



# **Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics**

*2018-19*

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## Abbreviations and symbols

<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>ANZSCO</b>	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First edition
<b>ANZSIC</b>	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006
<b>NDS</b>	National Data Set for Compensation–Based Statistics
<b>np</b>	data not available due to confidentiality restrictions
<b>p</b>	Preliminary data
<b>% chg</b>	Percentage change

# Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics Report 2018-19\*

## Key findings

### Serious claims in 2018-19p\*



Number of serious Australian workers' compensation claims in 2018-19p\*

# 114,435

Frequency rate of serious claims  
per million hours worked 2018-19p\*



# 5.7

Incidence rate of serious claims  
per 1,000 employees 2018-19p\*

# 9.4



Frequency rate of serious claims  
per million hours worked by gender 2018-19p\*



# 6.2

men

# 5.1

women



Main causes of serious claims  
(by mechanism of incident) in 2018-19p\*



# 36%

Body stressing



# 23%

Falls, trips, and  
slips of a person



# 16%

Being hit by  
moving objects

#### Notes:

\*Preliminary data subject to revision in future years as further claims are finalised.

Serious compensation claims refer to accepted claims for worker's compensation involving five days or more of time off work.

Rates are calculated using unrounded numbers.

# Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics Report 2018-19\*

## Key findings

Three occupations with the highest rates of serious claims  
(per million hours worked in 2018-19p\*)



Three industries with the highest rates of serious claims  
(per million hours worked in 2018-19p\*)



Serious claims 2008-09 to 2017-18

Frequency rate of serious claims per million hours worked

**decreased by 26%**

from 7.7 to 5.7 serious claims per million hours worked

**increased by 24%** from 5.0 to 6.2 working weeks



**declined by 12%** from 126,115 to 110,810 serious claims

despite the number of workers increasing by nearly 20% over the same period.

### Notes:

\*Preliminary data subject to revision in future years as further claims are finalised. Serious compensation claims refer to accepted claims for worker's compensation involving five days or more of time off work. Rates are calculated using unrounded numbers.

# Introduction

The statistics in this report are of Australian workers' compensation claims that were lodged between 2000–01 and 2018–19. The statistics are an indicator of Australia's work health and safety performance over the 19-year period between 2000–01 and 2018–19. However, the data do not cover all work-related injuries and diseases that occurred during this period and are also affected by changes in workers' eligibility for compensation over time and between jurisdictions (see explanatory notes for further information). The statistics are presented by:

- gender
- age group
- industry
- occupation
- mechanism of injury or disease
- nature of injury or disease
- breakdown agency of injury or disease
- mechanism of injury or disease and breakdown agency, and
- mechanism and bodily location of injury or disease.

Claim numbers are rounded to the nearest five to help protect confidential information about employers and employees. Due to rounding, differences may appear between the reported totals and proportions and the sums of rows or columns.

## Data

The data used in this report were supplied by jurisdictions for the 2018–19 financial year with updates back to 2013–14. The data presented may differ from jurisdictional annual reports due to the use of different definitions and the application of adjustment factors to aid in the comparability of data. Additional information on the data can be found in the [explanatory notes](#).

## Definition of a serious claim

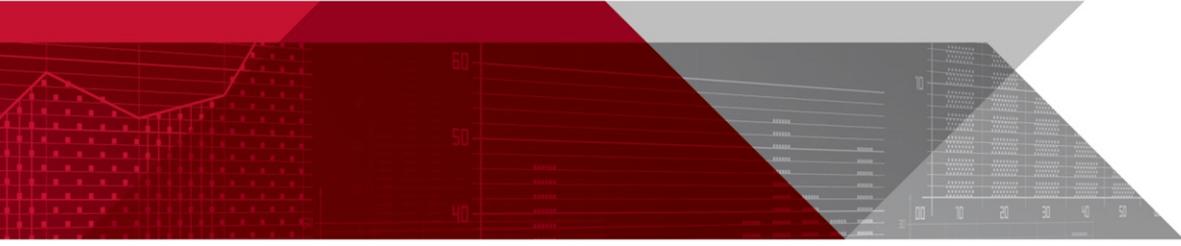
This report presents statistics in the form of 'serious claims'. A serious claim is an accepted workers' compensation claim for an incapacity that resulted in a total absence from work of one working week or more. Claims in receipt of common-law payments are also included. Claims arising from a journey to or from work or during a recess period are not compensable in all jurisdictions and are excluded.

Serious claims exclude compensated fatalities. Safe Work Australia produces other resources that provide information on work-related fatalities in Australia. The most up-to-date count of worker fatalities is available online on Safe Work Australia's [Worker Fatalities](#) page. Comprehensive information on work-related injury fatalities is available in the [Work-Related Traumatic Injury Fatalities reports](#). The reports are based on information from workers' compensation data, coronial information, notifiable fatalities and the media.

## Frequency and incidence rates

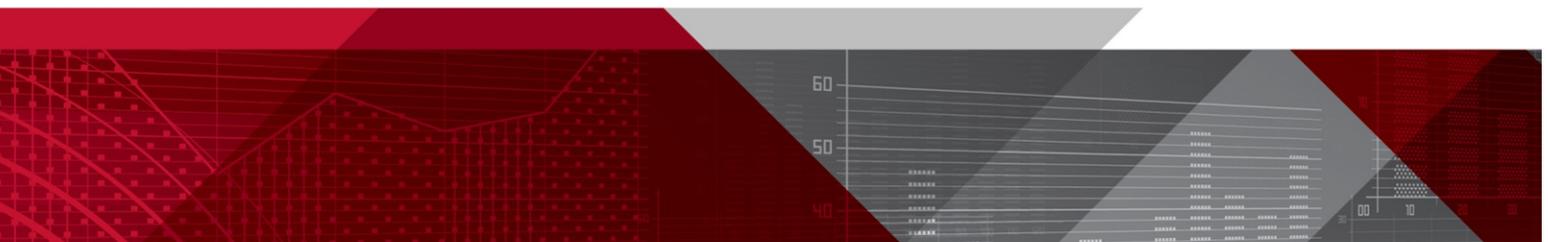
Frequency rates are expressed as the number of serious claims per million hours worked, while incidence rates are expressed as the number of serious claims per thousand employees.

Compared with an incidence rate, a frequency rate is a more accurate measure of work health and safety, because there are significant differences in the number of hours worked by different groups of employees and employees at different points in time. These differences in the number of hours worked mean that employees' exposure to work-related risks vary considerably. A frequency rate accounts for these differences and allows more accurate comparisons to be made.



# Section 1: Serious claims 2018–19p

This section provides workers' compensation statistics for claims lodged during the 2018–19 financial year. The 2018–19 data are preliminary (denoted by 'p') and are likely to be revised up in future years.



## 1.1 Gender

In 2018–19p<sup>1</sup>, male employees accounted for 62% of serious claims and 58% of hours worked, while female employees accounted for 38% of serious claims and 42% of hours worked (**Table 1**).

**Table 1: Percentage of serious claims and hours worked by gender, 2018–19p**

	Percentage of serious claims	Percentage of hours worked
<b>Male</b>	62%	58%
<b>Female</b>	38%	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2** below shows that in 2018–19p, the difference between the frequency rates of serious claims (serious claims per million hours worked) between males and females was smaller than the difference in the incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees), reflecting the higher prevalence of part-time work among females. Even when adjusted for hours worked, males are still more likely than female employees to have a serious claim (6.2 serious claims per million hours worked compared with 5.1 serious claims per million hours worked).

A higher percentage of male employees' serious claims arose from injury and musculoskeletal disorders (89% compared with 84% for female employees), while a higher percentage of female employees' serious claims arose from diseases (16% compared with 11% for male employees).

**Table 2: Number, percentage and rates of serious claims by injury or disease and gender, 2018–19p**

	Number of serious claims	Percentage of serious claims	Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)
<b>Male</b>				
Injury and musculoskeletal disorders	63,775	89%	5.5	10.2
Diseases	7,690	11%	0.7	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>
<b>Female</b>				
Injury and musculoskeletal disorders	35,925	84%	4.3	6.1
Diseases	7,035	16%	0.8	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>
<b>All serious claims</b>				
Injury and musculoskeletal disorders	99,710	87%	5.0	8.2
Diseases	14,725	13%	0.7	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>9.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Data for 2018–19 are preliminary and subject to change when further claims are finalised.

## 1.2 Age group

**Table 3** below shows that in 2018–19p, across the age groups older workers were more likely to make a serious claim, particularly those aged between 45 and 54 years. Workers aged under 25 years accounted for 12% of serious claims in 2018–19p, compared with workers aged 45 to 54 years who accounted for 25%.

**Table 3: Number of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2018–19p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims			Disease claims			All claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	2,555	1,100	3,650	80	55	135	2,635	1,155	3,785
20–24 years	6,775	2,945	9,720	300	365	665	7,075	3,310	10,385
25–29 years	7,605	3,310	10,915	535	550	1,085	8,135	3,860	12,000
30–34 years	7,130	2,975	10,105	700	660	1,360	7,825	3,635	11,465
35–39 years	6,560	3,070	9,630	810	745	1,555	7,375	3,810	11,185
40–44 years	6,430	3,615	10,045	1,005	920	1,920	7,430	4,535	11,965
45–49 years	7,185	4,765	11,950	1,145	1,135	2,280	8,330	5,900	14,230
50–54 years	6,735	5,030	11,765	1,100	1,085	2,185	7,835	6,115	13,950
55–59 years	6,525	4,880	11,405	1,060	855	1,915	7,585	5,735	13,320
60–64 years	4,430	3,065	7,490	715	510	1,225	5,140	3,575	8,715
65+ years*	1,855	1,175	3,030	240	160	400	2,095	1,335	3,430
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,775</b>	<b>35,925</b>	<b>99,710</b>	<b>7,690</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>14,725</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>114,435</b>

**Table 4** shows that the highest frequency rates in 2018–19p were among employees aged 60–64 years (8.2 serious claims per million hours worked). By contrast, employees aged 30–34 years had the lowest frequency rate (4.5 serious claims per million hours worked) in the workforce.

**Table 4: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2018–19p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims			Disease claims			All claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	7.1	3.8	5.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	7.3	4.0	5.9
20–24 years	6.6	3.5	5.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	6.9	4.0	5.6
25–29 years	5.2	3.0	4.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	5.6	3.5	4.7
30–34 years	4.7	3.0	4.0	0.5	0.7	0.5	5.1	3.6	4.5
35–39 years	4.5	3.3	4.0	0.6	0.8	0.6	5.0	4.1	4.7
40–44 years	4.9	4.0	4.5	0.8	1.0	0.9	5.7	5.0	5.4
45–49 years	5.5	4.8	5.2	0.9	1.1	1.0	6.4	5.9	6.2
50–54 years	6.0	5.7	5.9	1.0	1.2	1.1	7.0	7.0	7.0
55–59 years	6.6	6.6	6.6	1.1	1.1	1.1	7.7	7.7	7.7
60–64 years	7.1	7.0	7.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	8.2	8.1	8.2
65+ years*	5.0	5.8	5.3	0.6	0.8	0.7	5.6	6.5	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>

\*Rates data related to the 65+ years age group should be used with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

Generally, older workers recorded the highest incidence rates (**Table 5**). In 2018–19p, 55 to 59 year-olds had the highest incidence rate (13.1 serious claims per 1,000 employees), followed by workers aged 60 to 64 years and workers aged 50 to 54 years (with 12.7 and 12.3 serious claims per 1,000 employees respectively).

**Table 5: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2018–19p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims			Disease claims			All claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	7.5	2.9	5.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	7.7	3.1	5.3
20–24 years	10.3	4.6	7.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	10.7	5.2	8.0
25–29 years	9.7	4.6	7.3	0.7	0.8	0.7	10.4	5.4	8.0
30–34 years	9.1	4.4	6.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	10.0	5.4	7.9
35–39 years	9.0	4.8	7.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	10.1	6.0	8.2
40–44 years	9.9	5.9	8.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	11.5	7.4	9.5
45–49 years	11.2	7.4	9.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	13.0	9.2	11.1
50–54 years	12.1	8.7	10.4	2.0	1.9	1.9	14.1	10.6	12.3
55–59 years	12.7	9.8	11.2	2.1	1.7	1.9	14.7	11.5	13.1
60–64 years	12.5	9.3	10.9	2.0	1.5	1.8	14.5	10.8	12.7
65+ years*	7.4	6.4	7.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	8.4	7.3	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>

\*Rates data related to the 65+ years age group should be used with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

## 1.3 Industry

The Health care and social assistance industry accounted for 17% of serious claims in 2018–19p, followed by the Construction and Manufacturing industries which both accounted for around 12% of serious claims. Together, these three industries accounted for 41% of all serious claims, while making up only around 30% of the workforce (Table 6).

