.2	11.5	11.6	10.6	9.9	10.2	9.9	9.3
20–24 years	10.9	10.3	9.6	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.0	8.4
25–29 years	10.7	10.1	9.8	9.1	9.2	8.8	8.5	8.0
30–34 years	11.7	11.2	10.6	10.6	10.6	9.8	9.7	9.3
35–39 years	12.1	12.0	11.6	11.7	11.0	10.6	10.6	10.5
40–44 years	11.9	11.4	11.1	11.7	11.4	11.2	11.1	10.7
45–49 years	12.4	11.8	11.5	11.7	11.4	11.1	11.2	10.8
50–54 years	13.8	12.8	12.4	13.0	12.1	11.8	11.8	11.1
55–59 years	16.1	14.1	13.6	13.1	13.0	12.6	12.6	12.0
60–64 years	19.3	17.1	16.9	17.0	14.5	13.6	13.7	12.8
65 years & over ^(b)	9.7	9.7	9.6	10.3	9.4	10.4	11.4	10.2
All claims	12.2	11.6	11.2	11.2	10.9	10.6	10.5	10.1

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

(b) Although presented in the tables, the 65 years and over age group is not discussed in detail in the text because this group is not strictly comparable to the other age groups. In some jurisdictions compensation ceases at age 65 years (see Explanatory note 3 in Appendix 1, p.77 for further details).

Serious claims by industry

Table 10a shows the number, incidence rate and frequency rate of serious claims for the major industries over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05. Over the eight-year period the number of serious claims decreased in 10 of the 17 industry groups. The largest decrease in the number of claims over this period (52%) occurred among employees in the Communication services industry (though this small industry group recorded the third lowest number of claims in 2004–05). Claims made by employees in the Manufacturing industry, the group with the most claims overall, decreased by 21% — resulting in 8005 fewer claims in 2004–05 than in 1997–98.

Incidence rate

The highest incidence rate in 2004–05, of 30 serious claims per 1000 employees, occurred in the Manufacturing industry. Other industries with rates considerably higher than the national figure of 17 claims per 1000 employees were Transport and storage (29 claims per 1000 employees); Agriculture, forestry and fishing (27 claims per 1000 employees); Construction (27 claims per 1000 employees); and Mining (24 claims per 1000 employees). Of these five industries with relatively high incidence rates, the Mining industry has made the greatest improvement: reducing its incidence rate by 45% (from 44 serious claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to 24 serious claims per 1000 employees in 2004–05). Education was the only industry to experience a slight overall increase in incidence rate over the eight-year period: from 11 serious claims per 1000 employees in 1997–98 to a peak of 12 in 2002–03, before decreasing to 11 in 2004–05.

Frequency rate

Examining the frequency rates by industry shows a similar pattern to that observed looking at incidence rates. However, comparing the number of serious claims to the hours worked rather than the number of employees shifts the rankings of the industries. Nonetheless, the Manufacturing; Transport and storage; Agriculture, forestry and fishing; and Construction industries still recorded the four highest rates respectively using either measure.

Time lost

Table 10b presents the median time lost (in working weeks) and the median direct cost for serious injury or disease claims for each industry over the period 2000–01 to 2004–05. The time series for these data is shorter than that used in the previous tables because a recent review identified claim omissions that could only be corrected back to 2000–01 (see Appendix 1 — Explanatory note 11, p.79 for more details).

Over the five-year period the overall time lost from work by employees with serious claims increased slightly: from a median of 3.6 weeks in 2000–01 to 3.8 weeks in 2004–05. The median time lost from work for serious claims reached 4 weeks in 2002–03. However, the reader should keep in mind that while a claim remains open the time lost and associated costs will increase and the next Compendium may show changes back to 2001–02 (jurisdictions provide preliminary data for the new financial year and updated data for the previous five years).

