

# COMPENDIUM OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATISTICS AUSTRALIA 2002–03

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**Australian Government**

**Department of Employment and  
Workplace Relations**

Office of the Australian Safety and  
Compensation Council

# Part C

## Summary of new claims, 2002–03p

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The preliminary number of new work-related compensation claims reported in Australia for 2002–03p was 134 480. Of these claims, 211 were fatal claims (for more information on compensated fatalities, see Part B).

Data shown for 2002–03p are preliminary (denoted by the letter 'p' following the year) and subject to change as more claims are accepted or amended by the jurisdictions at a later date. Consequently, 2002–03p data underestimate the number of claims that will eventually be accepted for that year.

### New claims by industry

Table 6 New claims by industry, 2002–03p

Industry	Number of claims <sup>(a)</sup>			%
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
Manufacturing	20	28 040	28 070	20.9
Health & community services	4	15 960	15 965	11.9
Retail trade	8	12 810	12 820	9.5
Construction	37	12 540	12 580	9.4
Transport & storage	46	10 880	10 940	8.1
Property & business services	11	9 945	9 960	7.4
Education	6	6 920	6 925	5.1
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	3	6 550	6 555	4.9
Wholesale trade	11	6 055	6 070	4.5
Personal & other services	7	5 515	5 520	4.1
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	21	5 460	5 480	4.1
Government administration & defence	14	5 445	5 460	4.1
Cultural & recreational services	7	2 845	2 855	2.1
Mining	10	1 755	1 765	1.3
Finance & insurance	2	1 415	1 415	1.1
Communication services	3	1 340	1 345	1.0
Electricity, gas & water supply	1	735	735	0.5
<b>Total claims</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>134 225</b>	<b>134 480</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Claims are rounded except in the case of fatalities.

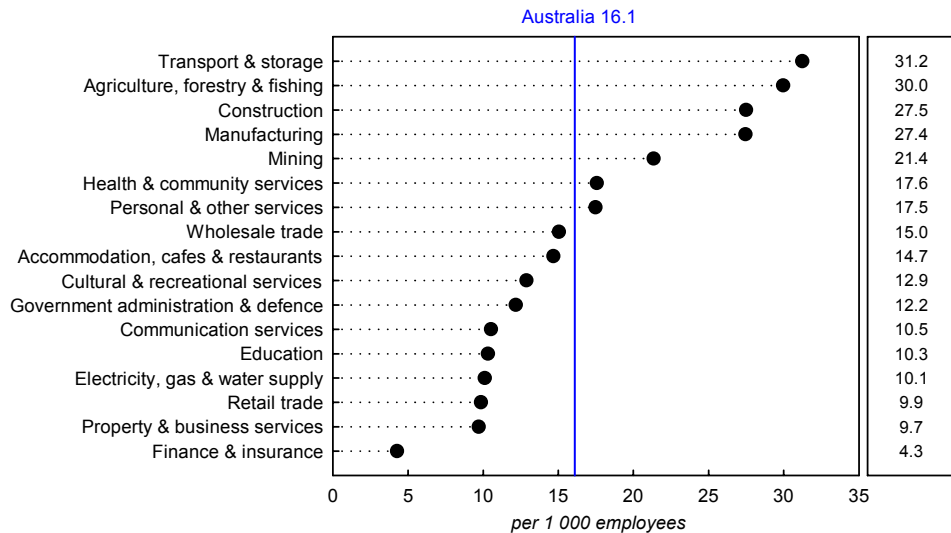
(b) Components may not sum to totals. See Appendix 1, Paragraph 5, p. 56.

Table 6 shows the number of new workers' compensation claims reported during 2002–03p in each industry. The incidence and frequency rates for each industry are also shown in Figures 8a and 8b.

*Manufacturing* had the highest number of claims, 28 070, or 21% of all claims. The next three industries ranked on the number of claims were *Health and community services* (15 965 claims, or 12% of all claims); *Retail Trade* (12 820 claims, or 10% of all claims) and *Construction* (12 580 claims, or 9% of all claims). These four industries together represented just over half of all claims. The *Transport and storage* industry had the highest number of fatal claims (46 fatalities).