**Table 6: Workforce characteristics by industry, 2018–19p**

Industry	Employed persons (million)*	Proportion of workforce	Proportion entitled to compensation	Jobs (million)**	Hours worked (billion)	Serious claims	Proportion of serious claims	Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)
Health care and social assistance	1.685	13%	93%	1.679	2.41	19,505	17%	8.1	11.6
Construction	1.166	9%	76%	0.938	1.87	14,280	12%	7.6	15.2
Manufacturing	0.906	7%	94%	0.855	1.60	13,410	12%	8.4	15.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	0.658	5%	84%	0.586	1.08	8,905	8%	8.2	15.2
Public administration and safety	0.836	7%	88%	0.857	1.43	8,760	8%	6.1	10.2
Retail trade	1.277	10%	96%	1.273	1.75	8,770	8%	5.0	6.9
Education and training	1.042	8%	93%	1.068	1.64	7,530	7%	4.6	7.1
Accommodation and food services	0.901	7%	96%	0.914	1.13	6,205	5%	5.5	6.8
Administrative and support services	0.429	3%	73%	0.476	0.75	5,250	5%	7.0	11.0
Wholesale trade	0.390	3%	87%	0.376	0.71	4,910	4%	7.0	13.0
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.334	3%	63%	0.207	0.39	3,565	3%	9.2	17.2
Other services	0.505	4%	77%	0.417	0.70	2,935	3%	4.2	7.0
Mining	0.247	2%	89%	0.241	0.53	2,525	2%	4.8	10.5
Arts and recreation services	0.249	2%	83%	0.247	0.31	2,290	2%	7.5	9.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	1.103	9%	76%	1.008	1.81	2,120	2%	1.2	2.1
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.154	1%	93%	0.154	0.30	1,165	1%	3.9	7.6
Rental, hiring and real estate services	0.212	2%	86%	0.203	0.37	1,080	0.9%	2.9	5.3
Financial and insurance services	0.445	3%	90%	0.443	0.78	665	0.6%	0.8	1.5
Information media and telecommunications	0.215	2%	92%	0.210	0.36	475	0.4%	1.3	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.753</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>12.154</b>	<b>19.9115</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>9.4</b>

**Note:** Sorted by number of serious claims.

\* Employment data are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

\*\* The number of employed persons is higher than the number of jobs, as some workers are employed part-time.

**Table 7** below shows that the industries with the highest frequency rates in 2018–19p were Agriculture, forestry and fishing (9.2 serious claims per million hours worked), Manufacturing (8.4), Transport, postal and warehousing (8.2), Health care and social assistance (8.1) and Construction (7.6).

Within the broader Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, the Agriculture industry sub-division accounted for 75% of serious claims in 2018–19p, with 8.4 serious claims per million hours worked and 15.7 serious claims per 1,000 employees. Within the broader Transport, postal and warehousing industry, the Road transport industry sub-division accounted for close to half of all serious claims with 9.4 serious claims per million hours worked and 18.5 claims per 1,000 employees.

The industries with the lowest frequency rates were Financial and insurance services (0.9 serious claims per million hours worked), Professional, scientific and technical services (1.2), and Information media and telecommunications (1.3).

The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest frequency rate for injury and musculoskeletal disorders (8.6 serious claims per million hours worked), more than one and a half times the average for all industries (5.0).

The Public administration and safety industry recorded the highest frequency rate for diseases (1.6), more than twice the all industry average (0.7). Most disease claims (86%) in this industry related to mental health conditions.

**Table 7: Number and rates of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and industry, 2018–19p**

Industry	Number of serious claims			Frequency rate (claims per million hours)			Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>All serious claims</b>									
Health care and social assistance	3,860	15,645	19,505	6.5	8.6	8.1	10.8	11.9	11.6
Construction	13,820	455	14,280	8.2	2.5	7.6	16.9	3.8	15.2
Manufacturing	11,510	1,895	13,410	9.3	5.2	8.4	18.3	8.3	15.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	7,515	1,390	8,905	8.6	6.6	8.2	16.6	10.3	15.2
Road transport	3,980	315	4,295	10.1	4.9	9.4	20.6	8.0	18.5
Retail trade	4,415	4,350	8,770	5.0	5.0	5.0	7.9	6.1	6.9
Public administration and safety	6,130	2,630	8,760	8.2	3.8	6.1	14.6	6.0	10.2
Education and training	2,120	5,410	7,530	4.3	4.7	4.6	7.0	7.1	7.1
Accommodation and food services	2,950	3,260	6,205	5.1	5.8	5.5	7.1	6.5	6.8
Administrative and support services	3,305	1,945	5,250	8.1	5.6	7.0	14.0	8.1	11.0
Wholesale trade	3,990	920	4,910	8.0	4.5	7.0	15.8	7.4	13.1
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,710	855	3,565	9.0	10.1	9.2	18.4	14.2	17.2
Agriculture	1,930	730	2,665	7.8	10.1	8.4	16.3	14.3	15.7
Other services	2,035	900	2,935	4.6	3.5	4.2	8.7	4.9	7.0
Mining	2,295	230	2,525	5.0	3.2	4.8	11.3	5.9	10.5
Arts and recreation services	1,340	950	2,290	8.0	6.8	7.4	11.2	7.5	9.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,120	1,000	2,120	1.0	1.4	1.2	2.0	2.3	2.1
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1,040	125	1,165	4.6	1.9	3.9	9.2	3.1	7.6
Rental, hiring and real estate services	720	360	1,080	3.6	2.2	3.0	7.0	3.6	5.3
Financial and insurance services	190	475	665	0.4	1.3	0.9	0.9	2.1	1.5
Information media and telecommunications	315	160	475	1.4	1.2	1.3	2.6	1.8	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>									
Health care and social assistance	3,115	13,340	16,455	5.3	7.4	6.8	8.7	10.1	9.8
Construction	12,990	385	13,375	7.7	2.1	7.2	15.9	3.2	14.3
Manufacturing	10,400	1,640	12,040	8.4	4.5	7.5	16.6	7.2	14.1
Transport, postal and warehousing	6,830	1,215	8,045	7.8	5.7	7.4	15.1	9.0	13.7
Road transport	3,695	265	3,960	9.4	4.1	8.6	19.1	6.7	17.0
Retail trade	4,015	3,915	7,935	4.6	4.5	4.5	7.2	5.5	6.2
Public administration and safety	4,660	1,745	6,405	6.3	2.5	4.5	11.1	4.0	7.5
Education and training	1,635	4,130	5,765	3.3	3.6	3.5	5.4	5.4	5.4
Accommodation and food services	2,750	2,990	5,740	4.8	5.3	5.1	6.6	6.0	6.3

Industry	Number of serious claims			Frequency rate (claims per million hours)			Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Administrative and support services	3,040	1,665	4,710	7.5	4.8	6.2	12.9	6.9	9.9
Wholesale trade	3,615	770	4,385	7.2	3.8	6.2	14.3	6.2	11.7
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,530	815	3,340	8.4	9.6	8.6	17.2	13.5	16.1
Agriculture	1,800	695	2,495	7.3	9.6	7.8	15.2	13.5	14.7
Other services	1,830	705	2,530	4.1	2.8	3.6	7.8	3.8	6.1
Mining	2,120	205	2,325	4.6	2.8	4.4	10.5	5.2	9.6
Arts and recreation services	1,230	870	2,100	7.3	6.3	6.8	10.3	6.9	8.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	950	755	1,710	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.7
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	945	95	1,035	4.1	1.4	3.5	8.3	2.3	6.7
Rental, hiring and real estate services	665	260	925	3.3	1.6	2.5	6.4	2.6	4.6
Financial and insurance services	125	295	420	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.6	1.3	0.9
Information media and telecommunications	260	125	385	1.1	0.9	1.1	2.1	1.4	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,775</b>	<b>35,925</b>	<b>99,710</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Diseases</b>									
Health care and social assistance	745	2,305	3,050	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.1	1.7	1.8
Construction	830	70	900	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.6	1.0
Manufacturing	1,110	255	1,365	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.8	1.1	1.6
Transport, postal and warehousing	685	175	860	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.5
Road transport	290	50	335	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.2	1.4
Retail trade	400	435	835	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7
Public administration and safety	1,465	885	2,355	2.0	1.3	1.6	3.5	2.0	2.7
Education and training	485	1,280	1,765	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.7
Accommodation and food services	195	270	465	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Administrative and support services	265	275	540	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.1
Wholesale trade	370	155	525	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.5	1.2	1.4
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	180	40	225	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.2	0.7	1.1
Agriculture	130	35	165	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	0.7	1.0
Other services	210	195	405	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.0
Mining	175	30	205	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.8
Arts and recreation services	110	75	185	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	170	240	410	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.4
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	100	30	130	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	55	100	155	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.8
Financial and insurance services	70	180	250	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.6
Information media and telecommunications	55	35	90	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,690</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>14,725</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Note: The above table has been sorted in descending order by number and rates of serious claims accepted in 2018–19p.

## 1.4 Occupation

Labourers accounted for almost a quarter (24%) of all serious claims in 2018–19p, followed by Community and personal service workers and Technicians and trades workers (18% each). Together, employees working in these occupations accounted for 60% of all serious claims while representing just 34% of the workforce (**Table 8**).

**Table 8: Workforce characteristics by occupation, 2018–19p**

Occupation	Employed persons (million)*	Proportion of workforce	Proportion entitled to compensation	Jobs (million) **	Hours worked (billion)	Serious claims	Proportion of serious claims	Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)
Labourers	1.225	10%	89%	0.753	1.649	27,090	24%	16.7	24.1
Community and personal service workers	1.369	11%	93%	1.387	1.772	21,080	18%	12.3	15.7
Technicians and trades workers	1.803	14%	83%	1.529	2.961	20,755	18%	7.1	13.6
Machinery operators and drivers	0.857	7%	89%	1.149	1.528	15,870	14%	10.8	21.1
Professionals	3.067	24%	89%	1.632	5.062	11,645	10%	2.4	4.0
Managers	1.555	12%	85%	2.893	2.783	5,420	5%	1.9	3.9
Clerical and administrative workers	1.769	14%	94%	1.340	2.736	5,420	5%	2.1	3.3
Sales workers	1.108	9%	96%	1.126	1.420	5,120	4%	3.5	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.759</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11.808</b>	<b>19.912</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>9.7</b>

\* Employment data is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

\*\* The number of employed persons is higher than the number of jobs, as some workers are employed part-time.

**Table 9** shows that Labourers had the highest serious claims (all cause) frequency rate of 16.4 per million hours worked in 2018–19p, followed by Community and personal service workers (11.9), Machinery operators and drivers (10.4) and Technicians and trades workers (7.0). The remaining occupations all had frequency rates below the national average rate of 5.7 serious claims per million hours worked.

Labourers also had the highest frequency rate for injury and musculoskeletal disorders, with 15.1 serious claims per million hours worked, more than triple the rate for all occupations (5.0).

With respect to diseases, Community and personal service workers recorded the highest frequency rate of 1.9 serious claims per million hours worked, followed by Labourers (1.4), both of which were double or more the national rate of 0.7.

