



NATIONAL
RETURN ²⁰²⁰⁻²⁰³⁰
TO WORK
STRATEGY



Measurement Framework

Measuring the success of the *National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030*

Also see the **Methodology for the Measurement Framework** which provides the rationale and technical details underpinning the Measurement Framework

Introduction

The Measurement Framework (the framework) outlines how Safe Work Australia will measure the success of the [National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030](#) (the Strategy).

Measuring progress towards achieving the Strategy's strategic outcomes will provide signposts throughout its 10 year life and enable the efficient and effective targeting of resources to both monitor and improve return to work outcomes, including by informing national action under the Strategy.

In 2019, Safe Work Australia Members and all Australian Work Health and Safety Ministers endorsed the Strategy, with a vision to minimise the impact of work-related injury and illness and enable workers to have a timely, safe and durable return to work.

Three national strategic outcomes support the vision, and outline the change expected from the Strategy's success:

Strategic Outcome 1: Increase in workers staying in or returning to good work following a work-related injury or illness

Strategic Outcome 2: Increase in positive return to work experiences for workers with a work-related injury or illness

Strategic Outcome 3: Increase in employers preparing for, effectively responding to and managing work-related injury and illness in the workplace

The framework was developed in partnership with governments, worker and employer representatives, informed by the national and global return to work evidence base, expert advice, and insights from various stakeholders during the development of the Strategy.

Primary data sources

The framework utilises Safe Work Australia's national datasets that provide insights into workers' compensation claims and experiences.

National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS)

The [NDS](#) includes administrative workers' compensation claim data collected by Commonwealth, state and territory workers' compensation authorities, enabling the production of nationally comparable information on claims for work-related injuries, disease (illness) and fatalities.

National Return to Work Survey (NRTWS)

The [NRTWS](#) measures the return to work outcomes and experiences of workers with a compensable work-related injury or illness to better understand their return to work journey and the factors that can influence their successful return to work.

National performance measures and objectives

Tables 1 and 2 sets out the national measures selected to monitor performance against the three strategic outcomes in the Strategy. Collectively, the suite of measures provide a broad view of progress toward achieving the Strategy's vision. The title given to each measure (e.g. 'timely return to work') has been guided by the vision and strategic outcomes. These titles are general descriptors and are not intended to be value judgements.

The measures include lagging indicators (recovery of work function and return to work outcomes) and leading indicators (factors that influence whether recovery and return to work outcomes are achieved). The measures also span the domains of the four key stakeholders in the return to work process – the worker, employer, healthcare and insurer.

The national performance objectives are national targets for improvement and indicate the direction of a positive change in performance and the scope for that change to occur. Further information on the national performance measures and objectives is available in the **Methodology for the Measurement Framework**.

Reporting

Safe Work Australia will monitor the performance measures and report on national progress at the end of years one (acting as the baseline for future improvement), three and five of the Strategy, culminating in the mid-term review. Any reporting will include explanatory notes on measures and metrics to ensure they can be clearly understood and acknowledge any limitations.

Reviewing the Measurement Framework

The framework recognises the current challenges and future opportunities to measure return to work. Work under the Strategy and across governments and the sector to develop more holistic measures will provide richer insights into workers' recovery and return to work in the future. The framework will be reviewed periodically to consider and incorporate improvements and developments in return to work data and measures as appropriate.

Table 1. National performance measures and objectives: lagging indicators (recovery and return to work outcomes)

Measure	Data source	Domain	Strategic Outcome 1	Strategic Outcome 2	Strategic Outcome 3	Metric (data item selected to identify and indicate change against corresponding measure)	Performance objective	
							Direction of change	Scope for change
Timely return to work*	NDS	Multiple	✓			Rate of accepted claims with time loss at 13 weeks, 26 weeks and 52 weeks (frequency rate)	Decrease	Small
Safe return to work*	NRTWS	Multiple	✓			Percentage of workers who had returned to work and required additional time off	Decrease	Moderate
Durable return to work*	NRTWS	Multiple	✓			Percentage of workers with time loss claims back at work for at least 3 months	Increase	Small
General health (recovery)	NRTWS	Multiple	✓			Percentage of all workers with good to excellent self-rated health	Increase	Moderate
Work role functioning (recovery)	NRTWS	Multiple	✓			Average Work Role Functioning Questionnaire score in workers who had returned to work	Increase	Moderate
Stay at work**	NDS	Multiple	✓			Rate of accepted claims that do not involve time loss	Increase	Moderate

Footnote: At the time of publishing, there is an absence of reliable national data for some listed measures. Future data development may result in the inclusion of alternative measures and/or metrics in the framework as noted below:

* These measures reflect the Strategy's vision and combined provide a general indication of 'good work' in Strategic Outcome 1.

** 'Stay at work' data is not routinely and consistently collected at this time.

Table 2. National performance measures and objectives: leading indicators (factors influencing recovery and return to work outcomes)

Measure	Data source	Domain	Strategic Outcome 1	Strategic Outcome 2	Strategic Outcome 3	Metric (data item selected to identify and indicate change against corresponding measure)	Performance objective	
							Direction of change	Scope for change
Insurer decision time	NDS	Insurer		✓		Mean time in days between claim receipt by insurer and insurer decision to accept claim	Decrease	Moderate
Perceived fairness	NRTWS	Insurer		✓		Average score on the perceived justice of the compensation process scale for all workers	Increase	Moderate
Work-focused healthcare	NRTWS	Healthcare		✓		Average score on work-focussed healthcare questions for all workers	Increase	Small to Moderate
Healthcare stress	NRTWS	Healthcare		✓		Percentage of all workers reporting that they had stressful interactions with a healthcare provider	Decrease	Moderate
Employer response*	NRTWS	Employer*		✓	✓	Percentage of all workers agreeing that their employer supported them following their injury (score based on 6 questions about the employer's attitudes and behaviours)	Increase	Large
Employer contact*	NRTWS	Employer*		✓	✓	Percentage of all workers reporting contact from their employer since their injury	Increase	Large
Return to work planning*	NRTWS	Employer*		✓	✓	Percentage of all workers reporting that they had a return to work plan	Increase	Large
Workplace accommodations*	NRTWS	Employer*		✓	✓	Percentage of workers who had returned to work reporting that they returned with modified hours or modified duties	Increase	Moderate to Large
Return to work self-efficacy	NRTWS	Worker		✓		Average score of all workers on the return to work self-efficacy scale	Increase	Small to Moderate

Footnote: Future data developmental work may result in the inclusion of additional measures and/or alternative metrics in the framework as noted below:

* Selected measures related to employers are based on the worker's perspective of their employer's actions, captured through the NRTWS.