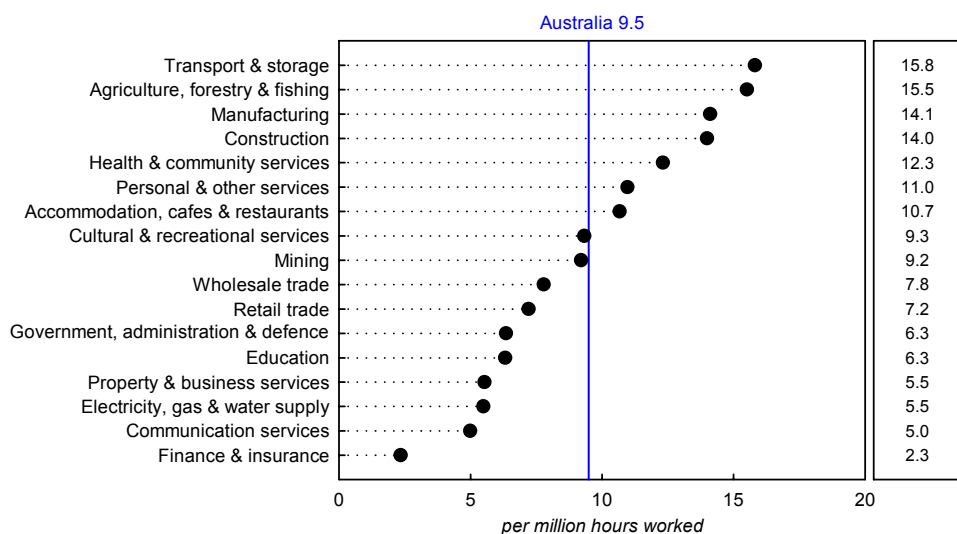
**Incidence rates** Figure 8a compares the number of claims to the number of employees in each industry. The *Transport and storage* industry had the highest incidence rate of 31 claims per 1 000 employees. Three other industries, *Agriculture, forestry and fishing* (30 claims per 1 000 employees); *Construction* (28 claims per 1 000 employees) and *Manufacturing* (27 claims per 1 000 employees) had incidence rates which were well above the national incidence rate of 16 claims per 1 000 employees. The *Finance and insurance* industry had the lowest incidence rate at 4.3 claims per 1 000 employees, well below the rates for all other industries.

**Figure 8a Incidence rate of new claims by industry, 2002–03p**



**Frequency rates** Figure 8b compares the number of new claims with the total hours worked by employees within each industry. The *Transport and storage* industry, with 16 claims per million hours worked, had the highest frequency rate. In descending order, it was followed by the *Agriculture, forestry and fishing* industry (16 claims per million hours worked), *Manufacturing* (14 claims per million hours worked) and *Construction* (14 claims per million hours worked). As for incidence rates, these four industries were well above the national frequency rate of 9.5 claims per million hours worked. The *Finance and insurance* industry again recorded a rate below the frequency rates of all other industries, with 2 claims per million hours worked.

**Figure 8b Frequency rate of new claims by industry, 2002–03p**



## New claims by occupation

Table 7 examines the occupation of employees who had new compensation claims accepted in 2002–03. The largest number of workers' compensation claims were for employees in the *Labourers and related workers* occupation category, with 36 100 claims, representing just over one-quarter (27%) of all new claims. *Tradespersons and related workers* and *Intermediate production and transport workers* together accounted for a further 36% of all claims. *Advanced clerical and service workers* had the least number of claims of any occupation group (1 310, or 1% of all new claims) and the smallest number of compensated fatalities with 2. The greatest number of fatalities, 58, occurred among employees in the *Intermediate production and transport workers* occupation group; these fatalities represented 27% of all compensated fatalities.