In 2004–05, employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry had the highest median time lost from work of 4.4 working weeks: a ranking that is evident in most years back to 2000–01. Employees in the Electricity, gas and water supply industry recorded levels of median time lost consistently well below the other industries over the period, with a median time lost of 1.9 weeks in 2000–01 and 2.0 weeks in 2004–05.

Direct costs

The overall median direct cost of claims also increased slightly over the period: from \$5400 for serious claims lodged in 2000–01 to \$6000 for those lodged in 2004–05. Over that period the median direct cost of serious claims increased across all industries, to differing degrees, with the exception of serious claims within the Accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry (the median direct cost of serious claims was \$3900 in both 2000–01 and 2004–05). Employees in the Accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry also consistently had the

Table 10a Serious claims: number of claims, incidence rate and frequency rate by industry by year

Industry	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Number of serious claims								
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	6 005	6 185	6 230	6 030	5 960	5 695	5 250	5 025
Mining	3 395	2 515	2 355	2 700	2 610	2 465	2 380	2 380
Manufacturing	37 420	35 450	34 105	32 765	31 055	30 440	29 565	29 415
Electricity, gas & water supply	1 470	1 265	1 150	1 025	985	865	885	950
Construction	14 035	13 630	14 045	14 385	13 125	13 400	14 635	14 765
Wholesale trade	8 325	7 785	7 785	7 315	6 925	6 545	6 685	6 895
Retail trade	14 380	13 900	15 455	15 840	14 785	14 495	14 620	14 105
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	6 555	6 830	7 060	7 120	7 010	6 935	6 920	6 905
Transport & storage	12 080	11 655	11 560	12 015	12 135	11 840	11 870	11 505
Communication services	2 895	2 195	1 860	1 700	1 585	1 565	1 545	1 390
Finance & insurance	1 575	1 525	1 335	1 490	1 565	1 545	1 530	1 320
Property & business services	8 950	9 980	9 940	10 350	10 165	10 565	10 725	11 095
Government administration & defence	4 730	4 650	4 950	4 890	5 590	6 130	5 565	5 485
Education	6 155	6 165	6 690	6 860	7 145	7 825	7 900	7 520
Health & community services	15 865	16 685	16 490	16 600	16 990	17 550	18 380	18 500
Cultural & recreational services	3 475	3 330	3 105	3 215	3 215	3 000	2 775	2 715
Personal & other services	5 720	5 730	5 680	6 075	6 175	6 210	6 355	6 475
Total claims	153 030	149 495	149 810	150 380	147 025	147 080	147 580	146 465
Incidence rate (serious claims per 1000 employees)								
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	33.3	32.6	32.1	29.8	27.4	31.1	27.8	26.9
Mining	43.5	33.0	31.6	36.0	34.2	29.8	26.2	23.9
Manufacturing	36.5	35.8	33.3	31.6	31.6	30.3	30.4	30.0
Electricity, gas & water supply	23.3	19.8	18.2	15.3	14.9	11.9	11.9	12.6
Construction	37.2	33.2	30.9	33.1	30.2	29.9	29.2	27.1
Wholesale trade	18.6	17.2	17.5	18.5	17.8	16.5	16.7	17.5
Retail trade	13.4	12.2	13.2	13.4	12.1	11.3	11.3	10.5
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	16.5	16.7	16.5	15.7	15.7	15.6	15.1	13.9
Transport & storage	36.5	33.7	33.3	33.5	34.8	34.0	31.5	29.1
Communication services	21.7	15.9	11.5	10.8	11.7	11.4	10.6	9.5
Finance & insurance	5.3	5.0	4.3	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.0
Property & business services	11.3	11.8	10.9	10.6	10.3	10.4	10.1	10.4
Government administration & defence	13.7	13.2	14.7	12.9	13.6	14.4	12.7	12.1
Education	10.5	10.2	10.9	11.0	11.0	11.6	11.4	11.2
Health & community services	20.4	20.8	20.0	19.4	19.3	19.3	19.8	19.3
Cultural & recreational services	18.2	16.7	14.5	15.3	14.8	13.5	12.4	11.1
Personal & other services	20.8	21.2	19.9	21.5	20.8	19.8	20.6	20.3
All claims	20.8	19.7	19.1	18.8	18.2	17.7	17.4	16.8
Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked)								
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	16.5	16.5	16.4	15.8	14.0	16.1	15.2	14.5
Mining	19.7	14.5	13.9	15.7	15.2	12.9	11.6	10.5
Manufacturing	19.0	18.4	17.3	16.5	16.5	15.6	16.0	15.6
Electricity, gas & water supply	12.3	9.9	9.5	8.3	7.9	6.4	6.4	6.7
Construction	18.4	16.5	15.3	16.8	15.6	15.2	14.9	13.9
Wholesale trade	9.5	8.8	9.0	9.6	9.2	8.5	8.8	9.2
Retail trade	9.8	9.0	9.5	9.8	8.8	8.3	8.4	7.6
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	12.1	12.4	11.9	11.3	11.5	11.4	11.3	10.3
Transport & storage	18.3	17.0	16.7	17.1	17.9	17.1	16.0	15.0
Communication services	11.6	8.5	6.1	5.8	6.1	5.9	5.8	5.1
Finance & insurance	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.2
Property & business services	6.3	6.6	6.1	6.0	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9
Government administration & defence	7.8	7.5	8.4	7.3	7.7	8.1	7.5	7.0
Education	6.3	6.1	6.6	6.7	6.9	7.1	7.1	6.9
Health & community services	14.1	14.3	14.0	13.6	13.6	13.5	14.1	13.6
Cultural & recreational services	13.1	12.0	10.3	11.3	10.6	9.8	9.3	8.3
Personal & other services	12.9	13.2	12.2	13.6	13.3	12.5	13.0	12.6
All claims	12.2	11.6	11.2	11.2	10.9	10.6	10.5	10.1

