

COMPENDIUM OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATISTICS AUSTRALIA 2004–05

May 2007



Australian Government

Australian Safety and Compensation Council

Part A

Summary of new claims, 2004–05p

The preliminary number of new work-related compensation claims reported in Australia for 2004–05p was 140 655. Of these claims, 214 were compensated fatalities. For more information on compensated fatalities see Part B.

Data shown for 2004–05p are preliminary (denoted throughout this publication by the letter 'p') and subject to change as more claims are accepted or amended by the jurisdictions at a later date. Consequently, 2004–05p data understate the number of claims that will eventually be accepted for that year. However, the validity of the distributional characteristics of the 2004–05p data is unlikely to be significantly affected by this understatement.

New claims by gender and nature of claim

Table 1 shows the number and proportion of new workers' compensation claims reported for 2004–05p by the employee's gender and the nature of the claim (i.e. a claim for injury or poisoning or a claim for disease). Musculoskeletal diseases were included as injuries rather than diseases in previous editions of the Compendium. This practice has been retained for the purpose of time series comparison in Part C of the report. However, in this part on new claims they have been counted as diseases (see Appendix 1 — Explanatory note 12, p.83). On this basis, there were 103 395 new claims for injury or poisoning and 37 260 new claims for disease.

The reader should note that workers' compensation data are not an ideal measure of the extent of work-related disease since, for a variety of reasons, many diseases do not result in a compensation claim. In particular, the long latency period of many diseases means that it is not always possible to conclusively establish a relationship between a disease and prior workplace exposure.

Table 1 New claims: number, percentage of total, incidence rate and frequency rate by gender and nature of claim, 2004–05p

	Males	Females	Total
Number of claims			
All claims	95 830	44 825	140 655
Injury and poisoning claims	72 080	31 315	103 395
Disease claims	23 750	13 510	37 260
Per cent of total claims			
All claims	68.1%	31.9%	100%
Injury and poisoning claims	69.7%	30.3%	100%
Disease claims	63.7%	36.3%	100%
Incidence rate (per 1000 employees)			
All claims	21.5	11.1	16.6
Injury and poisoning claims	16.2	7.8	12.2
Disease claims	5.3	3.4	4.4
Frequency rate (per million hours worked)			
All claims	11.3	7.9	10.0
Injury and poisoning claims	8.5	5.5	7.3
Disease claims	2.8	2.4	2.6

Of the 140 655 new claims reported during 2004–05p, 68% (95 830 claims) were for male employees. Male employees accounted for 70% of injury and poisoning claims (72 080 claims) and 64% of disease claims (23 750 claims).

Incidence rates

Differences in the number of claims for male and female employees reflect underlying differences in both work safety outcomes and labour force participation for men and women. The incidence rate — measured here as the number of compensated claims per 1000 employees — takes into account differences in labour force participation, and can be used to compare the relative likelihood of work-related injury or disease between men and women.

Table 1 shows that after taking into account differences in labour force participation, male employees were twice as likely as female employees to have a claim (22 claims for men per 1000 male employees compared with 11 claims for women per 1000 female employees) — and they were 2.1 times more likely to have an injury or poisoning claim and were 1.6 times more likely to have a disease claim.

For men and women combined, there were 17 claims per 1000 employees in 2004–05p, comprising 12 injury and poisoning claims per 1000 employees and 4.4 disease claims per 1000 employees.

Frequency rates

Another way to examine differences in workplace injury or disease between different groups of employees — such as men and women — is to use frequency rates. This measure relates the number of compensated claims reported among a given group of employees to the total time they spent working. This negates differences in the proportion of part-time employees between one group and another.

Table 1 shows that in 2004–05p frequency rates differed less between male and female employees than did incidence rates. This reflects a higher level of part-time work among women than among men. On this basis, male employees were 1.4 times more likely than female employees to have a claim (11 claims for men per million hours worked by men compared with 8 claims for women per million hours worked by women) — and they were 1.5 times more likely to have an injury or poisoning claim and were 1.2 times more likely to have a disease claim.

For men and women combined, there were 10 claims per million hours worked, comprising 7 injury and poisoning claims per million hours worked and 3 disease claims per million hours worked.

New claims by age

Table 2 New claims: number, percentage of total, incidence rate and frequency rate by age, 2004–05p

Age group	No. of claims	%	Incidence rate ^(a)	Frequency rate ^(b)
15–19 years	6 665	4.8	9.5	9.3
20–24 years	13 500	9.6	13.2	8.4
25–29 years	13 610	9.7	14.0	7.9
30–34 years	16 355	11.7	16.3	9.2
35–39 years	16 970	12.1	18.1	10.5
40–44 years	19 050	13.6	18.5	10.5
45–49 years	18 455	13.2	18.7	10.5
50–54 years	16 180	11.5	19.1	10.9
55–59 years	12 130	8.6	21.2	12.5
60–64 years	5 825	4.2	21.5	13.5
65 years and over	1 565	1.1	11.9	7.8
Total claims	140 655	100.0	16.6	10.0

(a) Calculated as a rate per 1000 employees.