**Table 7 New claims by occupation, 2002–03p**

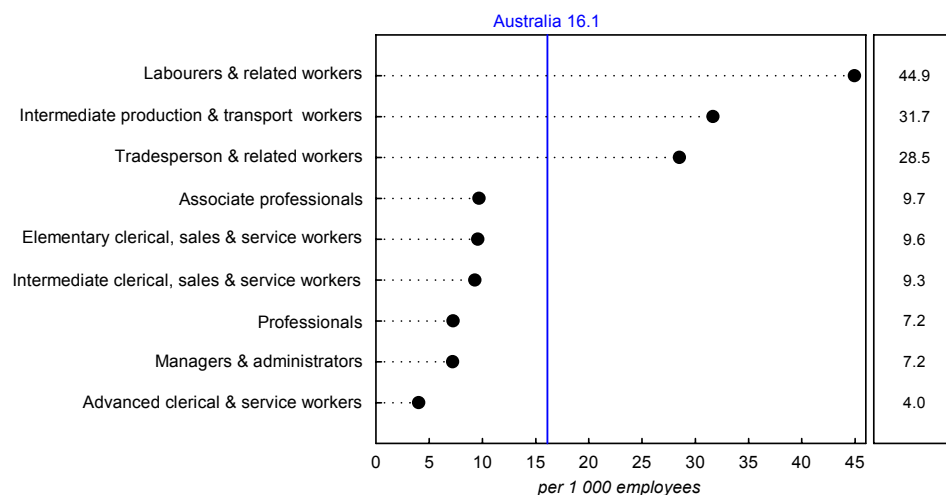
Occupation	Number of claims <sup>(a)</sup>			%
	Fatal	Non-fatal	Total <sup>(b)</sup>	
Labourers & related workers	45	36 050	36 100	26.9
Tradesperson & related workers	41	25 130	25 175	18.8
Intermediate production & transport workers	58	22 790	22 865	17.0
Intermediate clerical, sales & service workers	6	15 290	15 300	11.4
Professionals	16	11 745	11 765	8.8
Elementary clerical, sales & service workers	7	9 315	9 325	7.0
Associate professionals	13	9 040	9 060	6.8
Managers & administrators	21	3 235	3 255	2.4
Advanced clerical & service workers	2	1 310	1 310	1.0
<b>Total claims</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>134 225</b>	<b>134 480</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Claims are rounded except in the case of fatalities.

(b) Components may not sum to totals. See Appendix 1, Paragraph 5, p. 56.

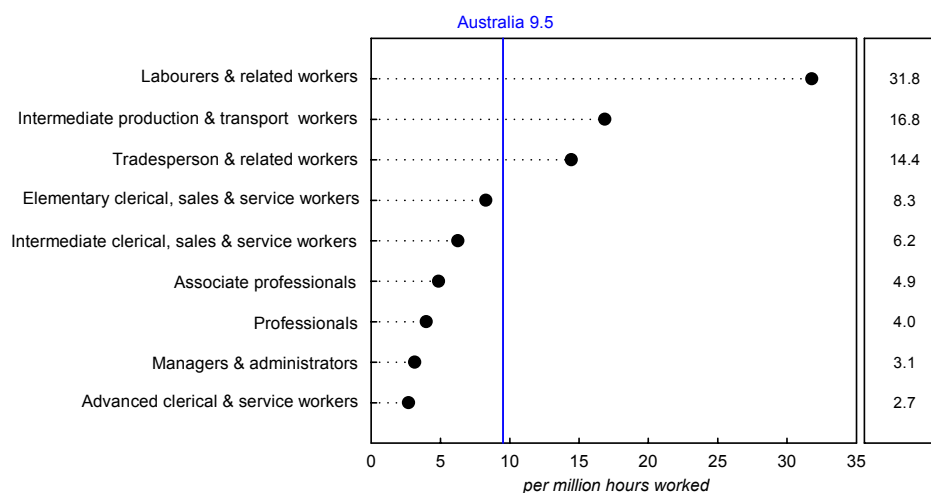
**Incidence rates** The incidence rates (number of claims per 1 000 employees) in Figure 9a show that the highest rate occurred among *Labourers and related workers*, with 45 claims per 1 000 employees — nearly three times the national rate of 16. *Intermediate production and transport workers* and *Tradespersons and related workers* had rates nearly twice the national incidence rate. All other occupation groups had rates below the national rate, with the lowest occurring among *Advanced clerical and service workers* (4 claims per 1 000 employees).

**Figure 9a Incidence rate of new claims by occupation, 2002–03p**



**Frequency rates** Figure 9b presents the frequency rate for each occupation group. *Labourers and related workers* again had the highest rate with 32 claims per million hours worked — over three times the national average of 9.5. This was considerably higher than the second and third highest groups, *Intermediate production and transport workers* (17 claims per million hours worked) and *Tradespersons and related workers* (14). *Advanced clerical and service workers* had the lowest frequency rate of 3 claims per million hours worked.