**Table 9: Number and rates of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and occupation, 2018–19p**

Occupation	Number of serious claims			Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)			Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>All serious claims</b>									
Labourers	19,625	7,460	27,090	16.7	15.7	16.4	26.3	18.8	23.7
Community and personal service workers	7,925	13,150	21,075	13.5	11.1	11.9	19.4	13.4	15.2
Technicians and trades workers	18,135	2,620	20,755	7.0	7.4	7.0	13.7	11.1	13.3
Machinery operators and drivers	13,915	1,955	15,870	9.9	15.8	10.4	19.3	24.8	19.9
Professionals	3,500	8,145	11,645	1.4	3.2	2.3	2.6	4.9	3.9
Managers	3,115	2,305	5,420	1.7	2.5	1.9	3.6	4.5	3.9
Clerical and administrative workers	2,035	3,385	5,420	2.4	1.8	2.0	4.4	2.6	3.1
Sales workers	1,900	3,220	5,120	3.0	4.1	3.6	4.5	4.6	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>									
Labourers	18,115	6,715	24,835	15.4	14.2	15.1	24.3	17.0	21.8
Community and personal service workers	6,295	11,350	17,645	10.8	9.6	10.0	15.4	11.6	12.7
Technicians and trades workers	16,695	2,305	19,005	6.4	6.5	6.4	12.6	9.8	12.2
Machinery operators and drivers	12,805	1,770	14,575	9.1	14.3	9.5	17.8	22.5	18.3
Professionals	2,735	6,270	9,010	1.1	2.4	1.8	2.1	3.8	3.0
Managers	2,560	1,630	4,190	1.4	1.7	1.5	3.0	3.2	3.0
Clerical and administrative workers	1,700	2,425	4,125	2.0	1.3	1.5	3.7	1.8	2.3
Sales workers	1,650	2,810	4,465	2.6	3.5	3.1	3.9	4.0	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,775</b>	<b>35,925</b>	<b>99,710</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Diseases</b>									
Labourers	1,510	745	2,255	1.3	1.6	1.4	2.0	1.9	2.0
Community and personal service workers	1,630	1,800	3,430	2.8	1.5	1.9	4.0	1.8	2.5
Technicians and trades workers	1,435	315	1,750	0.6	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.1
Machinery operators and drivers	1,110	185	1,300	0.8	1.5	0.8	1.5	2.4	1.6
Professionals	760	1,870	2,635	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.9
Managers	555	675	1,230	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.6	1.3	0.9
Clerical and administrative workers	335	960	1,295	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7
Sales workers	250	405	655	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,690</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>14,725</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>

## 1.5 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 (**Table 10**) leading to a serious claim. In 2018–19p, the most common mechanism of injury or disease that resulted in a serious claim was Body stressing (36%), followed by Falls, trips and slips of a person (23%) and Being hit by moving objects (16%). These three mechanisms together accounted for three quarters of all serious claims.

Most mechanisms of injury involved similar proportions of claims by males and females. The mechanism with the largest difference by gender was Mental stress, which accounted for 5% of claims by males but 13% of claims by females.

**Table 10: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease and gender, 2018-19p**

Mechanism of injury or disease	Number of serious claims			% of serious claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Body stressing	26,045	15,350	41,395	36%	36%	36%
Falls, trips and slips of a person	15,210	10,785	26,000	21%	25%	23%
Being hit by moving objects	12,760	5,595	18,355	18%	13%	16%
Mental stress	3,910	5,600	9,510	5%	13%	8%
Hitting objects with a part of the body	5,880	1,795	7,675	8%	4%	7%
Other mechanisms of incident*	3,610	1,990	5,600	5%	5%	5%
Vehicle collisions**	1,945	715	2,660	3%	2%	2%
Heat, electricity and other environmental factors	955	630	1,580	1%	1%	1%
Chemicals and other substances	780	265	1,045	1%	1%	0.9%
Biological factors	250	200	455	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%
Sound and pressure	120	40	160	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 1.6 Nature of injury or disease

The nature of injury/disease is intended to identify the type of hurt or harm that occurred to the worker leading to the serious claim. Injury and musculoskeletal disorders accounted for 87% of serious claims in 2018–19p. Of these, the most common were Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injuries, accounting for 45% of all injury and musculoskeletal disorders claims, and 39% of serious claims overall. Diseases were responsible for 13% of serious claims, with the most common being Mental health conditions (68% of disease claims and 9% of claims overall) (**Table 11**).

Both male and female employees recorded similar proportions of claims from traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injuries at 39% and 41% respectively. A higher percentage of male employees' serious claims arose from Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage (19% compared with 10% for female employees).

A higher percentage of female employees' serious claims arose from Mental health conditions (14% compared with 6% for male employees).

**Table 11: Number and percentage of serious claims by nature of injury or disease and gender, 2018–19p**

Nature of injury or disease	Number of serious claims			Proportion of claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>						
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	27,595	17,550	45,145	39%	41%	39%
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	13,425	4,465	17,895	19%	10%	16%
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	10,495	7,280	17,780	15%	17%	16%
Fractures	7,970	4,065	12,035	11%	9%	11%
Other injuries*	2,370	1,290	3,660	3%	3%	3%
Burn	1,115	655	1,770	2%	2%	2%
Intracranial injuries	525	475	995	1%	1%	0.9%
Other claims**	175	100	275	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	105	50	155	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>63,775</b>	<b>35,925</b>	<b>99,710</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Diseases</b>						
Mental health conditions	4,170	5,845	10,015	6%	13%	9%
Digestive system diseases	2,020	135	2,155	3%	0.3%	2%
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	610	525	1,135	0.9%	1%	1%
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	340	115	455	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%
Respiratory system diseases	250	200	450	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Infectious and parasitic diseases	120	130	245	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Circulatory system diseases	75	50	125	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Other diseases*	40	35	75	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Neoplasms (cancer)	60	5	65	0.1%	0.01%	0.1%
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>7,690</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>14,725</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total: all serious claims</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

\*\* 'Other claims' refers to injury types that recorded small numbers and are combined in a single category for this table.

## 1.7 Breakdown agency of injury or disease

The breakdown agency is intended to identify the object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in, or most commonly associated with, the point at which things started to go wrong and which ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease experienced by a worker. In 2018–19p, the most common breakdown agency leading to a serious claim was Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment, accounting for almost a quarter of all serious claims (23%) (Table 12). This represented a much higher proportion than Powered equipment, tools and appliances, which only accounted for 4% of claims.

**Table 12: Number and percentage of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2018–19p**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	Number	Percentage
<b>Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment</b> (e.g. edged tools, fastening equipment, furniture, ladders and scaffolding)	26,745	23%
<b>Environmental agencies</b> (e.g. weather and water, surface features, building features, vegetation, underground environmental hazards)	17,905	16%
<b>Animal, human and biological agencies</b> (e.g. live animals, other people, personal fatigue)	17,415	15%
<b>Materials and substances</b> (e.g. hazardous materials, cement, rocks, glass, fire and smoke, sewerage)	15,615	14%
<b>Other and unspecified agencies</b> (e.g. non-physical agencies, such as trauma or work pressures; other agencies not elsewhere classified)	15,245	13%
<b>Mobile plant and transport</b> (e.g. vehicles, pneumatic tools, drilling rigs)	10,875	10%
<b>Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant</b> (e.g. cutting, slicing, sawing or crushing, pressing, rolling machinery, furnaces, conveyors and lifting plant, electrical installation)	5,115	4%
<b>Powered equipment, tools and appliances</b> (e.g. electric tools (including battery-operated tools), kitchen appliances, IT equipment)	4,685	4%
<b>Chemicals and chemical products</b> (e.g. nominated chemicals, basic chemicals, detergents, paints)	835	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 1.8 Mechanism of injury or disease and breakdown agency

Body stressing caused 36% of all serious claims in 2018–19p, while Falls, trips and slips led to a further 23% of serious claims. More than one third of Body stressing claims involved Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment (34%), whereas Environmental agencies (e.g. steps, uneven ground, traffic etc.) caused the majority (55%) of Falls, trips and slips of a person (Table 13).

**Table 13: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism and breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2018–19p**

Mechanism of injury or disease Breakdown agency of injury or disease	Number	Percentage
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>41,395</b>	<b>36%</b>
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	13,905	34%
Materials and substances	7,090	17%
Animal, human and biological agencies	5,665	14%
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>23%</b>
Environmental agencies	14,200	55%
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	4,690	18%
Mobile plant and transport	2,485	10%
Materials and substances	1,810	7%
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>18,355</b>	<b>16%</b>
Animal, human and biological agencies	5,090	28%
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	4,195	23%
Materials and substances	3,585	20%
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	1,835	10%
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>9,510</b>	<b>8%</b>
Other and unspecified agencies	5,020	53%
Animal, human and biological agencies	4,300	45%
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>8,255</b>	<b>7%</b>
Other and unspecified agencies	4,350	53%
Mobile plant and transport	2,355	29%
Animal, human and biological agencies	540	7%
Environmental agencies	310	4%
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>7,675</b>	<b>7%</b>
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	3,455	45%
Materials and substances	1,750	23%
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	685	9%
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>1%</b>
Materials and substances	745	47%
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	235	15%
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	210	13%
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Chemicals and chemical products	490	47%
Materials and substances	310	29%
Animal, human and biological agencies	155	15%
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Animal, human and biological agencies	340	75%
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The table above only features the most common breakdown agencies and as a result, the percentages and numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

## 1.9 Mechanism of injury or disease and bodily location

**Table 14** refers to the mechanism of injury or disease broken down by the part of the body affected by the most serious injury or disease. In 2018–19p, more than one third of Body stressing claims affected the upper or lower back (37% of these claims). Injuries to knees accounted for the greatest share of claims (20%) involving Falls, trips and slips of a person.

**Table 14: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism and bodily location of injury or disease, 2018–19p**

Mechanism of injury or disease Bodily location of injury or disease	Number	Percentage
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>41,395</b>	<b>36%</b>
Back - upper or lower	15,445	37%
Shoulder	8,030	19%
Knee	3,710	9%
Wrist	2,345	6%
Abdomen and pelvic region	2,200	5%
Elbow	1,460	4%
Hand, fingers and thumb	1,345	3%
Neck	1,130	3%
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>23%</b>
Knee	5,210	20%
Ankle	4,600	18%
Back - upper or lower	2,905	11%
Shoulder	2,200	8%
Wrist	1,540	6%
Foot and toes	1,405	5%
Hand, fingers and thumb	955	4%
Lower leg	875	3%
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>18,355</b>	<b>16%</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	6,850	37%
Foot and toes	1,665	9%
Shoulder	870	5%
Back - upper or lower	825	5%
Knee	825	4%
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>9,510</b>	<b>8%</b>
Psychological system	9,315	98%
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>8,255</b>	<b>7%</b>
Back - upper or lower	1,300	16%
Shoulder	950	12%
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>7,675</b>	<b>7%</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	4,320	56%
Knee	485	6%
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>1%</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	515	33%
Forearm	165	10%
Foot and toes	160	10%
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Chest (thorax)	200	19%
Eye	190	18%
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,435</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The table above only includes the most bodily locations and as a result, the percentages and numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

# Section 2: Trends in serious claims 2000–01 to 2018–19p

The National Data Set for Compensation–based Statistics (NDS) was first introduced as a standard set of data items collected by each jurisdiction in 1987. Following a review of the NDS, reporting requirements were changed significantly for the 2000–01 financial year. The statistics in this chapter cover serious claims that were lodged between 2000–01 and 2018–19.

Data for 2018–19 are preliminary and therefore should not be used to examine trends or calculate percentage changes. Percentage changes are calculated using unrounded data for 2000–01 to 2017–18. Only the base year and the most recent five years are displayed. However, data for 2018–19p are displayed. When analysing trends over time, consideration needs to be given to a range of factors, including legislative changes that may influence trends in workers' compensation data. Information on workers' compensation arrangements can be found in Safe Work Australia's *Comparison of Workers' Compensation Arrangements in Australia and New Zealand* available on the Safe Work Australia [website](#).