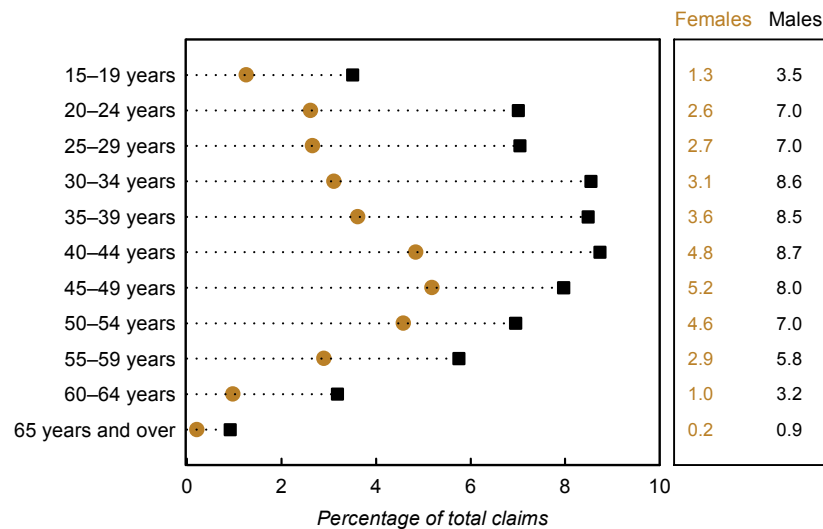
(b) Calculated as a rate per million hours worked.

Table 2 shows the number and proportion of new workers' compensation claims reported for 2004–05p by the age of the employee. Table 2 also shows incidence rates and frequency rates to take into account differences between age groups in total number of employees and total employee hours spent at work.

New claims reported for 2004–05p predominantly involved employees aged between 20 and 59 years. In particular, more than one-quarter of all new claims (27%) involved employees aged 40–49 years. Only 5% of claims involved employees aged less than 20 years, and 5% involved employees aged 60 years or older.

Figure 1a shows the age distribution of new claims separately for men and women. For men, the share of total new claims generally increased with age up to a peak at 40–44 years. Similarly, for women, the share generally increased with age up to a peak at 45–49 years. Claims for men exceeded claims for women in all age groups.

Figure 1a New claims: percentage of claims by gender and age, 2004–05p

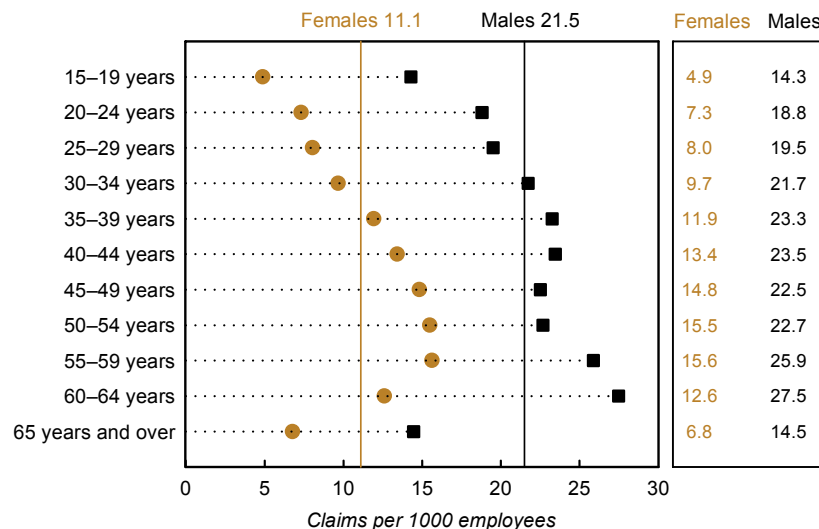


Incidence rates

Table 2 indicates that incidence rates increased progressively with age from 15–19 years (10 claims per 1000 employees) until 60–64 years (22 claims per 1000 employees). Employees in all age groups between 35 years and 64 years recorded incidence rates above the national rate of 17 claims per 1000 employees.