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

Table 10b Serious claims: median time lost and median direct cost by industry by year^(a)

Industry	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Median time lost (working weeks)					
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.3	4.4
Mining	3.6	3.2	2.8	3.6	3.2
Manufacturing	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.2	3.2
Electricity, gas & water supply	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.0
Construction	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.0
Wholesale trade	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8
Retail trade	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.5
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.4
Transport & storage	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Communication services	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.1	3.6
Finance & insurance	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2
Property & business services	4.0	4.2	4.8	4.4	4.2
Government administration & defence	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.4
Education	3.4	3.9	4.4	4.0	4.0
Health & community services	4.0	4.5	4.6	4.2	4.2
Cultural & recreational services	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2
Personal & other services	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.1
All claims	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8
Median direct cost (\$)					
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	4 300	4 300	4 500	4 700	4 700
Mining	8 800	9 200	9 400	10 100	9 500
Manufacturing	5 800	6 100	5 800	6 200	6 100
Electricity, gas & water supply	6 000	7 300	7 100	8 000	7 700
Construction	6 700	6 900	6 800	6 900	7 000
Wholesale trade	5 600	5 800	5 800	5 900	6 100
Retail trade	4 200	4 400	4 400	4 800	4 800
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	3 900	3 700	3 500	3 700	3 900
Transport & storage	5 100	5 500	5 500	6 100	6 400
Communication services	7 500	9 300	9 800	8 800	8 100
Finance & insurance	8 300	8 200	8 500	8 900	8 900
Property & business services	5 400	5 800	6 000	5 900	5 700
Government administration & defence	6 000	6 000	6 200	7 600	7 000
Education	5 500	6 000	6 500	7 100	7 200
Health & community services	4 800	5 100	4 900	5 000	5 000
Cultural & recreational services	5 000	5 300	5 200	5 600	5 600
Personal & other services	6 800	6 600	7 200	7 300	7 100
All claims	5 400	5 700	5 700	6 000	6 000

(a) A review of time lost and costs data identified claim omissions that could only be backdated to 2000–01. Because earlier data are no longer comparable they have been excluded from this table.

lowest median cost for serious claims over the five-year period, probably related to the relatively lower salaries in that industry and the high proportion of part-time employees (*ABS Average weekly earnings*, Cat. no. 6302.0 and *Australian labour market statistics*, Cat. no. 6105.0). The Mining industry had the highest median cost in 2004–05, \$9500, and also ranked the highest or second highest in all earlier years. This reflects the relatively high salaries in the Mining industry since the median time lost from work by employees in the industry is among the lowest.