**Figure 9b** Frequency rate of new claims by occupation, 2002–03p

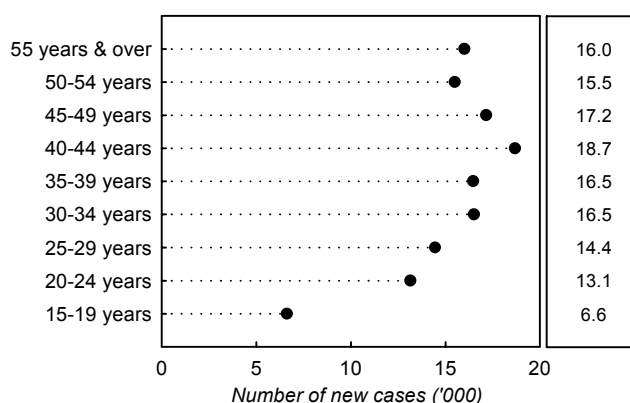


## New claims by age

The age distribution of employees who had new claims accepted in Australia in 2002–03p is shown in Figure 10a.

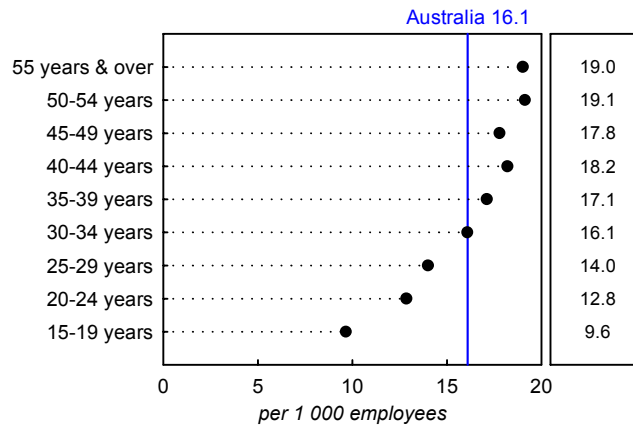
The figure shows that the number of claims made increased with age up to a peak among employees in the 40–44 years age group, who made 18 670 claims (accounting for 14% of all compensated claims). The number of claims then decreased with age, dropping to 15 990 claims (11% of compensated claims) among employees aged 55 years and over.

**Figure 10a** Number of new claims by age, 2002–03p



**Incidence rates** Incidence rates (claims per 1 000 employees) by age are shown in Figure 10b. Generally, the incidence rate increased with age, with employees aged 15–19 years recording 10 claims per 1 000 employees and employees aged 50 years and over having 19 claims per 1 000 employees. All employees aged 35 years and over recorded incidence rates above the national figure of 16 claims per 1 000 employees.

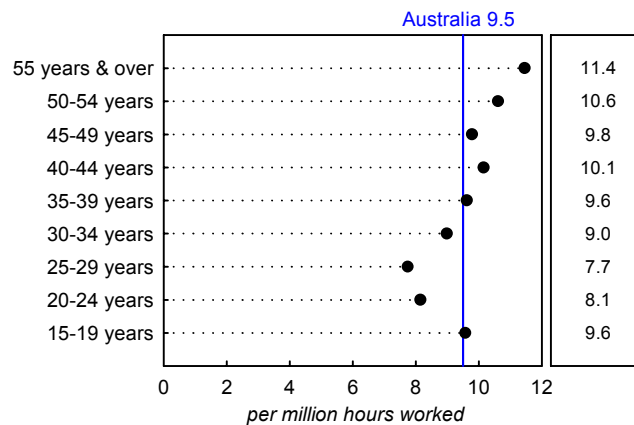
Figure 10b Incidence rate of new claims by age, 2002–03p



**Frequency rates** Frequency rates (claims per million hours worked) by age are shown in Figure 10c. The highest frequency rate (11 claims per million hours worked) was recorded by the oldest employees aged 55 years and over. The lowest frequency rate (8 claims per million hours worked) was recorded by employees aged 25-29 years.

As in the case of incidence rates, the frequency rate generally increased with age. The exception to this pattern occurred among the youngest employees aged 15–19 years. They recorded a higher frequency rate than employees aged between 20 and 34 years. This higher frequency rate, compared to this age group’s relatively low incidence rate, may be due to the relatively high proportion of young employees who work part-time. The frequency rate, by examining claims in respect to hours worked, negates differences in the proportions of full and part-time employees, and consequently provides a better measure of the relative likelihood of work-related injury or disease between the age groups.