Figure 1b shows the incidence rates for male and female employees in 2004–05p by age group. The rate for men substantially exceeded the rate for women in every

Figure 1b New claims: incidence rate by gender and age, 2004–05p



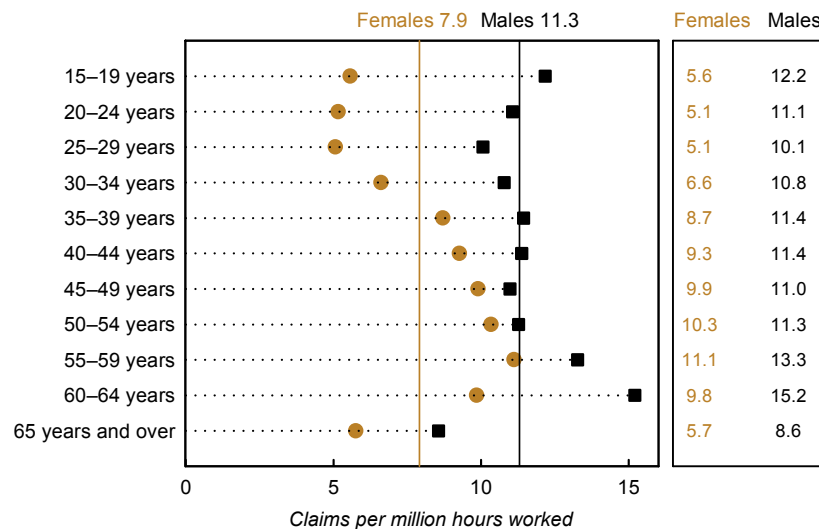
age group. For men, the incidence rate generally increased with age up to a peak at 60–64 years. For women, the incidence rate increased with age up to a peak at 55–59 years.

Frequency rates

Table 2 indicates that frequency rates were much more even between age groups than were incidence rates. Whereas incidence rates were much lower for young employees than for most older employees (those less than 65 years of age), there was substantially less difference between the frequency rates for the young and those for older employees. This reflects a higher level of part-time work among younger employees than among older employees.

Figure 1c shows the frequency rates for male and female employees in 2004–05p by age group. The rate for male employees exceeded the rate for female employees in all age groups, although differences were small for ages between 45 and 54 years. In common with the pattern of incidence rates across age groups, the highest frequency rates occurred among men aged 60–64 years and women aged 55–59 years (15 and 11 claims per million hours worked respectively). However, frequency rates for both men and women were more even across age groups than were incidence rates. This was most notable among young males — whereas males aged 15–19 years had the lowest incidence rate of all male employees, they had a higher frequency rate than all other male employees aged less than 55 years.

Figure 1c New claims: frequency rate by gender and age, 2004–05p



New claims by industry

Table 3a shows the number and percentage of new claims reported in each industry for 2004–05p. Just over half of all claims (53%) involved four industries: Manufacturing (28 775 claims, or 21% of all claims); Health and community services (17 400 claims, 12%); Construction (14 460 claims, 10%); and Retail trade (13 425 claims, 10%).

Four industries accounted for 62% of the compensated fatalities for which Industry was stated. These were Transport and storage (43 fatalities); Manufacturing (30 fatalities); Agriculture, forestry and fishing (29 fatalities); and Construction (25 fatalities).

Table 3a New claims: number of claims by industry, 2004–05p

Industry	Number of claims ^(a)			%
	Non-fatal	Fatal	Total	
Manufacturing	28 745	30	28 775	20.5
Health and community services	17 400	4	17 400	12.4
Construction	14 435	25	14 460	10.3
Retail trade	13 420	9	13 425	9.5
Transport and storage	11 150	43	11 190	8.0
Property and business services	10 545	14	10 555	7.5
Education	6 940	2	6 940	4.9
Wholesale trade	6 620	9	6 630	4.7
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	6 605	8	6 615	4.7
Personal and other services	6 025	10	6 035	4.3
Government administration and defence	5 515	7	5 520	3.9
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4 855	29	4 885	3.5
Cultural and recreational services	2 605	7	2 610	1.9
Mining	2 250	5	2 255	1.6
Communication services	1 270	1	1 270	0.9
Finance and insurance	1 195	0	1 195	0.9
Electricity, gas and water supply	875	2	875	0.6
Total claims	140 440	214^(b)	140 655	100.0

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

(b) Includes claims for which Industry was not stated.

Incidence rates

Figure 2a compares incidence rates between industries for new claims in 2004–05p. Five industries had incidence rates substantially above the national rate of 17 claims per 1000 employees. These were Manufacturing; Transport and storage; Construction; Agriculture, forestry and fishing; and Mining (ranging between 26 and 32 claims per 1000 employees). Finance and insurance (4 claims per 1000 employees) had a substantially lower rate than any other industry.