These median costs are based on the cumulative costs of serious claims lodged in a particular year: they are not a summary of the cost of all open claims in any one year. The reader should also note that median costs are subject to revision as updated data on open claims are received in subsequent years. The costs tabulated are those current at the time of publication and are not adjusted for inflation (expressed as constant prices) because compensation is generally paid in cumulative sums over a period.

Serious claims by nature of injury or disease

The Nature of injury or disease classification identifies the most serious injury or disease sustained by the employee. Table 11a shows that over the eight-year period spanning 1997–98 to 2004–05, the number of serious claims decreased in most nature categories. Notable exceptions included claims related to *Mental disorders*, which increased by 57% (from 5680 claims in 1997–98 to 8890 in 2004–05); *Diseases of the respiratory system*, which increased by 59% (from 390 claims in 1997–98 to 620 claims in 2004–05); and *Neoplasms*, which increased by 72% (from 145 claims in 1997–98 to 250 in 2004–05). The increase in serious claims related to these latter two disease categories was largely driven by the increase in claims for two diseases related to past asbestos exposure: claims for *Asbestosis* (a respiratory disease) increased by 158% (from 95 to 245 claims) and

Table 11a Serious claims: number of claims by nature of injury or disease by year

Nature of injury or disease	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Injuries, poisoning & musculoskeletal diseases ^(b)	133 680	132 735	133 125	131 400	127 765	127 405	126 830	125 220
<i>Sprains, strains & musculoskeletal diseases^(b)</i>	85 650	83 915	84 820	87 515	86 055	84 740	84 830	82 710
<i>Open wound not involving traumatic amputation</i>	14 520	13 820	13 630	12 455	11 465	11 580	11 495	11 580
<i>Fractures</i>	12 855	11 990	11 880	11 585	11 190	11 405	11 425	11 450
<i>Contusion with intact skin surface & crushing injury^(c)</i>	10 015	10 680	10 380	9 895	9 485	9 835	9 735	10 015
<i>Burns</i>	2 685	2 675	2 545	2 290	2 115	2 245	1 980	2 005
<i>Superficial injury</i>	1 665	1 945	1 745	1 600	1 465	1 175	980	1 100
<i>Dislocation</i>	975	990	1 005	1 035	1 050	1 065	990	1 070
<i>Traumatic amputation (inc. loss of eyeball)</i>	910	795	730	780	700	675	630	635
<i>Foreign body in eye, ear, nose etc.^(d)</i>	755	1 065	1 005	780	720	785	700	625
<i>Multiple injuries</i>	675	740	710	710	700	750	780	590
<i>Intracranial injury, inc. concussion</i>	490	450	480	465	435	495	445	440
<i>Fracture of vertebral column</i>	360	320	325	395	360	375	350	410
<i>Poisoning & toxic effects</i>	365	365	395	435	400	405	350	355
<i>Internal injury of chest, abdomen & pelvis</i>	110	140	150	105	125	140	120	130
Mental disorders	5 680	5 540	5 635	7 155	8 110	8 780	9 065	8 890
Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs	7 315	5 450	5 315	6 250	5 900	5 300	5 605	6 145
<i>Deafness</i>	6 000	4 185	4 020	4 460	4 245	3 515	3 700	4 040
Diseases of the digestive system	3 660	3 330	3 390	3 290	2 910	3 185	3 465	3 700
<i>Hernia</i>	3 645	3 305	3 375	3 275	2 890	3 170	3 440	3 685
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	1 135	975	930	890	885	905	935	940
<i>Contact dermatitis</i>	375	295	265	275	320	315	295	350
Diseases of the respiratory system	390	380	410	480	490	530	540	620
<i>Asbestosis</i>	95	65	90	155	165	205	175	245
<i>Asthma</i>	85	95	95	95	75	70	85	70
<i>Pneumoconiosis due to other silica or silicates</i>	10	10	15	15	20	10	10	20
Infectious and parasitic diseases	560	535	400	295	325	325	360	335
Neoplasms (cancers and benign tumours)	145	100	140	145	205	175	265	250
<i>Mesothelioma</i>	40	25	45	45	75	80	115	105
<i>Carcinoma in situ of skin</i>	40	15	30	30	40	35	60	45
<i>Malignant melanoma of skin</i>	10	15	10	15	15	20	30	35
Diseases of the circulatory system	255	210	200	250	225	280	255	185
<i>Ischaemic heart disease</i>	110	85	70	105	85	115	100	65
Other diseases	195	240	270	230	210	195	260	180
Total claims	153 030	149 495	149 810	150 380	147 025	147 080	147 580	146 465