## 2.1 Serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees

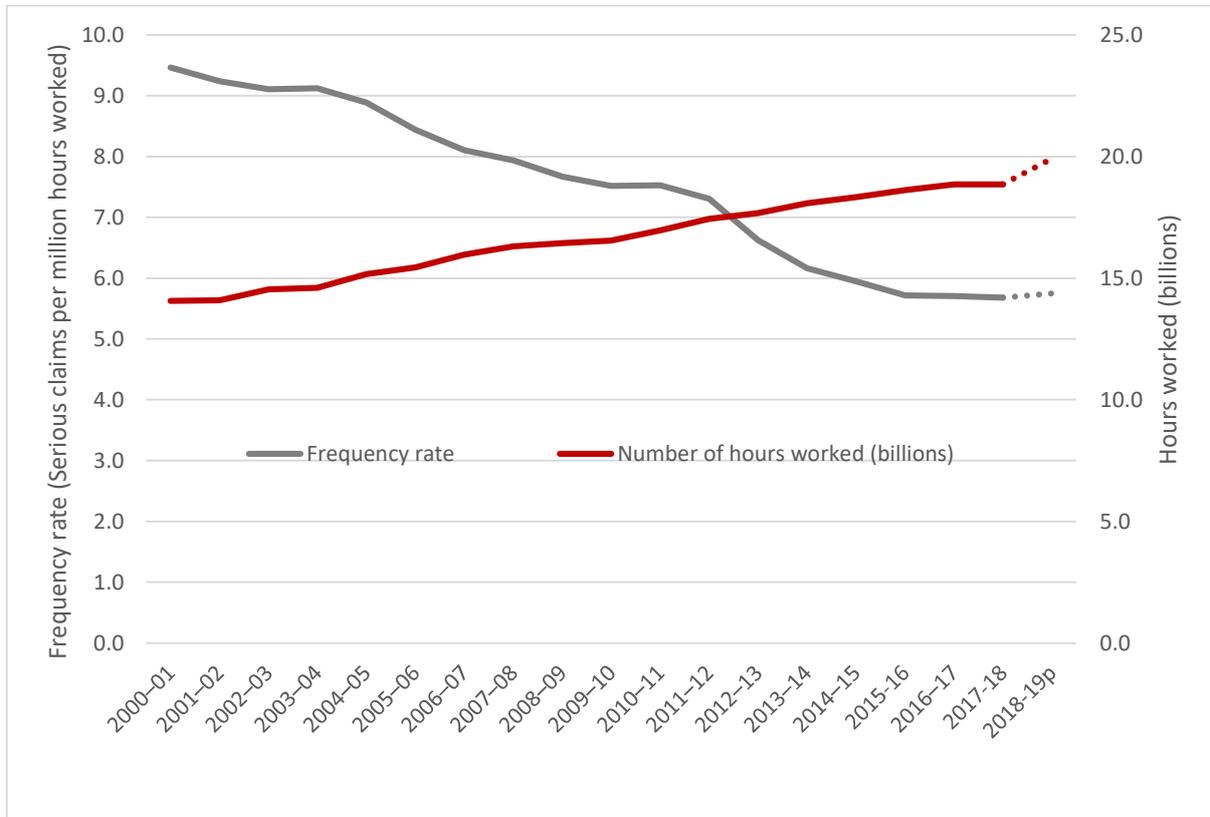
The data in **Table 15** shows there was a 17% decrease in the number of claims from 133,040 claims in 2000–01 to 110,810 claims in 2017–18. The frequency rate (number of serious claims per million hours worked) declined by 40% over the same period, while the incidence rate (number of serious claims per 1,000 employees) declined by 42%. However, both frequency and incidence rates have remained unchanged since 2014–15.

**Table 15: Number and rates of serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees, 2000–01 to 2018–19p**

Year of lodgement	Number of serious claims	Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)	Total hours worked (billion)	Number of employees (million)
2000–01	133,040	9.5	16.3	14.1	8.2
2001–02	130,110	9.2	15.8	14.1	8.3
2002–03	132,385	9.1	15.6	14.5	8.5
2003–04	133,265	9.1	15.4	14.6	8.7
2004–05	134,725	8.9	15.1	15.2	8.9
2005–06	130,360	8.4	14.2	15.4	9.2
2006–07	129,410	8.1	13.6	16.0	9.5
2007–08	129,490	7.9	13.4	16.3	9.7
2008–09	126,115	7.7	12.8	16.4	9.9
2009–10	124,365	7.5	12.5	16.5	10.0
2010–11	127,700	7.5	12.5	17.0	10.2
2011–12	127,415	7.3	12.3	17.4	10.4
2012–13	117,045	6.6	11.1	17.7	10.6
2013–14	111,465	6.2	10.3	18.1	10.8
2014–15	108,995	5.9	9.9	18.3	11.0
2015–16	106,220	5.7	9.4	18.6	11.2
2016–17	107,520	5.7	9.4	18.8	11.4
2017–18	110,810	5.7	9.4	19.5	11.8
% change 2000–01 to 2017–18	-17%	-40%	-42%	39%	44%
2018–19p	114,435	5.7	9.4	19.9	12.2

**Figure 1** shows that frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) have been trending downward while the total number of hours worked (in billions) has been increasing.

**Figure 1: Frequency rates and total hours worked, 2000–01 to 2018–19p**



## 2.2 Gender

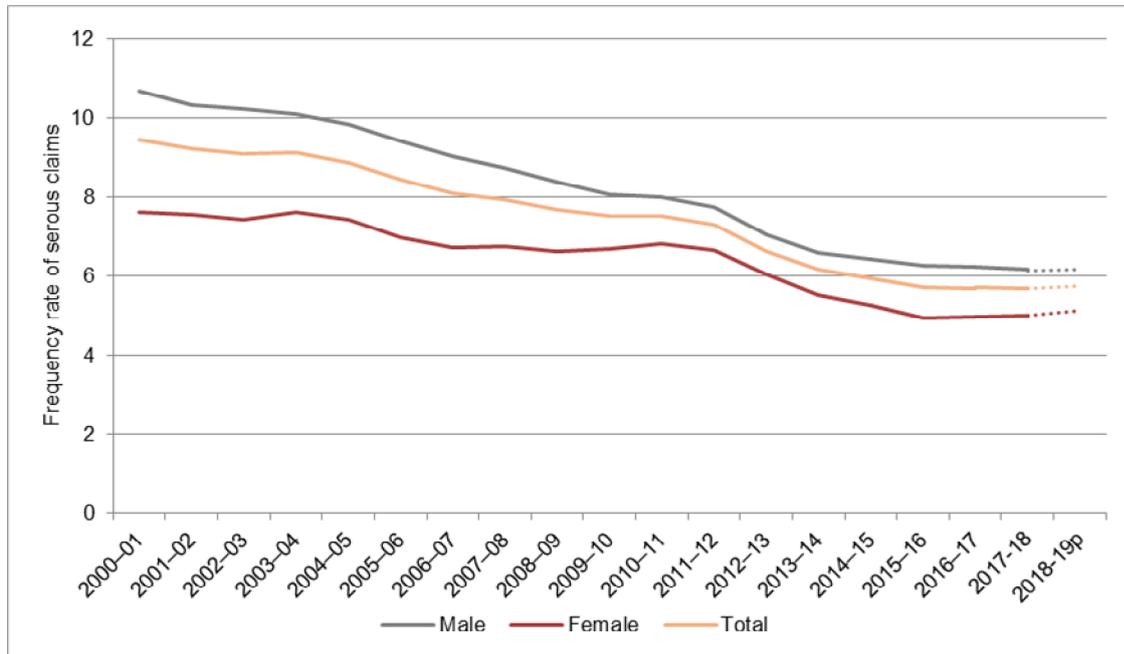
Over the period from 2000–01 to 2017–18, the number of serious claims has decreased by 23% for male employees but only 3% for female employees (**Table 16**). Frequency rates however have decreased more substantially over the same period for both genders— by 42% for male employees and 34% for female employees. This partly reflects the growth in hours worked, particularly by females.

**Table 16: Number and rates of serious claims by gender, 2000–01 to 2018–19p**

Year of lodgement	Male			Female		
	Number of serious claims	Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)	Number of serious claims	Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)
2000–01	90,995	10.7	20.9	42,045	7.6	11.0
2001–02	88,195	10.3	20.2	41,915	7.5	10.8
2002–03	89,510	10.2	20.1	42,875	7.4	10.6
2003–04	89,345	10.1	19.5	43,915	7.6	10.8
2004–05	90,010	9.8	19.2	44,715	7.4	10.6
2005–06	87,145	9.4	18.1	43,210	7.0	9.9
2006–07	86,510	9.0	17.3	42,905	6.7	9.5
2007–08	85,255	8.7	16.7	44,235	6.7	9.6
2008–09	81,835	8.4	15.9	44,280	6.6	9.4
2009–10	79,350	8.1	15.3	45,010	6.7	9.5
2010–11	81,160	8.0	15.1	46,540	6.8	9.6
2011–12	80,680	7.8	14.8	46,740	6.6	9.4
2012–13	74,235	7.0	13.4	42,810	6.0	8.5
2013–14	71,250	6.6	12.5	40,215	5.5	7.8
2014–15	69,855	6.4	12.1	39,145	5.3	7.4
2015–16	68,455	6.3	11.7	37,765	5.0	7.0
2016–17	68,855	6.2	11.6	38,660	5.0	7.0
2017–18	70,205	6.2	11.5	40,610	5.0	7.1
% change 2000–01 to 2017–18	-23%	-42%	-45%	-3%	-34%	-35%
<b>2018–19p</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>42,965</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>

**Figure 2** shows that the frequency rates of serious claims for both males and females have been trending downward. In 2000-01 the rate for males was 1.4 times the rate for females. By 2018-19 the rate for males was only 1.2 times the rate for females.

**Figure 2: Frequency rates of serious claims by gender, 2000–01 to 2018–19p**



## 2.3 Age group

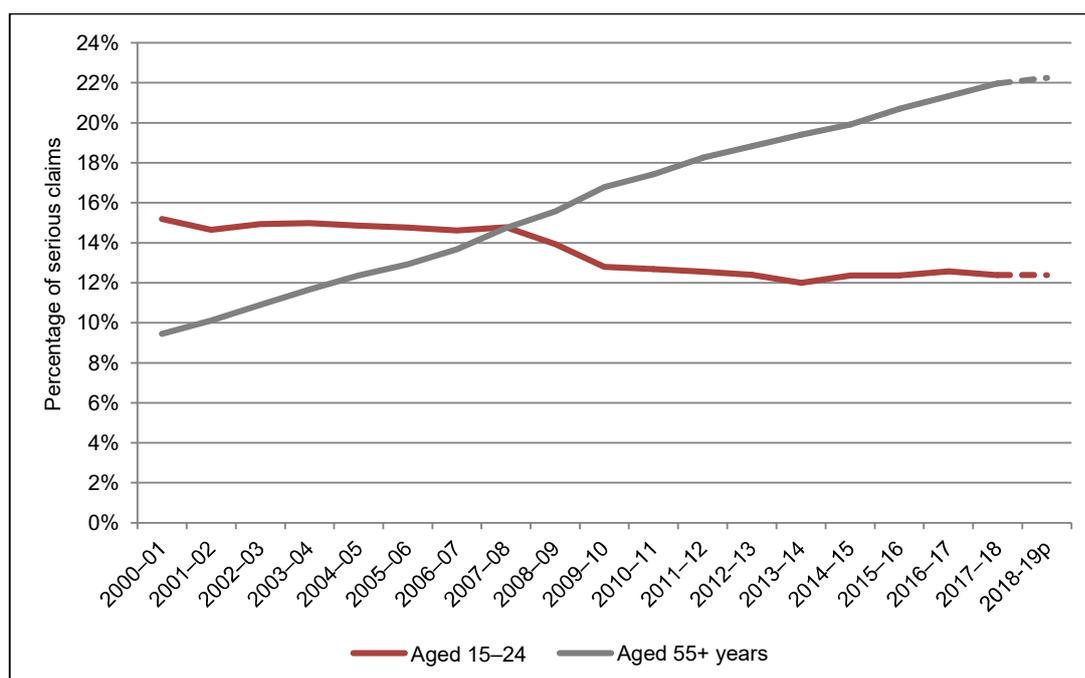
Tables 17, 18 and 19 and Figure 3 present information on the age groups of employees who made serious compensation claims in the period 2000–01 to 2018–19p. Table 17 indicates that the largest percentage decreases in numbers of serious claims were recorded in the 15–19 years age group (down 43%) and 35–39 years age group (down 40%). In contrast, serious claims among older age groups increased substantially over the period—55–59 years (up 56%), 60–64 years (up 129%) and 65+ age groups (up 354%). Increases in the number of serious claims for older workers is partly explained by the ageing of the Australian workforce more generally. Table 18 shows the rate of claims by age group relative to the hours worked by each cohort.

**Table 17: Number of serious claims by age group, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Age group	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
15–19 years	6,645	3,600	3,600	3,545	3,570	3,815	-43%	3,785
20–24 years	13,560	9,780	9,880	9,595	9,945	9,915	-27%	10,385
25–29 years	15,790	10,830	10,785	10,520	10,775	11,335	-28%	12,000
30–34 years	16,510	10,945	10,800	10,495	10,450	10,750	-35%	11,465
35–39 years	17,895	11,200	10,590	10,340	10,210	10,740	-40%	11,185
40–44 years	18,425	13,995	13,330	12,310	11,770	11,835	-36%	11,965
45–49 years	16,615	14,325	13,810	13,365	13,800	14,075	-15%	14,230
50–54 years	15,030	15,155	14,475	14,070	14,055	14,010	-7%	13,950
55–59 years	8,280	11,830	11,730	11,990	12,285	12,925	56%	13,320
60–64 years	3,575	7,400	7,420	7,385	7,755	8,190	129%	8,715
65+ years*	710	2,395	2,560	2,605	2,905	3,225	354%	3,430
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,810</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

As shown in Figure 3, the proportion of serious claims made by employees aged 55 years and above has been trending steadily upward, rising from 9% of all serious claims in 2000–01 to 22% in 2017–18. In contrast, the proportion of serious claims made by workers aged under 25 has remained relatively steady, except for a brief period of decline from 2007–08 to 2009–10.