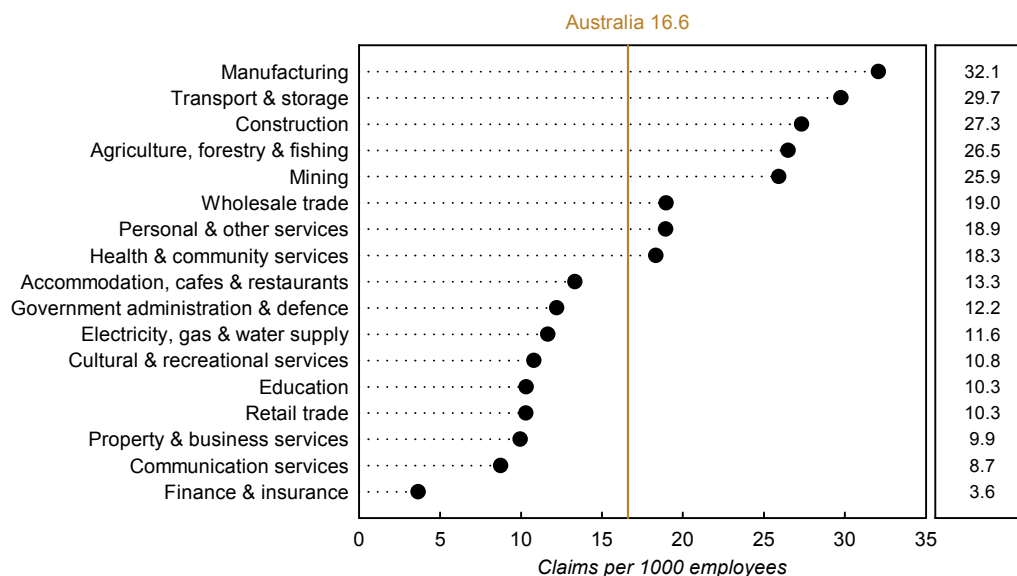
Figure 2a New claims: incidence rate by industry, 2004–05p

Table 3b New claims: industry sub-categories with the ten highest incidence rates, 2004–05p

Industry sub-category ^(a)	Incidence rate ^(b)	No. of claims	% of all claims
Sheet metal product manufacturing	171	935	0.7
Meat and meat product manufacturing	69	3 250	2.3
Cement, lime, plaster and concrete product manufacturing	66	770	0.5
Structural metal product manufacturing	65	1 455	1.0
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	63	1 675	1.2
Non-building construction	56	2 580	1.8
Fruit and vegetable processing	51	400	0.3
Industrial machinery and equipment manufacturing	51	2 060	1.5
Flour mill and cereal food manufacturing	48	270	0.2
Services to water transport	48	590	0.4

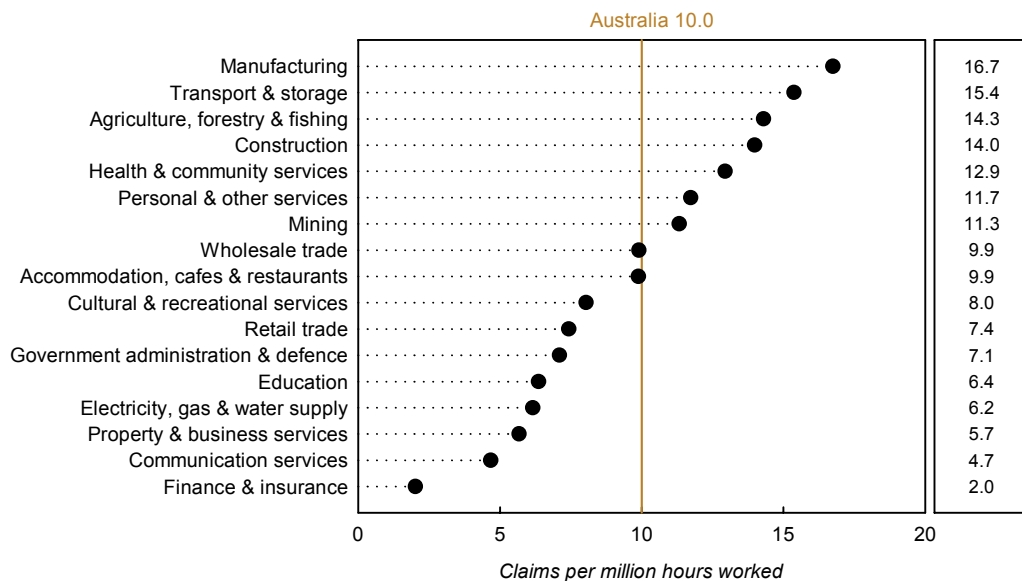
(a) Elements of the 3rd level of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC).
 (b) Calculated as a rate per 1000 employees.

Table 3b shows the industry sub-categories with the ten highest incidence rates in 2004–05p. Together, these sub-categories accounted for 10% of all new claims. The highest incidence rate (171 claims per 1000 employees) occurred within Sheet metal product manufacturing: a rate more than 10 times the national rate. The next highest incidence rates occurred within Meat and meat product manufacturing (69), Cement, lime, plaster and concrete product manufacturing (66) and Structural metal product manufacturing (65).