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

(b) See Appendix 1 — Explanatory note 8, p.78 for more details of this classification combination.

(c) Excluding those with fractures.

(d) Including respiratory, digestive or reproductive systems.

Table 11b Serious claims: median time lost and median direct cost by nature of injury or disease by year^(a)

Nature of injury or disease	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Median time lost (working weeks)					
Injuries, poisoning & musculoskeletal diseases ^(b)	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.7	3.6
<i>Fractures</i>	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.6
<i>Fracture of vertebral column</i>	12.1	12.1	14.0	14.2	12.8
<i>Dislocation</i>	6.9	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.0
<i>Sprains, strains & musculoskeletal diseases^(b)</i>	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.0
<i>Intracranial injury, inc. concussion</i>	2.4	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.3
<i>Internal injury of chest, abdomen & pelvis</i>	4.6	4.7	6.1	5.5	6.9
<i>Traumatic amputation (inc. loss of eyeball)</i>	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.6
<i>Open wound not involving traumatic amputation</i>	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
<i>Superficial injury</i>	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
<i>Contusion with intact skin surface & crushing injury^(c)</i>	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.6
<i>Foreign body in eye, ear, nose etc.^(d)</i>	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.6
<i>Burns</i>	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
<i>Poisoning & toxic effects</i>	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.0
<i>Multiple injuries</i>	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.1	3.4
Diseases of the nervous system & sense organs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Diseases of the skin & subcutaneous tissue	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4
Diseases of the digestive system	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.6	5.5
Infectious & parasitic diseases	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
Diseases of the respiratory system	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.0
Diseases of the circulatory system	5.0	7.0	7.2	8.6	6.9
Neoplasms (cancers & benign tumours)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mental disorders	10.7	10.6	9.6	9.8	9.0
Other diseases	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.8
All claims	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8
Median direct cost (\$)					
Injuries, poisoning & musculoskeletal diseases ^(b)	4 800	5 100	5 000	5 200	5 200
<i>Fractures</i>	6 300	6 500	6 700	7 100	7 300
<i>Fracture of vertebral column</i>	22 200	22 600	21 100	24 800	16 600
<i>Dislocation</i>	9 200	8 800	8 400	8 100	8 200
<i>Sprains, strains & musculoskeletal diseases^(b)</i>	5 700	6 000	5 800	5 900	5 800
<i>Intracranial injury, inc. concussion</i>	3 100	3 200	3 800	4 400	4 000
<i>Internal injury of chest, abdomen & pelvis</i>	8 000	8 000	9 500	11 200	11 400
<i>Traumatic amputation (inc. loss of eyeball)</i>	17 600	16 600	17 400	18 300	17 500
<i>Open wound not involving traumatic amputation</i>	2 300	2 300	2 300	2 600	2 700
<i>Superficial injury</i>	1 900	2 100	2 100	2 300	2 400
<i>Contusion with intact skin surface & crushing injury^(c)</i>	2 700	2 700	2 700	2 800	3 000
<i>Foreign body in eye, ear, nose etc.^(d)</i>	1 400	1 300	1 200	1 200	1 400
<i>Burns</i>	1 400	1 500	1 400	1 500	1 600
<i>Poisoning & toxic effects</i>	2 200	2 400	2 000	2 100	1 900
<i>Multiple injuries</i>	25 500	20 300	15 600	14 700	15 800
Diseases of the nervous system & sense organs	8 800	8 900	9 900	10 400	10 000
Diseases of the skin & subcutaneous tissue	2 300	2 500	2 500	2 600	2 700
Diseases of the digestive system	6 900	7 100	7 400	7 900	8 100
Infectious & parasitic diseases	1 600	1 900	2 400	1 700	1 900
Diseases of the respiratory system	23 600	21 700	22 500	17 000	18 100
Diseases of the circulatory system	29 600	19 300	21 100	17 000	14 100
Neoplasms (cancers & benign tumours)	21 200	41 400	25 700	23 900	23 200
Mental disorders	15 000	13 700	12 600	12 800	12 600
Other diseases	5 900	6 700	7 300	7 300	7 500
All claims	5 400	5 700	5 700	6 000	6 000