**Figure 3: Percentage of serious claims by age group, 2000–01 to 2018–19p**



**Tables 18 and 19** show that frequency and incidence rates declined for all age groups from 2000–01 to 2017–18, including among workers aged 55–59 years, 60–64 years and 65+ years.

The largest falls in frequency rates and incidence rates were for employees aged 30–34 years (frequency rate down by 53% and incidence rate down by 55%) and 35–39 years (frequency rate down by 53% and incidence rate down by 55%) over the period.

**Table 18: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by age group, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Age group	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
15–19 years	9.4	6.0	6.0	5.9	6.3	6.2	-34%	5.9
20–24 years	8.1	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.6	5.4	-34%	5.6
25–29 years	8.0	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5	-44%	4.7
30–34 years	9.2	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.4	-53%	4.5
35–39 years	10.1	5.5	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.7	-53%	4.7
40–44 years	10.0	6.4	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.3	-47%	5.4
45–49 years	9.9	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.3	6.1	-38%	6.2
50–54 years	10.6	7.6	7.2	7.1	7.0	7.0	-34%	7.0
55–59 years	10.2	7.7	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.5	-26%	7.7
60–64 years	11.8	8.4	8.1	7.8	7.9	8.0	-32%	8.2
65+ years*	7.2	5.9	6.3	5.9	6.2	6.1	-16%	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>5.7</b>

\*Rates data related to the 65+ years age group should be interpreted with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

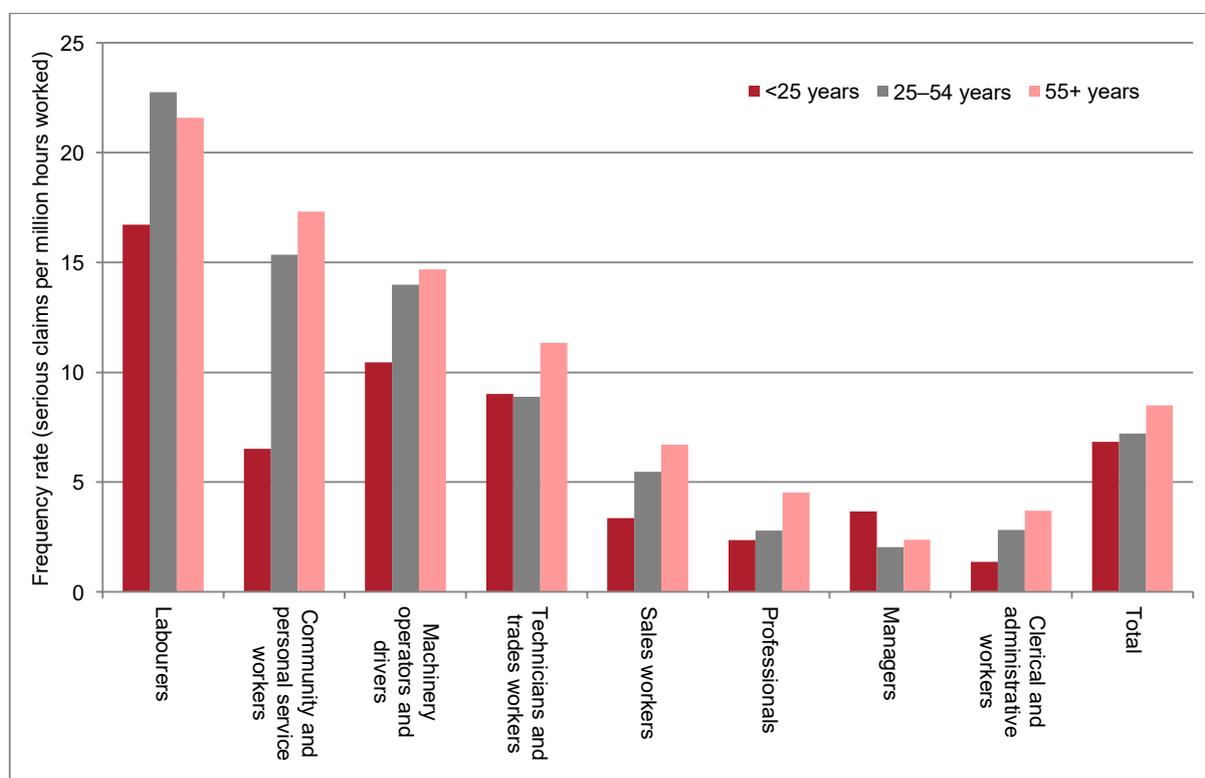
**Table 19: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by age group, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Age group	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
15–19 years	9.7	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.5	-43%	5.3
20–24 years	13.3	8.3	8.3	7.7	8.1	7.8	-41%	8.0
25–29 years	14.7	8.2	8.0	7.6	7.7	7.8	-47%	8.0
30–34 years	16.7	8.7	8.2	7.8	7.5	7.6	-55%	7.9
35–39 years	18.2	9.8	9.1	8.7	8.2	8.2	-55%	8.2
40–44 years	18.1	11.4	10.7	10.0	9.5	9.5	-47%	9.5
45–49 years	18.1	12.5	11.8	11.2	11.3	11.0	-39%	11.1
50–54 years	19.3	13.4	12.9	12.4	12.5	12.5	-35%	12.3
55–59 years	18.0	13.2	12.9	12.9	12.7	13.0	-28%	13.1
60–64 years	19.2	13.5	12.9	12.3	12.4	12.7	-34%	12.7
65+ years*	10.0	7.9	8.1	7.8	8.3	8.3	-17%	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>-42%</b>	<b>9.4</b>

\*Rates data related to the 65+ years age group should be interpreted with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

For most occupations, frequency rates increase relative to age. Labourers aged over 55 were an exception, with lower frequency rates than those aged 25–54. Managers aged under 25 also had higher frequency rates than those of older age groups (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Frequency rates by age group and occupation, 2000–2001 to 2018–19p**



## 2.4 Industry

**Table 20** shows that from 2000–01 to 2017–18, the number of serious claims decreased in 13 of Australia's 19 industry divisions. The largest industry decreases occurred in Information, media and telecommunications (down 61%), Manufacturing (down 51%), and Financial and insurance services (down 47%).

The number of serious claims also decreased for both the Road transport (down 18%) and Agriculture (down 33%) industry sub-divisions over the same period.

The largest increases in the number of serious claims were for Mining (21%), Health care and social assistance (up 18%) and Education and Training (up 17%).

**Table 20: Number of serious claims by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Industry	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
Health care and social assistance	15,315	17,585	17,370	16,645	17,355	18,030	18%	19,505
Construction	12,295	12,335	12,650	13,115	13,260	14,180	15%	14,280
Manufacturing	27,025	14,150	13,980	13,230	13,135	13,350	-51%	13,410
Transport, postal and warehousing	11,555	9,455	9,040	8,495	8,685	8,865	-23%	8,905
Road transport	5,260	4,480	4,320	4,160	4,265	4,305	-18%	4,295
Retail trade	11,895	9,000	8,950	8,860	8,495	8,530	-28%	8,770
Public administration and safety	8,120	9,320	8,640	8,160	8,090	8,355	3%	8,760
Education and training	6,100	6,680	6,955	6,645	6,935	7,165	17%	7,530
Accommodation and food services	7,400	6,220	6,280	6,225	6,075	6,020	-19%	6,205
Administrative and support services	6,265	4,155	3,875	4,255	4,690	4,955	-21%	5,250
Wholesale trade	5,910	4,625	4,680	4,595	4,470	4,815	-19%	4,910
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5,455	3,450	3,435	3,625	3,700	3,630	-33%	3,565
Agriculture	4,155	2,625	2,630	2,825	2,835	2,785	-33%	2,665
Other services	4,270	3,450	3,065	2,875	2,985	2,995	-30%	2,935
Mining	1,905	2,870	2,235	2,175	2,155	2,300	21%	2,525
Arts and recreation services	2,320	2,205	2,195	2,135	2,195	2,185	-6%	2,290
Professional, scientific and technical services	2,110	1,780	1,835	1,720	1,790	1,990	-6%	2,120
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1,415	1,245	1,190	1,140	1,205	1,150	-19%	1,165
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1,030	1,055	1,045	990	1,005	1,075	4%	1,080
Financial and insurance services	1,310	780	760	685	610	700	-47%	665
Information media and telecommunications	1,220	625	605	550	600	480	-61%	475
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,810</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

While some industries recorded increases in the number of serious claims, frequency rates have fallen for all industries since 2000–01, as shown in **Table 21**.

The largest declines in industry frequency rates over the period occurred in Financial and insurance services (down 58%), Information media and telecommunications (down 58%), Mining (down 57%) and Electricity, gas, water and waste services (down 57%). The smallest improvements occurred in Wholesale trade (down 13%), Education and training (down 19%), and Public administration and safety (down 25%) industries.

The Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries also witnessed declines in frequency rates (down by 44% and 38%, respectively) over the same period.

**Table 21: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Industry	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
Health care and social assistance	12.1	8.8	8.5	7.6	7.8	7.5	-38%	8.1
Construction	13.5	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.0	7.7	-43%	7.6
Manufacturing	13.9	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.2	8.3	-40%	8.4
Transport, postal and warehousing	14.9	9.4	8.5	8.0	8.4	8.0	-46%	8.2
Road transport	16.2	12.0	10.2	9.7	10.2	9.1	-44%	9.4
Retail trade	8.8	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.8	-45%	5.0
Public administration and safety	8.8	7.3	7.0	6.5	6.2	6.6	-25%	6.1
Education and training	5.5	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	-19%	4.6
Accommodation and food services	8.9	6.4	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.3	-41%	5.5
Administrative and support services	11.6	6.0	5.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	-41%	7.0
Wholesale trade	8.2	6.5	6.5	6.8	6.8	7.2	-13%	7.0
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	14.3	8.8	9.8	9.3	9.5	8.8	-39%	9.2
Agriculture	13.6	8.0	9.0	8.6	9.5	8.4	-38%	8.4
Other services	7.8	5.0	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.4	-44%	4.2
Mining	10.8	4.9	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.6	-57%	4.8
Arts and recreation services	13.7	8.9	7.7	7.1	8.0	7.0	-49%	7.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	2.0	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	-41%	1.2
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	9.3	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.0	-57%	3.9
Rental, hiring and real estate services	4.6	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.9	-36%	3.0
Financial and insurance services	2.2	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	-58%	0.9
Information media and telecommunications	3.1	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.3	-58%	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>5.7</b>

The trends in incidence rates are similar to the pattern for frequency rates, having decreased for all industries from 2000–01 to 2017–18 (**Table 22**). The largest falls in incidence rates occurred in the industries for Financial and insurance services (down 59%), Mining (down 59%), and Information media and telecommunications (down 58%).

**Table 22: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Industry	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2014–15	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
<b>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</b>	27.8	17.7	18.9	18.4	18.8	17.0	-39%	17.2
Agriculture	26.1	16.3	17.4	17.1	18.7	16.3	-38%	15.7
<b>Manufacturing</b>	27.3	16.2	16.3	16.1	15.5	15.7	-42%	15.7
<b>Construction</b>	27.7	15.7	15.9	16.5	15.9	15.3	-45%	15.2
<b>Transport, postal and warehousing</b>	29.3	17.7	16.3	15.1	15.6	15.3	-48%	15.2
Road transport	34.6	24.6	20.8	19.8	20.9	18.6	-46%	18.5
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	16.2	12.3	12.5	12.7	12.8	13.7	-15%	13.1
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	17.9	12.7	12.1	11.0	11.2	10.9	-39%	11.6
<b>Administrative and support services</b>	19.2	9.7	9.1	9.3	10.0	11.0	-43%	11.0
<b>Mining</b>	25.2	11.1	10.2	9.9	9.9	10.4	-59%	10.5
<b>Public administration and safety</b>	15.5	12.2	11.6	10.8	10.2	11.1	-28%	10.2
<b>Arts and recreation services</b>	18.6	11.6	9.7	9.7	10.2	8.9	-52%	9.3
<b>Electricity, gas, water and waste services</b>	17.8	8.4	8.5	8.1	8.8	7.8	-56%	7.6
<b>Education and training</b>	9.1	7.2	7.3	6.8	6.9	6.8	-25%	7.1
<b>Other services</b>	13.7	8.7	7.8	7.6	7.3	7.4	-46%	7.0
<b>Retail trade</b>	12.2	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.7	-45%	6.9
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	11.9	8.3	7.6	7.4	7.0	6.6	-45%	6.8
<b>Rental, hiring and real estate services</b>	8.8	5.5	5.2	4.9	5.0	5.3	-40%	5.3
<b>Information media and telecommunications</b>	5.4	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.3	-58%	2.2
<b>Professional, scientific and technical services</b>	3.8	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	-44%	2.1
<b>Financial and insurance services</b>	4.0	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.6	-59%	1.5
<b>Total</b>	16.3	10.3	9.9	9.4	9.4	9.4	-42%	9.4

## 2.5 Occupation

**Table 23** shows the number of serious workers' compensation claims decreased in 6 of the 8 major occupation groups. The largest percentage decreases in the number of claims from 2000–01 to 2017–18 occurred among Sales workers (down by 33%), followed by Clerical and administrative workers (down 31%) and Labourers (down by 30%). In contrast, the number of serious claims made by Community and personal service workers increased by 29% over the period, which is largely reflective of the growth in these occupations rather than higher rates of injury. **Table 24** shows a different pattern for this occupation group once the size of the workforce is taken into account.