Figure 10c Frequency rate of new claims by age, 2002–03p



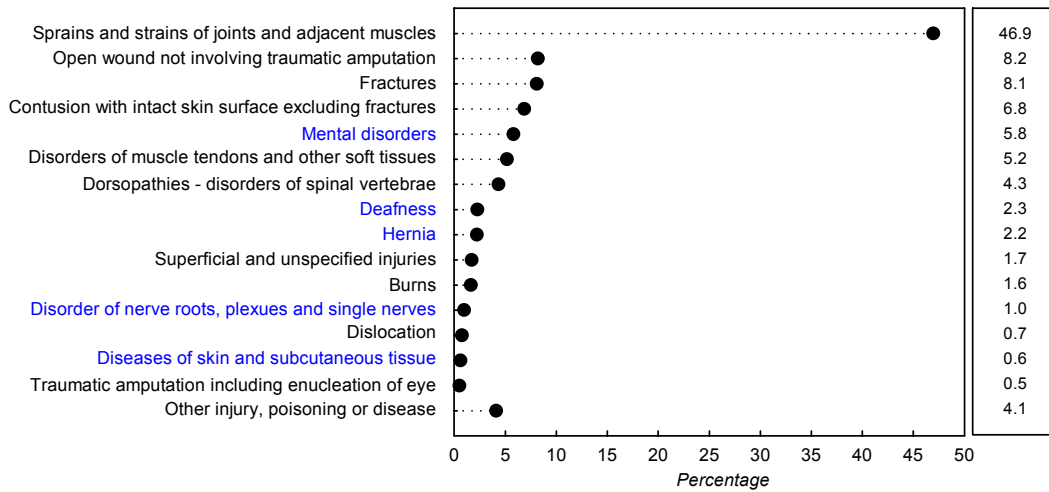
## New claims by the nature of injury or disease

The nature of injury/disease classification is used to identify the most serious injury or disease sustained by the employee.

In 2002–03, 87% of compensated claims were classified as injury-related (including musculoskeletal diseases) and 13% as disease-related (excluding musculoskeletal diseases). Slightly less than half (47%) of all compensated injury and disease claims were *Sprains and strains of joints and adjacent muscles*. The next most common category, representing 8% of claims was *Open wound not involving traumatic amputation*, followed by *Fractures* (8%) and *Contusion with intact skin surface* (7%). These categories are all injury-

related. The most common reason for a disease-related compensation claim in 2002–03p was *Mental disorders*, accounting for 6% of all compensated claims (44% of all disease-related claims).

**Figure 11** Proportion of new claims by nature of injury or disease<sup>(a)</sup>, 2002–03p



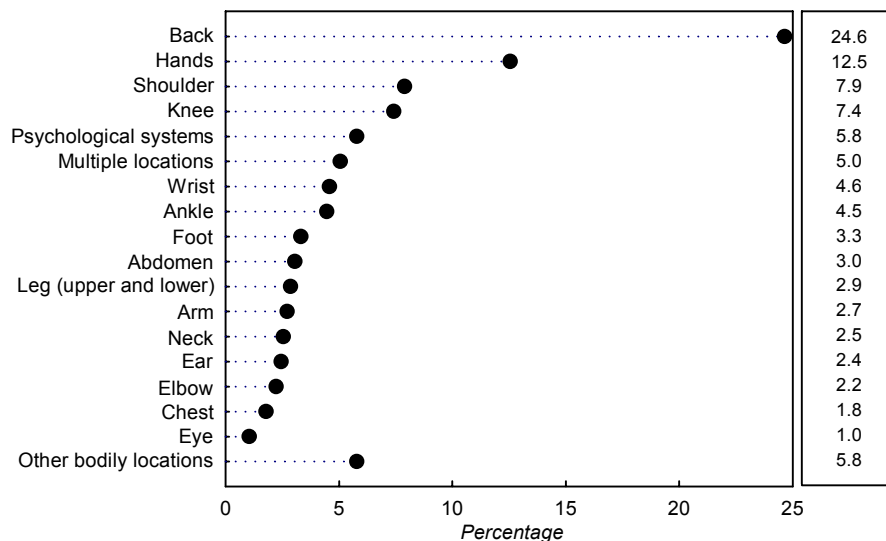
(a) Injury and poisoning categories are shown in black and Disease categories in blue.

## New claims by bodily location of injury or disease

At the broad level, the most common bodily locations of the most serious injury or diseases were the *Upper Limbs* (31% of all claims) and the *Trunk* (30% of all claims).