(a) A review of time lost and costs data identified claim omissions that could only be backdated to 2000–01.

Because earlier data are no longer comparable they have been excluded from this table.

(b) See Appendix 1 — Explanatory note 8, p.78 for more details of this classification combination.

(c) Excluding those with fractures.

(d) Including respiratory, digestive or reproductive systems.

claims for *Mesothelioma* (a neoplasm) increased by 163% (from 40 to 105 claims). These workers' compensation figures are not a full measure of the incidence of these diseases in the community. For more information see the report *Mesothelioma in Australia, March 2008*, available from the ASCC website. A notable decrease over the period (40%) came from *Infectious and parasitic diseases* claims decreasing from 560 to 335 over the period. The number of claims relating to *Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs* also declined (by 16%): mostly attributable to a 33% reduction in *Deafness* claims over the period, probably related to the introduction of minimum thresholds for compensability of deafness by the jurisdictions.

Time lost & costs

Employees with claims for *Mental disorders* has a median time lost of around 10 weeks in each year over the five-year period — the highest among disease categories in each year. Among employees with claims involving injuries, a *Fracture of vertebral column* resulted in the longest time lost from work — the median was around 13 weeks across the period 2000–01 to 2004–05. The median time lost from work for claims related to *Diseases of the circulatory system* has trended noticeably higher over the five-year period: from 5 weeks in 2000–01 to a maximum of 8.6 in 2003–04. The median cost of claims associated with disease or injury categories that have relatively small numbers of claims, such as *Neoplasms*, will be particularly subject to random differences in the types of claim over the period. Serious claims involving *Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs* had a zero median time lost. This is because of the very high proportion of *Deafness* claims in this category which generally involve no absence from work.

Serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease

The Mechanism classification is used to identify the action, exposure or event which was the direct cause of the most serious injury or disease. Table 12a shows the mechanisms ranked in descending order with *Body Stressing* as the most prevalent mechanism of injury, consistently accounting for just over 40% of serious claims over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05. *Falls, trips and slips of a person*, the second most common mechanism, also represented a relatively consistent proportion of serious claims over the period, around 19%. The proportion of serious claims caused by *Mental Stress* increased over the period from 2.9% to 5.9%.

Over the eight-year period the number of serious claims decreased in all but one mechanism category, *Mental stress*, which increased by 95% (from 4440 claims in 1997–98 to 8665 in 2004–05). The largest decrease in serious claims numbers, 23%, was for *Heat, radiation and electricity*, followed by *Sound and pressure* with a 20% decrease (most of these claims are related to hearing loss). The number of serious claims caused by *Body stressing* and *Falls, trips and slips of a person* both decreased by 3%.