**Table 23: Number of serious claims by occupation, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Occupation	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
Labourers	38,570	26,425	26,510	26,445	26,360	27,105	-30%	27,090
Community and personal service workers	15,020	18,645	18,055	17,475	18,830	19,375	29%	21,075
Technicians and trades workers	27,155	20,890	20,295	19,335	19,725	19,830	-27%	20,755
Machinery operators and drivers	20,290	16,870	16,140	15,320	15,355	15,180	-25%	15,870
Professionals	10,405	11,050	11,190	10,090	11,100	11,205	8%	11,645
Managers	5,200	5,010	4,685	4,765	4,935	5,040	-3%	5,420
Clerical and administrative workers	7,955	6,065	5,895	5,400	5,185	5,520	-31%	5,420
Sales workers	7,390	5,745	5,700	5,510	5,130	4,940	-33%	5,120
Total	133,040	111,465	108,995	106,220	107,520	110,810	-17%	114,435

All occupations have recorded a fall both in frequency and incidence rates over the period (**Tables 24 and 25**). Technicians and trades workers experienced the largest fall in frequency rate (down 46%) while Managers experienced the largest fall in incidence rate (down 51%).

The smallest decrease in frequency and incidence rates was for Community and personal service workers (down 24% and 29% respectively).

**Table 24: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Occupation	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
Labourers	26.6	17.4	17.9	17.8	16.6	16.8	-37%	16.4
Community and personal service workers	15.0	12.5	11.9	10.9	11.5	11.3	-24%	11.9
Machinery operators and drivers	18.1	11.9	11.5	11.5	11.1	10.3	-43%	10.4
Technicians and trades workers	12.7	7.6	7.3	6.9	7.1	6.8	-46%	7.0
Professionals	3.4	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.3	-34%	2.3
Clerical and administrative workers	3.3	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1	2.2	-34%	2.0
Managers	3.2	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	-45%	1.9
Sales workers	5.9	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.3	-43%	3.6
Total	9.5	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.7	-40%	5.7

**Table 25: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2000–01</b>	<b>2013–14</b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17</b>	<b>2017–18</b>	<b>% chg</b>	<b>2018–19p</b>
<b>Labourers</b>	39.2	25.2	25.7	25.4	23.7	24.1	-39%	23.7
<b>Machinery operators and drivers</b>	35.3	23.8	22.6	22.2	21.6	20.2	-43%	19.9
<b>Community and personal service workers</b>	20.3	16.3	15.3	13.9	14.8	14.5	-29%	15.2
<b>Technicians and trades workers</b>	24.9	14.6	14.0	13.4	13.6	13.0	-48%	13.3
<b>Sales workers</b>	7.7	5.3	5.2	4.9	4.7	4.3	-44%	4.5
<b>Professionals</b>	6.4	4.5	4.3	3.8	4.0	3.9	-39%	3.9
<b>Managers</b>	7.4	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	-51%	3.9
<b>Clerical and administrative workers</b>	5.3	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.4	-36%	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>-42%</b>	<b>9.4</b>

## 2.6 Nature of injury or disease

**Table 26** shows that serious claims related to injury and musculoskeletal disorders have been the main driver of decreases in serious claims, declining by 18% from 119,730 claims in 2000–01 to 97,885 claims in 2017–18. The largest percentage decrease in serious injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims was for Wounds, lacerations, amputations, and internal organ damage (down by 25%). Intracranial injuries more than doubled over the same period, although the relatively smaller number of claims mean this increase should be interpreted with caution.

In comparison, serious claims for diseases decreased by only 3% over the same period. This was overwhelmingly due to an increase in the number of serious claims for Mental health conditions, which grew by 28% over the same period and which represented 66% of all disease claims. All other disease types recorded decreases over the period.

While not included in the trend analysis, there has been a very large increase in the number of respiratory system diseases, which grew from 250 serious claims in 2017–18 to 450 in 2018–19p. This was due to the establishment of dust disease compensation schemes in a number of jurisdictions over the last two years. Please note that not all jurisdictions provide data from these schemes to Safe Work Australia, so the total number of claims for respiratory system diseases is an underestimate.

**Table 26: Number of serious claims by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Nature of injury or disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>								
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	80,700	67,560	65,025	61,420	61,315	61,520	-24%	62,925
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	22,760	16,205	15,955	16,470	16,370	17,035	-25%	17,895
Fractures	11,285	10,300	10,760	10,600	11,575	12,015	6%	12,035
Burn	2,110	1,655	1,635	1,595	1,580	1,700	-19%	1,770
Intracranial injuries	415	535	665	625	810	840	102%	995
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	85	195	170	150	140	120	41%	155
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>119,730</b>	<b>99,445</b>	<b>97,445</b>	<b>94,760</b>	<b>95,180</b>	<b>97,885</b>	<b>-18%</b>	<b>99,710</b>
<b>Diseases</b>								
Mental health conditions	6,615	6,890	6,770	6,885	7,765	8,485	28%	10,015
Digestive system diseases	3,230	2,585	2,375	2,300	2,220	2,140	-34%	2,155
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	1,595	1,280	1,215	1,120	1,165	1,170	-27%	1,135
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	855	510	445	480	460	450	-47%	455
Respiratory system diseases	285	230	230	215	250	250	-12%	450
Infectious and parasitic diseases	305	265	295	225	215	185	-39%	245
Circulatory system diseases	190	115	95	110	115	110	-42%	125
Neoplasms (cancer)	60	50	45	35	65	40	-33%	65
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>13,310</b>	<b>12,025</b>	<b>11,555</b>	<b>11,460</b>	<b>12,335</b>	<b>12,935</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>14,725</b>
<b>Total: serious claims</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,820</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

**Note:** The table above only features the most common types of injury or disease. As a result numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

## 2.7 Bodily location of injury or disease

**Table 27** shows the number of serious claims by the part of the body that is most affected by an injury or disease. Claims related to Upper limbs accounted for over one third (35%) of all serious claims in 2018–19p. Within this group, serious claims for the Shoulder have risen by 10% (from 10,650 serious claims in 2000–01 to 11,665 serious claims in 2017–18), while the number of claims declined for all other Upper limb locations.

Serious claims related to the Trunk accounted for nearly one quarter (23%) of all serious claims in 2018–19p. This group of claims has recorded a 41% overall decrease, from 42,590 serious claims in 2000–01 to 25,275 serious claims in 2017–18. The largest contributor to this decrease was the reduction in Back – upper or lower claims, which declined from 35,260 claims in 2000–01 to 20,350 claims in 2017–18.

However, serious claims for Non-physical locations increased by 28%. This is consistent with the increase in the number of Mental health conditions over the same period.

**Table 27: Number of serious claims by bodily location of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Bodily location of injury or disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
<b>Upper limbs</b>	43,045	38,090	38,070	37,045	37,975	38,805	-10%	40,145
Hand, fingers and thumb	17,625	13,770	14,175	14,040	14,470	14,740	-16%	15,120
Shoulder	10,650	12,245	11,835	11,325	11,615	11,665	10%	12,250
Wrist	6,115	5,205	5,115	4,900	5,030	5,285	-14%	5,490
Elbow	3,110	2,720	2,755	2,525	2,690	2,725	-12%	2,835
Forearm	2,165	1,575	1,605	1,605	1,520	1,635	-24%	1,725
Upper limb - multiple	1,300	1,095	1,145	1,170	1,200	1,275	-2%	1,255
<b>Lower limbs</b>	26,345	25,430	25,030	24,260	25,160	25,805	-2%	26,545
Knee	10,460	10,925	10,880	10,225	10,360	10,550	1%	10,880
Ankle	5,915	5,565	5,515	5,390	5,740	5,975	1%	6,100
Foot and toes	4,545	3,855	3,785	3,735	3,880	4,015	-12%	4,170
Lower leg	2,245	2,405	2,240	2,210	2,325	2,410	7%	2,565
Upper leg	1,015	915	830	935	915	980	-3%	1,120
Hip	780	880	855	860	885	925	19%	965
<b>Trunk</b>	42,590	29,015	27,440	25,885	25,140	25,275	-41%	25,765
Back - upper or lower	35,260	23,725	22,385	20,990	20,155	20,350	-42%	20,675
Abdomen and pelvic	4,745	3,295	3,155	3,025	2,985	2,865	-40%	2,880
Chest (thorax)	2,350	1,765	1,690	1,655	1,830	1,865	-21%	2,050
<b>Non-physical locations</b>	6,610	6,890	6,770	6,880	7,765	8,480	28%	10,005
<b>Multiple locations</b>	6,180	5,305	5,020	4,605	4,720	4,570	-26%	4,475
<b>Head</b>	3,765	3,320	3,425	3,370	3,470	3,625	-4%	4,040
Cranium	830	810	940	915	1,120	1,115	34%	1,310
Eye	1,155	845	855	845	785	890	-23%	895
Face, not elsewhere specified	640	630	580	615	565	580	-9%	625
Nose	230	200	220	220	225	200	-13%	230
Mouth	135	145	140	160	170	155	15%	195
Ear	170	130	120	105	110	165	-3%	125
<b>Neck</b>	3,700	2,420	2,235	2,075	2,180	2,170	-41%	2,365
<b>Systemic locations</b>	655	425	440	410	395	395	-40%	440
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,810</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

**Notes:** The table above doesn't include all bodily locations. As a result numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

## 2.8 Mechanism of injury or disease

The mechanism of incident is intended to identify the mechanism or process that best describes the circumstances in which an injury or disease occurred. **Table 28** shows that Body stressing was the most common mechanism of injury, accounting for around 36% of all serious claims in 2018–19p. However, claims for Body stressing injuries declined by 30% between 2000–01 and 2017–18. This reduction in Body stressing claims accounts for around 80% of the total reduction in all serious claims over the same period.

The largest percentage decreases in serious claims were for contact with or exposure to Biological factors (such as germs or bacteria - down by 46%), followed by contact with Chemicals and other substances (down by 44%).

The largest percentage increase in any mechanism of injury or disease occurred for Being assaulted by a person or persons, with the number of claims having more than doubled since 2000–01 (up by 111%).

**Table 28: Number of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Mechanism of injury or disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
<b>Body stressing</b>	58,175	46,620	44,285	41,625	40,860	40,485	-30%	41,395
Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying	18,835	18,305	18,075	17,345	16,400	17,480	-7%	18,350
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	28,610	18,640	16,970	15,880	15,960	14,955	-48%	14,795
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	6,325	6,070	5,605	5,235	5,590	5,300	-16%	5,270
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	26,145	24,910	24,750	23,950	25,115	25,540	-2%	26,000
Falls on the same level	15,555	15,880	15,755	15,195	15,935	16,720	7%	17,105
Falls from a height	8,840	6,710	6,835	6,555	6,875	6,710	-24%	6,735
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	18,175	16,220	16,280	15,925	16,540	17,490	-4%	18,355
Being hit by moving or flying objects	5,910	5,325	5,535	5,500	5,285	6,020	2%	6,190
Being hit by falling objects	4,205	3,530	3,530	3,455	3,610	3,650	-13%	3,625
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	2,480	2,315	2,250	2,065	2,145	2,335	-6%	2,595
Being assaulted by a person or persons	1,105	2,195	2,260	2,070	2,365	2,335	111%	2,535
Being hit by a person accidentally	1,320	795	790	845	945	1,085	-18%	1,225
<b>Mental stress</b>	6,295	6,425	6,370	6,445	7,215	8,055	28%	9,510
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	9,430	6,600	6,765	7,815	7,060	8,795	-7%	8,255
Vehicle accident	2,730	2,550	2,345	2,535	2,630	2,635	-3%	2,660
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	10,575	7,670	7,640	7,635	8,010	7,610	-28%	7,675
Hitting moving objects	5,315	3,600	3,865	4,075	4,290	4,040	-24%	3,865
Hitting stationary objects	5,110	4,000	3,730	3,515	3,675	3,515	-31%	3,760

<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	1,955	1,550	1,510	1,500	1,425	1,500	-23%	1,580
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	1,535	940	850	870	825	860	-44%	1,045
<b>Biological factors</b>	605	400	400	320	355	325	-46%	455
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	150	130	150	135	115	150	0%	160
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,810</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

**Notes:** The table above only features the most common types of mechanism, as a result numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

Percentage changes are calculated using unrounded numbers.