Frequency rates

Figure 2b compares frequency rates between industries for new claims in 2004–05p. Industries with frequency rates well above the national rate of 10 claims per million hours worked were Manufacturing; Transport and storage; Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Construction; and Health and community services (ranging between 13 and 17 claims per million hours worked). Finance and insurance (2 claims per million hours worked) had a substantially lower rate than any other industry.

Figure 2b New claims: frequency rate by industry, 2004–05p



New claims by occupation

Table 4a shows the number and percentage of new claims reported in each occupation category for 2004–05p. Labourers and related workers had the largest number of new claims (36 740 claims) — about one-quarter (26%) of all 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 claims of any occupation category (1335, or 1% of all new claims).

Three occupation groups accounted for 70% of all compensated fatalities in 2004–05p. These were Intermediate production and transport workers (73 fatalities); Labourers and related workers (40 fatalities); and Tradespersons and related workers (37 fatalities).

Table 4a New claims: number of claims by occupation, 2004–05p

Occupation	Number of claims ^(a)			%
	Non-fatal	Fatal	Total	
Labourers and related workers	36 700	40	36 740	26.1
Tradesperson and related workers	26 245	37	26 280	18.7
Intermediate production and transport workers	24 535	73	24 605	17.5
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	16 240	4	16 245	11.5
Professionals	11 875	21	11 900	8.5
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	10 290	6	10 295	7.3
Associate professionals	10 025	13	10 040	7.1
Managers and administrators	3 200	10	3 210	2.3
Advanced clerical and service workers	1 335	1	1 335	0.9
Total claims	140 440	214^(b)	140 655	100.0

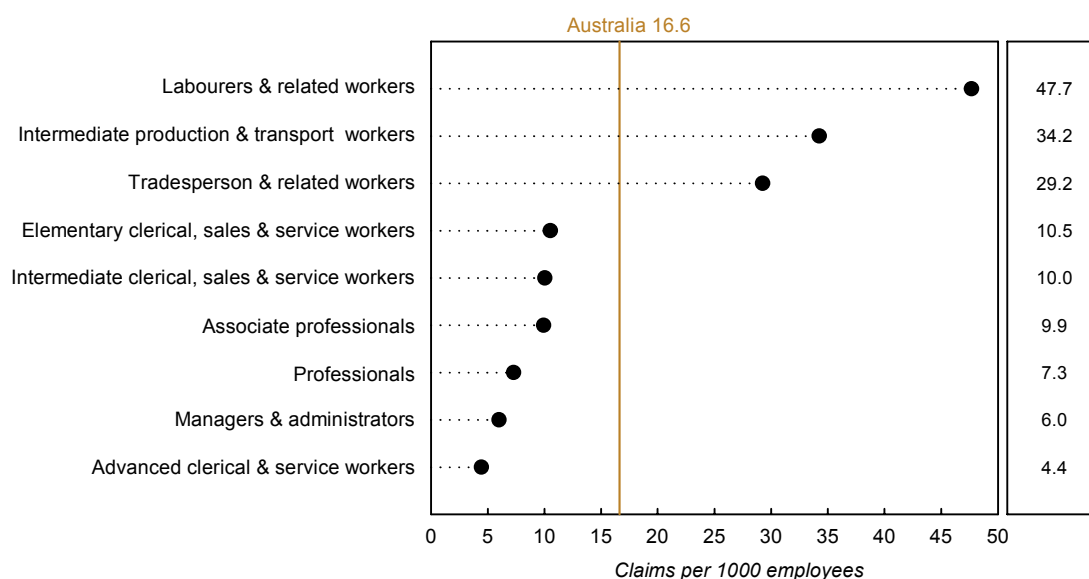
(a) Numbers of claims are rounded except in the case of fatalities.

(b) Includes claims for which Occupation was not stated.

Incidence rates

Figure 3a compares incidence rates between occupation categories for new claims in 2004–05p. Labourers and related workers had the highest rate, 48 claims per 1000 employees — nearly three times the national rate of 17 claims per 1000 employees. Intermediate production and transport workers and Tradespersons and related workers had rates close to double the national rate (34 and 29 claims per

Figure 3a New claims: incidence rate by occupation, 2004–05p



1000 employees respectively). All other occupation groups had rates below the national rate, with the lowest rate being for Advanced clerical and service workers (4 claims per 1000 employees).

Table 4b shows the occupation sub-categories with the ten highest incidence rates in 2004–05p. Together, these sub-categories accounted for 6% of all new claims. The highest incidence rate (109 claims per 1000 employees) occurred among Meat and fish process workers: a rate more than six times the national rate. The next highest incidence rates occurred among Engineering production process workers (100), Food trades assistants (97), and Nurse managers (95).