Table 12a Serious claims: number of claims by mechanism of injury or disease by year

Mechanism of injury or disease	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Body stressing	63 660	61 285	63 165	63 485	61 630	60 800	62 200	61 560
Falls, trips & slips of a person	29 330	28 940	27 825	28 480	27 825	28 805	28 305	28 500
Being hit by moving objects	22 295	21 290	20 000	19 975	19 815	20 320	19 970	19 750
Hitting objects with a part of the body	12 665	12 445	12 370	11 480	10 340	10 395	10 200	10 350
Mental stress	4 440	5 175	5 310	6 845	7 715	8 455	8 815	8 665
Sound & pressure	5 390	4 395	4 155	4 590	4 405	3 835	4 090	4 320
Heat, radiation & electricity	2 590	2 515	2 435	2 165	2 045	2 130	1 955	1 985
Chemicals & other substances	2 035	1 915	1 885	1 945	1 915	1 860	1 765	1 850
Biological factors	680	720	585	615	610	520	565	560
Other & unspecified mechanisms	9 945	10 815	12 085	10 795	10 730	9 955	9 715	8 930
Total claims	153 030	149 495	149 810	150 380	147 025	147 080	147 580	146 465

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

Table 12b Serious claims: median time lost and median direct cost by mechanism of injury or disease by year^(a)

Mechanism of injury or disease	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Median time lost (working weeks)					
Falls, trips & slips of a person	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.3
Hitting objects with a part of the body	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.2
Being hit by moving objects	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.2
Sound & pressure	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Body stressing	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.2
Heat, radiation & electricity	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0
Chemicals & other substances	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8
Biological factors	2.1	2.2	2.8	2.0	2.0
Mental stress	10.7	10.4	9.7	9.8	9.2
Other & unspecified mechanisms	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4
All claims	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8
Median direct cost (\$)					
Falls, trips & slips of a person	5 500	5 600	5 500	5 700	5 800
Hitting objects with a part of the body	2 500	2 500	2 600	2 800	2 800
Being hit by moving objects	3 900	4 000	3 800	4 100	4 300
Sound & pressure	8 600	8 800	9 900	10 500	10 200
Body stressing	6 100	6 400	6 400	6 400	6 300
Heat, radiation & electricity	1 500	1 600	1 600	1 600	1 800
Chemicals & other substances	2 700	3 200	3 200	3 500	3 400
Biological factors	2 000	2 200	2 300	1 800	2 000
Mental stress	15 500	13 700	12 800	13 000	12 700
Other & unspecified mechanisms	6 400	6 700	7 100	7 400	7 200
All claims	5 400	5 700	5 700	6 000	6 000

(a) A review of time lost and costs data identified claim omissions that could only be backdated to 2000–01. Because earlier data are therefore no longer comparable they have been excluded from this table.

Time lost & costs Table 12b shows that between 2000–01 and 2004–05, serious claims involving *Mental stress* consistently had the longest median time lost from work: around 10 working weeks. This was well above the median of 3.8 weeks for all serious claims in 2004–05. The high median time lost for *Mental stress* claims resulted in those claims also having the highest median direct cost: \$12 700 in 2004–05. *Body stressing* and *Falls, trips and slips of a person* also both had a higher median time lost compared to the other mechanisms. Claims involving *Sound and pressure* had a zero median time lost. This is because of the very high proportion of deafness claims in this category which generally involve no absence from work. Nonetheless, because *Sound and pressure* claims are mainly related to compensation for permanent hearing loss, the mechanism had the second highest median cost in all five years (\$10 200 in 2004–05).

Compensated fatality claims by industry

Table 13 shows that over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05, the overall number of compensated fatalities in Australia decreased by 28% — from 352 to 254. The decrease in the number of fatalities was also reflected in the overall incidence rate almost halving. Over the period the rate fell from 4.8 to 2.9 compensated fatalities per 100 000 employees.