## 2.9 Breakdown agency of injury or disease

The breakdown agency is intended to identify the object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in, or most commonly associated with, the point at which things started to go wrong and which ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease experienced by a worker.

**Table 29** shows that among all breakdown agencies that contribute to injuries and diseases, use of Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment consistently contributed to the highest number of serious claims between 2000–01 and 2017–18. However, the number of claims declined by 29% over that period.

From 2000–01 to 2017–18, the largest declines in the number of serious claims were related to Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant (down by 44%) and Chemicals and chemical products (down by 41%).

The smallest decrease was for environmental agencies (which includes weather and water, and other features of both indoor and outdoor environments), which decreased by 4%.

Increases in claim numbers were recorded for Animal, human and biological agencies (up by 14%) and Materials and substances (up by 8%).

**Table 29: Number of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2018–19p**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg	2018–19p
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	35,670	26,695	26,425	25,695	25,510	25,255	-29%	26,745
Environmental agencies	18,055	17,940	17,345	17,080	18,045	17,355	-4%	17,905
Animal, human and biological agencies	13,960	15,860	15,180	14,500	15,295	15,975	14%	17,415
Materials and substances	14,830	15,465	15,845	15,080	14,940	16,060	8%	15,615
Other and unspecified agencies	22,020	13,240	13,055	13,355	12,960	14,650	-33%	15,245
Mobile plant and transport	11,445	11,020	10,400	10,135	10,330	10,760	-6%	10,875
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	9,295	5,485	5,140	5,035	5,160	5,255	-43%	5,115
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	6,375	4,960	4,870	4,595	4,585	4,695	-26%	4,685
Chemicals and chemical products	1,390	795	735	740	700	815	-41%	835
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>111,465</b>	<b>108,995</b>	<b>106,220</b>	<b>107,520</b>	<b>110,810</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>114,435</b>

# Section 3: Time lost and compensation paid

This chapter provides statistics on time lost from work and amounts of compensation paid.

Time lost is measured in working weeks lost from work and excludes estimates of future absences. It reflects the total period for which compensation was paid and does not have to occur consecutively.

The median is used as the measure of central tendency because a few long-term claims involving lengthy periods of time lost or high amounts of compensation would significantly skew an arithmetic mean. It is not possible to calculate the total time lost or the total compensation paid by multiplying the median by the number of claims.

Preliminary data (2018–19) are excluded when reporting time lost and compensation paid because claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open and claimants may accrue more time lost or more compensation payments in future years. As in the previous section, percentage changes are calculated using data for 2000-01 and 2017-18.

### 3.1 Serious claims, median time lost, and median compensation paid

Between 2000–01 and 2017–18, the median time lost for a serious claim rose by 48% from 4.2 to 6.2 working weeks. Over the same period, the median compensation paid<sup>2</sup> for a serious claim rose by 193% from \$4,300 to \$12,600 (**Table 30**). These increases in time lost and compensation paid are in contrast to the long-term trend (shown in Section 2) of a reduction in serious workers' compensation claim numbers and rates over time. The reasons for this are complex, but likely include changes to scheme eligibility, demographic and workforce changes, and inflation.

**Table 30** also shows an estimate of median compensation paid adjusted for inflation. The median compensation amounts are adjusted using the ABS Wage Price Index<sup>3</sup> (WPI) to remove the effects of wage inflation and allow a more meaningful comparison with the median time lost time series. In all adjustments, the 2000–01 financial year is used as the base period for comparison. Due to the limited categories provided by the WPI series, WPI adjusted median compensation paid figures are only able to be provided at the 'overall' and 'industry' levels. For all other categories (occupation, nature of injury, mechanism, breakdown agency) in this chapter, non-adjusted figures are used.

**Table 30: Serious claims: median time lost (weeks) and compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2017-18**

Financial year of lodgement	Serious claims	Median time lost (working weeks)	Median compensation paid <sup>2</sup>	Median compensation (WPI adjusted)
2000–01	133,040	4.2	\$4,300	\$4,300
2001–02	130,110	4.3	\$4,500	\$4,400
2002–03	132,385	4.4	\$4,500	\$4,200
2003–04	133,265	4.0	\$3,100	\$2,800
2004–05	134,725	4.0	\$4,900	\$4,200
2005–06	130,360	4.3	\$3,500	\$3,000
2006–07	129,410	4.4	\$3,800	\$3,000
2007–08	129,490	4.6	\$4,100	\$3,200
2008–09	126,115	5.0	\$7,100	\$5,300
2009–10	124,365	5.0	\$7,600	\$5,500
2010–11	127,700	5.4	\$8,200	\$5,700
2011–12	127,415	5.6	\$8,200	\$5,500
2012–13	117,045	5.2	\$9,000	\$5,800
2013–14	111,465	5.4	\$9,600	\$6,100
2014–15	108,995	5.6	\$10,500	\$6,500
2015–16	106,220	5.6	\$11,400	\$6,900
2016–17	107,520	6.0	\$12,400	\$7,300
2017–18	110,810	6.2	\$12,600	\$7,300

**Figure 5** shows the unadjusted median compensation payment, and WPI adjusted median compensation payments for 2000–01 to 2017–18.

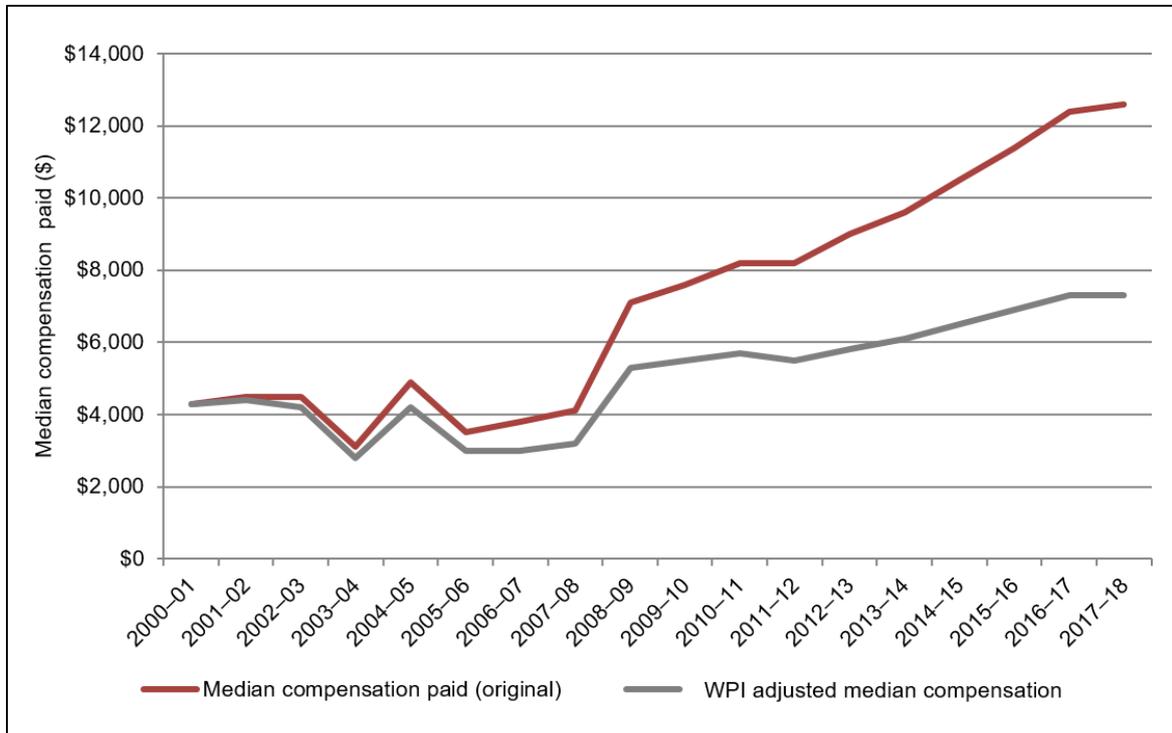
**Figure 6** shows a comparison between median time lost and the WPI adjusted median compensation paid series between 2000–01 and 2017–18, indicating that median compensation paid has broadly

<sup>2</sup> Calculation of the median compensation paid includes payments for all serious claims for each of the financial years. Prior to the 2017-18 *Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics* report, this figure only included the median compensation paid for serious claims where the payment made was greater than zero. Since 2017-18, all serious claims' payments have been included, as this more accurately reflects the true median amount of compensation paid.

<sup>3</sup> Wage Price Index, ABS Catalogue No. 6345.0, Australia, June 2019.

moved in line with median time lost in real terms. In recent years, the WPI adjusted compensation paid has continued to increase while median time lost has increased at a slower rate.

**Figure 5: Median compensation paid (original) and WPI adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2017–18**



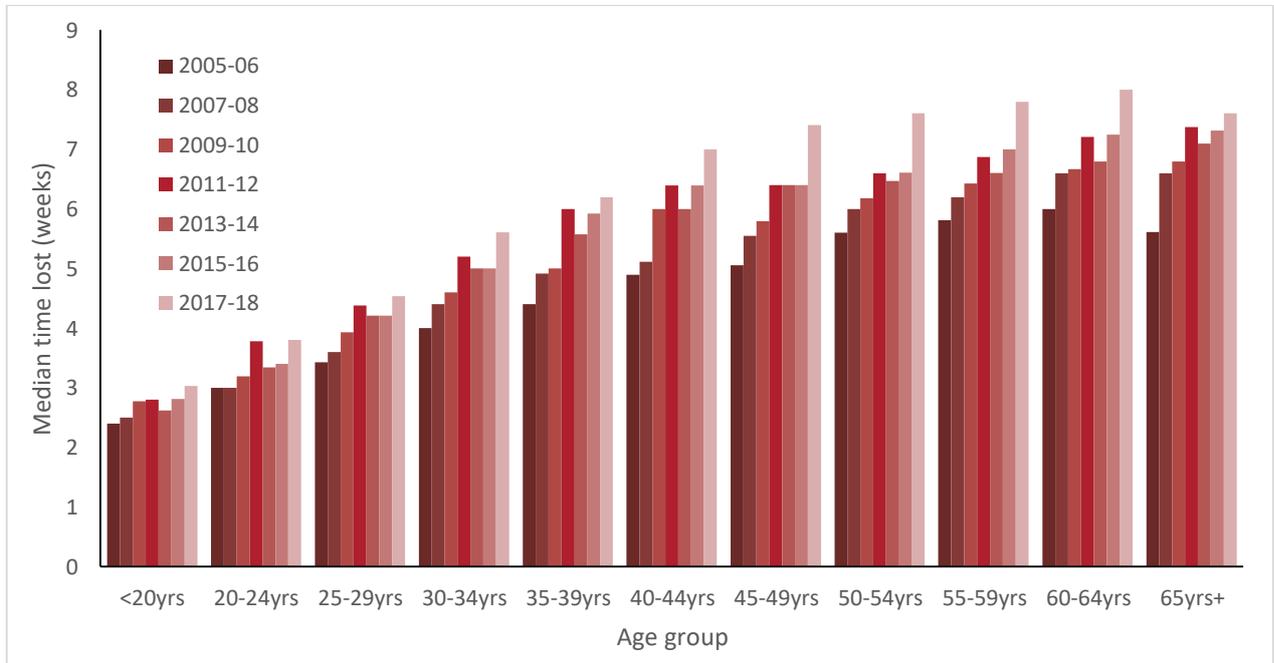
**Figure 6: Median time lost and inflation adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2017–18**