Table 4b New claims: occupation sub-categories with the ten highest incidence rates, 2004–05p

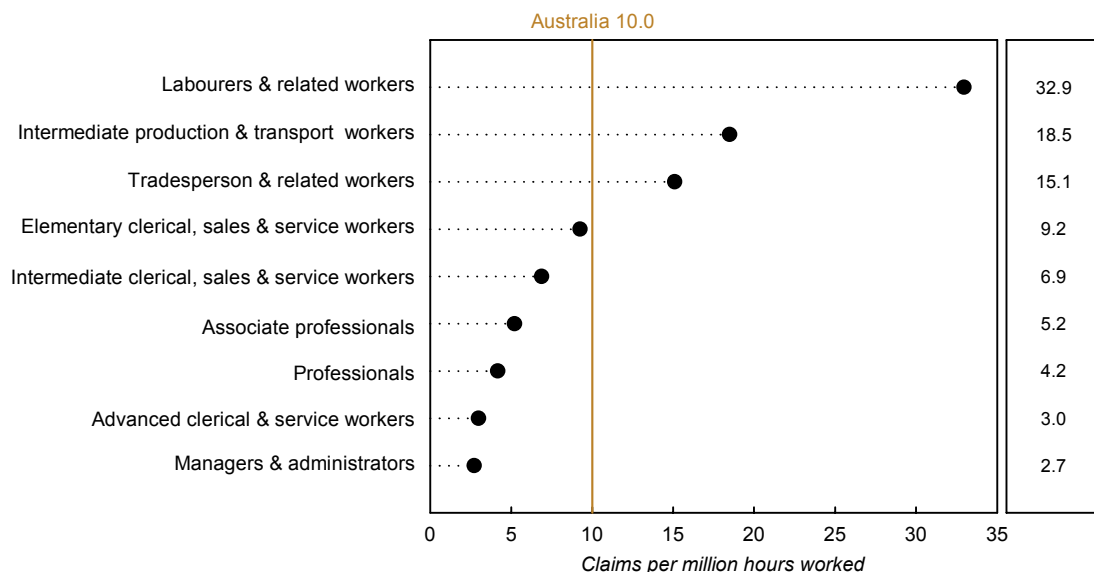
Occupation sub-category ^(a)	Incidence rate ^(b)	No. of claims	% of all claims
Meat and fish process workers	109	2 260	1.6
Engineering production process workers	100	1 525	1.1
Food trades assistants	97	375	0.3
Nurse managers	95	930	0.7
Wood products factory hands	83	890	0.6
Ambulance officers and paramedics	83	605	0.4
Paving and surfacing labourers	75	275	0.2
Sheetmetal tradespersons	70	560	0.4
Fire fighters	65	670	0.5
Crane, hoist and lift operators	64	795	0.6

(a) Elements of the 4th level of the Australian Standard Occupation Classification (ASCO).
(b) Calculated as a rate per 1000 employees.

Frequency rates

Figure 3b compares frequency rates between occupation categories for new claims in 2004–05p. Labourers and related workers had the highest rate, 33 claims per million hours worked — more than three times the national rate of 10 claims per million hours worked. This rate was considerably higher than the rates for the second and third-ranking occupation groups, Intermediate production and transport workers and Tradespersons and related workers (19 and 15 claims per million hours worked respectively). All other occupation groups had rates below the national rate, with Managers and administrators having the lowest rate (3 claims per 1000 employees).

Figure 3b New claims: frequency rate by occupation, 2004–05p



New claims by industry and occupation

Cross-comparison of the employee's occupation and industry (a tabulation too large to publish in this report) indicates that one-third of all new claims in 2004–05p were contributed by just six groups of employees formed by combination of occupation and industry. These six groups were Labourers and related workers, Tradespersons and related workers, and Intermediate production and transport workers within the Manufacturing industry (9 %, 6% and 4% of all claims respectively); Intermediate production and transport workers within the Transport and storage industry (5%); Tradespersons and related workers within the Construction industry (5%); and Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers within the Health and community services industry (4%).

In 2004–05p, almost one-third of all compensated fatalities were contributed by just four groups of employees formed by combination of occupation and industry. These four groups were Intermediate production and transport workers within the Transport and storage industry (17% of all compensated fatalities); Labourers and related workers within the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (5%); Tradespersons and related workers within the Construction industry (5%); and Intermediate production and transport workers within the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (5%).