Figure 12 shows in greater detail the part of the employee's body affected by the most serious injury or disease for claims in 2002–03. The *Back* was the most common location of injury or disease — representing one-quarter of all compensation claims (33 150 claims). Among employees who had an injury or disease located in the *Back*, 71% had a *Lower Back* problem. The next most common location was the *Hands* (13% of all claims), followed by the *Shoulder* (8%). The non-physical category, *Psychological systems*, was the location specified for 6% of all claims. This category applies to conditions such as nervous breakdown; mental conditions; stress; anxiety and neurosis.

**Figure 12** Proportion of new claims by bodily location of injury or disease, 2002–03p

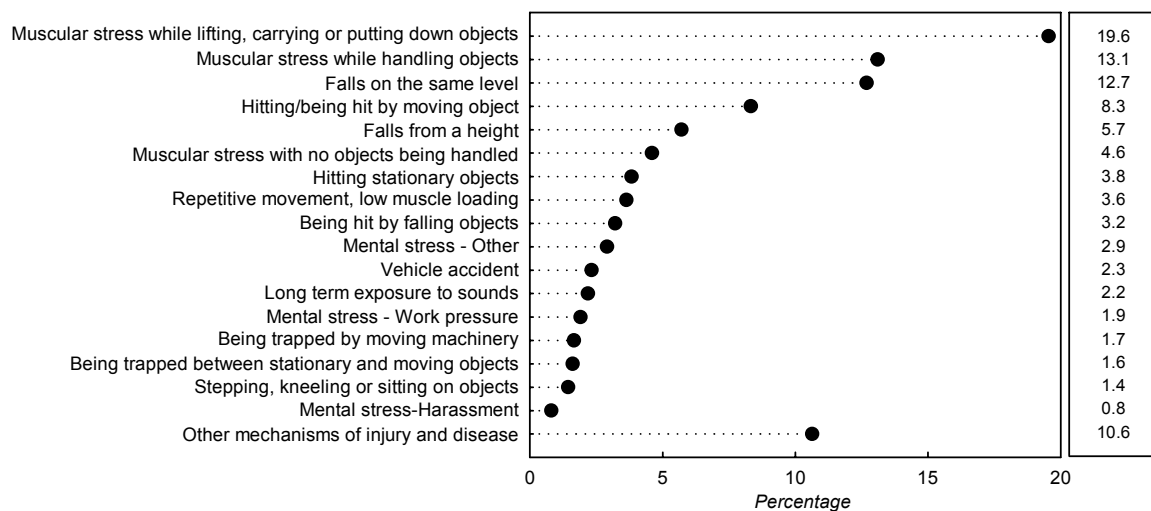


## New claims by mechanism of injury or disease

The mechanism classification is used to identify the action, exposure or event which was the direct cause of the most serious injury or disease. The *National OHS Strategy 2002–2012* identified four mechanisms that, because of their prevalence, should be monitored closely. These mechanisms are *Body Stressing; Falls, Trips and Slips of a Person; Hitting Objects with a Part of the Body* and *Being Hit by Moving Objects*. In 2002–03, these four mechanisms of injury or disease together represented 82% of all new claims and made up just over one-quarter (28%) of all compensated fatalities. *Hitting Objects with a Part of the Body* and *Being Hit by Moving Objects* are discussed in more detail in the feature article in Part E. Figure 13 shows the percentage distribution of new claims in 2002–03p based on a more detailed level of the mechanism of injury or disease classification.

In 2002–03, one in every five (20%) new injury and disease claims was due to *Muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down objects* with a further 13% due to *Muscular stress while handling objects, other than lifting, carrying or putting down*. The category, *Falls on the same level*, was the third most common mechanism at this classification level, representing 13% of all claims.

**Figure 13** Proportion of new claims by mechanism of injury or disease, 2002–03p



## New claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease

The breakdown agency refers to the object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in, or most closely associated with, the point at which things started to go wrong, and which ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease. At the broad classification level (see Figure 14), almost one-quarter of claims (24%) reported in 2002–03p were attributed to *Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment*. Within this category, the two most common sub-categories were *Fastening, packing and packaging equipment* (8% of all claims) and *Furniture and fittings* (5% of all claims).

*Environmental agencies* (15% of all claims) was the second most common agency specified at the broad classification level. At the sub-category level, this is split into *Indoor environment* and the *Outdoor environment* (8% and 7% of all claims respectively). These agencies include such factors as steps and stairways; floor conditions; weather; sun; and ground conditions.

Figure 14 Proportion of new claims by agency of injury or disease, 2002–03p