Over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 the fatality incidence rates improved in all industries. All four of the industries which experienced considerably higher fatality rates in 2004–05 than the national rate of 2.9 fatalities per 100 000 employees have reduced their rate since 1997–98. They were: Agriculture, forestry and fishing, with 18 fatalities per 100 000 employees (a 9% improvement since 1997–98); Transport and storage, with 13 fatalities per 100 000 employees

Table 13 Compensated fatalities: number of fatalities and incidence rate by industry by year

Industry	1997–98 ^(a)	1998–99 ^(a)	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Number of fatalities								
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	35	30	36	28	26	28	27	33
Mining	18	13	14	18	10	12	8	5
Manufacturing	63	41	49	44	40	33	32	36
Electricity, gas & water supply	4	4	4	2	5	2	3	2
Construction	37	47	45	48	47	45	46	31
Wholesale trade	27	14	15	16	12	13	17	8
Retail trade	12	21	14	14	11	9	12	10
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	8	6	4	6	8	5	12	9
Transport & storage	65	54	59	57	58	67	45	52
Communication services	3	2	1	2	4	5	3	2
Finance & insurance	3	3	2	7	4	3	2	1
Property & business services	23	22	17	21	21	23	21	13
Government administration & defence	13	7	15	15	20	23	14	12
Education	5	10	10	9	6	11	6	5
Health & community services	7	8	7	8	18	8	7	5
Cultural & recreational services	7	7	3	9	4	7	4	5
Personal & other services	19	15	17	16	18	9	12	11
Industry not stated	3	20	11	2	4	6	6	14
Total compensated fatalities	352	324	323	322	316	309	277	254
Incidence rate (fatalities per 100 000 employees)								
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	19.4	15.8	18.6	13.8	12.0	15.3	14.3	17.7
Mining	23.1	17.1	18.8	24.0	13.1	14.5	8.8	5.0
Manufacturing	6.2	4.1	4.8	4.2	4.1	3.3	3.3	3.7
Electricity, gas & water supply	6.3	6.3	6.3	3.0	7.5	2.7	4.0	2.7
Construction	9.8	11.5	9.9	11.1	10.8	10.0	9.2	5.7
Wholesale trade	6.0	3.1	3.4	4.0	3.1	3.3	4.2	2.0
Retail trade	1.1	1.8	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.7
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	2.0	1.5	0.9	1.3	1.8	1.1	2.6	1.8
Transport & storage	19.7	15.6	17.0	15.9	16.6	19.2	11.9	13.2
Communication services	2.2	1.4	0.6	1.3	2.9	3.6	2.1	1.4
Finance & insurance	1.0	1.0	0.6	2.2	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.3
Property & business services	2.9	2.6	1.9	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.0	1.2
Government administration & defence	3.8	2.0	4.5	3.9	4.9	5.4	3.2	2.6
Education	0.9	1.7	1.6	1.4	0.9	1.6	0.9	0.7
Health & community services	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.5
Cultural & recreational services	3.7	3.5	1.4	4.3	1.8	3.1	1.8	2.0
Personal & other services	6.9	5.5	5.9	5.7	6.1	2.9	3.9	3.4
All compensated fatalities	4.8	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.3	2.9

(a) Excludes ACT private sector.

(a 33% improvement since 1997–98); Construction, with 6 fatalities per 100 000 employees (a 42% improvement since 1997–98); and Mining, with 5 fatalities per 100 000 employees (a 78% improvement since 1997–98). Despite these overall improvements in reference to the 1997–98 financial year, the incidence rate of 18 fatalities per 100 000 employees in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry in 2004–05 is a marked increase on rates in the four earlier years.

The reference year for a claim refers to when the workers' compensation claim was first lodged. For some fatalities there may be many years between a claim being lodged for ill health and the eventual death of the employee. Consequently, even data for early years may be revised. In addition, workers' compensation coverage of work-related fatalities has some deficiencies. For example, a claim may not be lodged if the deceased employee had no dependants.