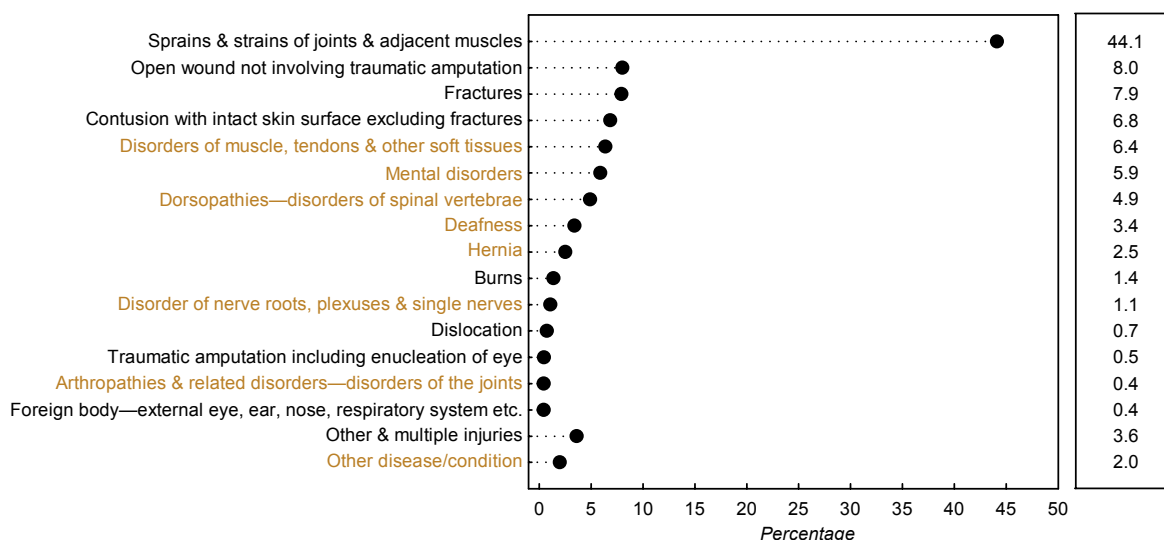
New claims by the nature of injury or disease

The Nature of injury or disease classification is used to categorise the most serious injury or disease sustained by the employee. Figure 4 shows the percentage distribution of new claims in 2004–05p across these categories. Injury-related categories are shown in black and disease-related categories are shown in colour.

Injury-related claims accounted for 74% of all new claims in 2004–05p. Of these, *Sprains and strains of joints and adjacent muscles* predominated, accounting for 44% of all injury and disease claims. The next most common categories of injury-related claims were *Open wound not involving traumatic amputation* and *Fractures* (both 8% of all claims).

Disease-related claims accounted for 26% of all new claims in 2004–05p. The most common diseases involved in claims were *Disorders of muscle, tendons and other soft tissues*, accounting for 24% of all disease-related claims (6% of all claims); *Mental disorders* (6% of all claims); *Dorsopathies — disorders of spinal vertebrae* (5% of all claims); *Deafness* (3% of all claims); and *Hernia* (3% of all claims).

Figure 4 New claims: percentage of claims by nature of injury or disease^(a), 2004–05p



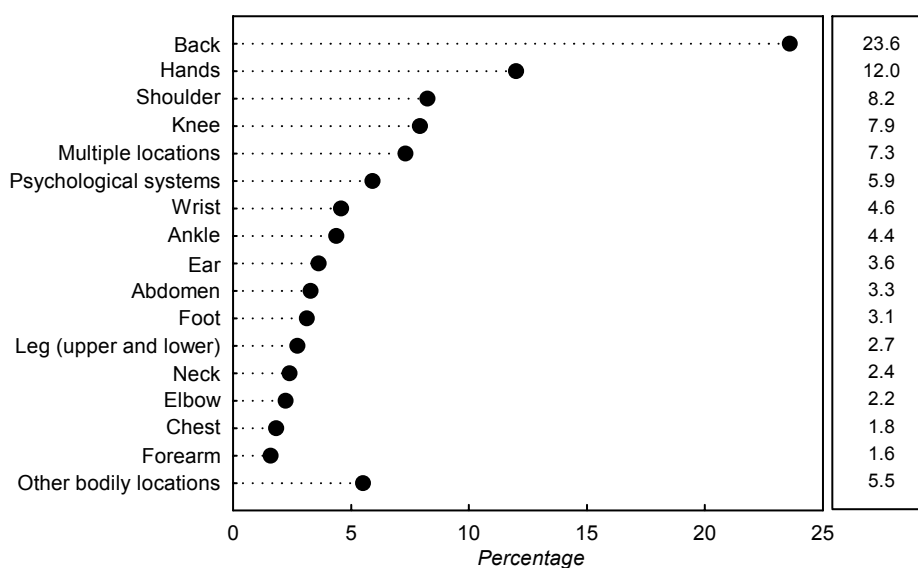
(a) Disease-related categories are shown in colour.

New claims by bodily location of injury or disease

The Bodily location classification is used to identify the part of the body affected by the most serious injury or disease. At the broadest level of classification, the most common bodily locations were *Upper Limbs* (31% of all claims) and *Trunk* (29% of all claims).

Figure 5 shows the percentage distribution of new claims in 2004–05p across bodily locations classified at a finer level of detail. The *Back* was the most common location of injury or disease, representing nearly one-quarter (24%) of all claims, and among these claims 74% involved a problem in the lower back. The next most common bodily locations were *Hands*, *Shoulder*, and *Knee* — 12%, 8%, and 8% of all claims respectively. The non-physical category *Psychological systems* was specified for 6% of all claims: this category covers conditions such as nervous breakdown, anxiety and depression.

Figure 5 New claims: percentage of claims by bodily location of injury or disease, 2004–05p

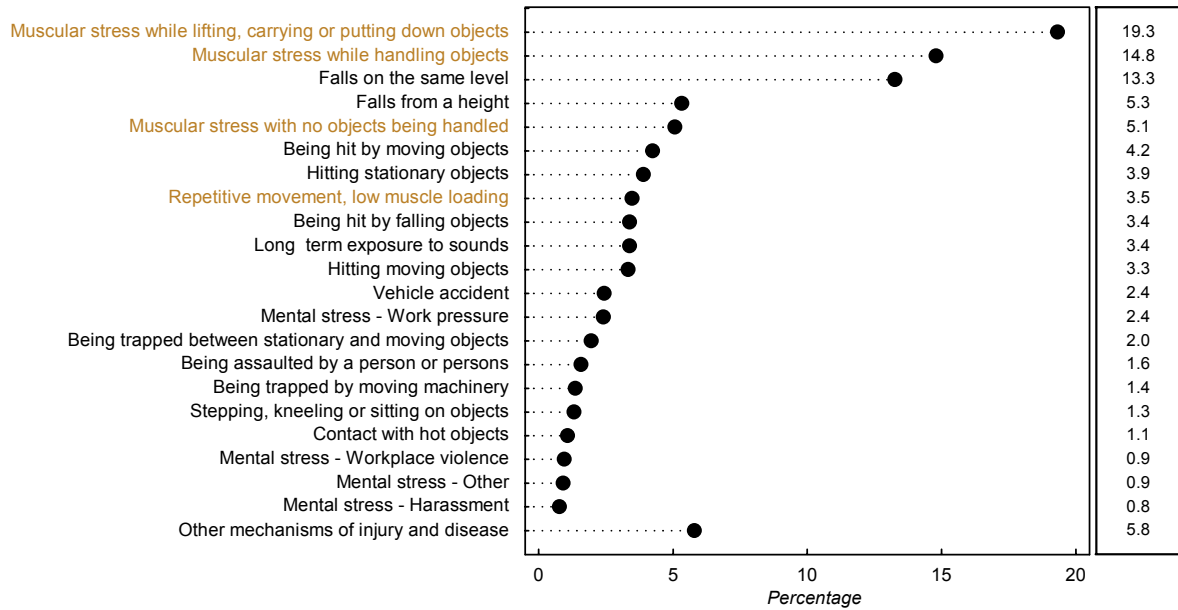


New claims by mechanism of injury or disease

The Mechanism of injury or disease classification is used to describe the action, exposure or event that was the direct cause of the most serious injury or disease. The National OHS Strategy 2002–2012 led to the identification of four mechanisms that, because of their prevalence, should be monitored closely. These mechanisms are *Body stressing* (also referred to as Manual handling); *Falls, trips and slips of a person*; *Hitting objects with a part of the body*; and *Being hit by moving objects*. In 2004–05p, these four mechanisms together accounted for 84% of all new claims and 28% of all compensated fatalities. Each of these mechanisms has been the subject of a feature article in earlier Compendiums.

Figure 6 shows the percentage distribution of new claims in 2004–05p across mechanisms classified at a finer level of detail. Manual-handling mechanisms (shown in colour) accounted for 43% of all new claims, including *Muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down objects* (19% of all new claims) and *Muscular stress while handling objects, other than lifting, carrying or putting down* (15%). The most common mechanism not related to manual handling was *Falls on the same level*, accounting for 13% of all new claims.

Figure 6 New claims: percentage of claims by mechanism of injury or disease^(a), 2004–05p



(a) Manual-handling mechanisms are shown in colour.

New claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease

Breakdown agency refers to the object, substance or circumstance 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 7), 25% of new claims in 2004–05p involved *Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment*. For these claims, the two most common sub-categories were *Fastening, packing and packaging equipment* and *Furniture and fittings* (8% and 5% of all claims respectively).

The second most common breakdown agency specified at the broad classification level was *Environmental agencies* (15% of all claims). These claims were split equally at the sub-category level between *Indoor environment* and the *Outdoor environment*. These sub-agencies include such factors as steps and stairways, floor conditions, weather and ground conditions.

Figure 7 New claims: percentage of claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2004–05p