### 3.2 Age group

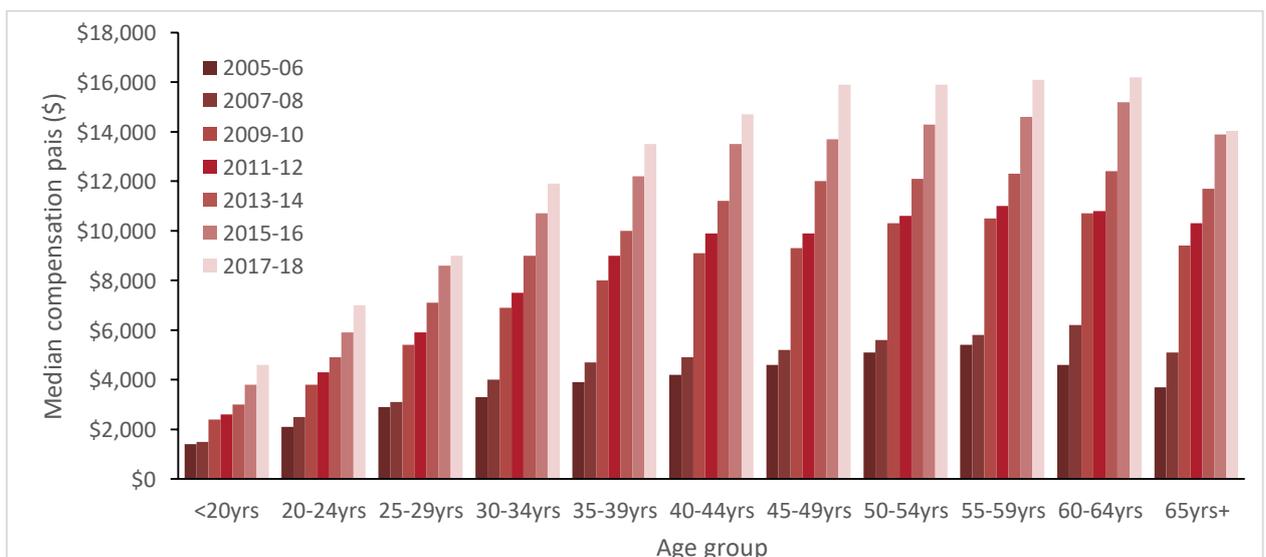
**Figure 7** shows that median time lost tends to increase with age and that all age groups have recorded an increase in median time lost between 2005–06 and 2017–18, with an accelerated effect in 2017-18 in particular.

**Figure 7: Serious claims: median time lost by age group, 2005–06 to 2017–18**



Similar to median time lost, **Figure 8** shows that median compensation paid generally tends to increase with age, although the differences between age groups are less pronounced among workers aged over 50, and workers aged over 65 years tend to receive slightly lower median compensation amounts. All age groups have recorded an increase in median compensation paid between 2005–06 and 2017–18.

**Figure 8: Serious claims: median compensation paid by age group, 2005–06 to 2017–18**



### 3.3 Gender

In 2017–18, the median time lost for a serious claim was 6.0 working weeks for male employees and 6.6 working weeks for female employees. The median compensation paid for a serious claim was \$13,400 for male employees and \$11,200 for female employees.

**Table 31** shows that the median compensation amount paid to males has increased by 219% from \$4,200 in 2000–01 to \$13,400 in 2017–18. The median compensation amount paid to females increased by 155% from \$4,400 in 2000–01 to \$11,200 in 2017–18. From 2007–08 onward, median payments for female employees were lower than the median payments for male employees.

One possible reason that females receive lower rates of compensation despite a longer median time lost period is the gender pay gap.

**Table 31: Serious claims: median time lost and compensation paid by gender, 2000–01 to 2017–18**

Financial year	Median time lost (working weeks)		Median compensation paid (\$)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000–01	4.0	4.7	\$4,200	\$4,400
2001–02	4.0	5.0	\$4,400	\$4,900
2002–03	4.1	5.0	\$4,400	\$4,800
2003–04	4.0	4.7	\$3,000	\$3,200
2004–05	4.0	4.5	\$4,800	\$4,900
2005–06	4.0	5.0	\$3,500	\$3,700
2006–07	4.2	5.0	\$3,800	\$3,800
2007–08	4.4	5.3	\$4,200	\$3,900
2008–09	4.8	5.6	\$7,400	\$6,600
2009–10	4.8	5.6	\$7,800	\$7,200
2010–11	5.0	6.0	\$8,400	\$7,900
2011–12	5.4	6.2	\$8,600	\$7,600
2012–13	5.0	5.8	\$9,600	\$8,000
2013–14	5.2	5.9	\$10,300	\$8,400
2014–15	5.3	6.0	\$11,300	\$9,200
2015–16	5.4	6.0	\$12,100	\$10,000
2016–17	5.8	6.2	\$13,200	\$10,900
2017–18	6.0	6.6	\$13,400	\$11,200

## 3.4 Industry

**Table 32** shows that median time lost has increased for all 19 industries in 2017–18 compared to 2000–01. The greatest increase was recorded for the Electricity, gas, water and waste services industry, which rose by 111%, from 3.4 working weeks in 2000–01 to 7.2 working weeks in 2017–18. The smallest increase was recorded in the Accommodation and food services industry, which increased by 9%, from 3.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 4.1 working weeks in 2017–18.

The Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries (with the Transport, postal and warehousing and Agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries) recorded increases of 58% and 20% respectively in median time lost over the period.

**Table 32: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017-18**

Industry	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	3.4	5.2	5.8	7.0	7.9	7.2	111%
Financial and insurance services	4.8	6.3	6.6	6.6	9.7	8.6	79%
Transport, postal and warehousing	4.0	6.4	6.6	7.0	7.0	7.2	78%
Road transport	5.2	7.0	7.4	7.9	7.8	8.2	58%
Information media and telecommunications	4.0	4.6	4.9	5.9	4.4	7.0	75%
Public administration and safety	4.0	5.8	6.4	6.1	6.6	6.8	69%
Mining	5.1	7.8	7.8	7.8	8.7	8.6	68%
Retail trade	3.4	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.3	5.5	63%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	4.4	5.4	5.3	6.0	6.5	6.6	50%
Wholesale trade	4.1	5.4	5.3	5.4	6.0	6.1	49%
Administrative and support services	4.4	5.2	5.4	5.8	6.0	6.4	45%
Health care and social assistance	4.4	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.2	42%
Manufacturing	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.4	5.6	40%
Construction	5.0	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.6	7.0	40%
Other services	4.6	5.2	5.6	5.6	5.7	6.4	39%
Arts and recreation services	4.6	4.9	5.4	5.4	6.2	6.3	38%
Professional, scientific and technical services	4.6	6.7	5.7	5.5	6.4	6.3	36%
Education and training	4.0	4.4	4.6	4.5	5.0	5.1	27%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4.8	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.9	6.0	25%
Agriculture	5.0	5.6	5.2	5.2	5.8	6.0	20%
Accommodation and food services	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.1	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>48%</b>

**Table 33** shows that median payments also increased in all 19 industries between 2000–01 and 2017–18. Increases in payments should be expected, as this reflects increases in wages and the costs of medical treatment. However, the table allows comparisons across industries to be made.

The smallest rises were recorded for the Accommodation and food services (up by 114%) and Education and training (up by 136%) industries.

The largest percentage increases in median payments were recorded for the Financial and insurance services (up by 356%), Electricity, gas, water and waste services (up by 284%), Retail trade (up by 270%) and Transport, postal and warehousing (up by 265%) industries.

Both the Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries recorded an increase in median compensation that was higher than the increase for all industries (up by 244% and 217% respectively).

**Table 33: Serious claims: median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Industry	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
Financial and insurance services	\$4,100	\$12,700	\$15,400	\$16,000	\$22,600	\$18,800	356%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	\$4,300	\$11,700	\$13,400	\$16,000	\$17,800	\$16,400	284%
Retail trade	\$2,600	\$7,300	\$7,900	\$8,800	\$9,900	\$9,600	270%
Transport, postal and warehousing	\$4,200	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$14,700	\$15,100	\$15,500	265%
Road transport	\$4,900	\$11,800	\$13,700	\$15,800	\$15,900	\$16,900	244%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$3,800	\$9,300	\$9,500	\$10,300	\$11,500	\$12,300	224%
Agriculture	\$3,800	\$9,300	\$9,000	\$10,200	\$11,300	\$12,000	217%
Information media and telecommunications	\$5,600	\$12,100	\$13,300	\$16,300	\$11,500	\$17,700	216%
Administrative and support services	\$3,400	\$7,100	\$8,500	\$9,900	\$10,000	\$10,400	202%
Wholesale trade	\$4,500	\$10,700	\$11,300	\$12,000	\$12,800	\$13,600	201%
Manufacturing	\$4,200	\$9,900	\$11,200	\$11,800	\$12,700	\$12,500	199%
Public administration and safety	\$5,600	\$12,100	\$13,100	\$14,100	\$16,700	\$16,500	197%
Other services	\$4,900	\$9,800	\$11,200	\$13,200	\$13,400	\$13,900	183%
Construction	\$5,600	\$13,200	\$14,500	\$15,100	\$15,300	\$15,600	180%
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$5,900	\$13,700	\$13,200	\$14,600	\$17,000	\$16,500	178%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	\$5,300	\$9,900	\$11,800	\$12,200	\$15,400	\$13,700	160%
Arts and recreation services	\$3,600	\$7,400	\$8,200	\$9,100	\$10,300	\$9,400	156%
Mining	\$11,200	\$25,200	\$27,300	\$29,000	\$29,800	\$28,600	156%
Health care and social assistance	\$4,200	\$7,100	\$8,000	\$8,600	\$9,600	\$10,100	144%
Education and training	\$5,100	\$9,100	\$10,400	\$10,600	\$11,500	\$12,100	136%
Accommodation and food services	\$3,100	\$5,100	\$5,000	\$5,700	\$6,400	\$6,600	114%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,400</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>194%</b>

**Table 34** shows the WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry for 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18. The smallest percentage increases in median payments occurred in the Education and training (up by 28%), Accommodation and food services (up by 35%) and Health care and social assistance (up by 37%) industries.

The largest percentage increases in WPI adjusted median compensation paid between 2000–01 and 2017–18 were for the Financial and insurance services (up by 160%) and Retail trade (up by 129%) industries.

The Electricity, gas, water and waste services and Transport, postal and warehousing industries also recorded increases of over 100% in WPI adjusted compensation paid over the period. The Mining industry had the highest level of WPI adjusted median compensation paid across all years (\$15,500 in 2017-18, more than three times higher than the \$4,200 median for Accommodation and food services).

**Table 34: Serious claims: WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2000–01</b>	<b>2013–14</b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17</b>	<b>2017–18</b>	<b>% chg</b>
<b>Financial and insurance services</b>	\$4,100	\$8,000	\$9,400	\$9,500	\$13,100	\$10,700	160%
<b>Retail trade</b>	\$2,600	\$4,900	\$5,200	\$5,600	\$6,200	\$5,900	129%
<b>Transport, postal and warehousing</b>	\$4,200	\$7,700	\$8,200	\$9,000	\$9,100	\$9,100	115%
<b>Electricity, gas, water and waste services</b>	\$4,300	\$6,900	\$7,600	\$8,900	\$9,700	\$8,700	105%
<b>Information media and telecommunications</b>	\$5,600	\$8,000	\$8,600	\$10,300	\$7,100	\$10,700	92%
<b>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</b>	\$3,800	\$5,800	\$5,900	\$6,200	\$6,800	\$7,100	88%
<b>Administrative and support services</b>	\$3,400	\$4,600	\$5,500	\$6,300	\$6,200	\$6,400	85%
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	\$4,500	\$6,900	\$7,100	\$7,400	\$7,800	\$8,100	79%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$4,200	\$6,300	\$6,900	\$7,200	\$7,500	\$7,200	71%
<b>Other services</b>	\$4,900	\$6,500	\$7,200	\$8,300	\$8,300	\$8,400	71%
<b>Public administration and safety</b>	\$5,600	\$7,400	\$7,900	\$8,300	\$9,600	\$9,300	67%
<b>Professional, scientific and technical services</b>	\$5,900	\$8,500	\$8,000	\$8,800	\$10,000	\$9,600	61%
<b>Construction</b>	\$5,600	\$7,900	\$8,500	\$8,700	\$8,700	\$8,700	56%
<b>Rental, hiring and real estate services</b>	\$5,300	\$6,400	\$7,400	\$7,500	\$9,400	\$8,200	55%
<b>Arts and recreation services</b>	\$3,600	\$4,800	\$5,200	\$5,600	\$6,200	\$5,500	51%
<b>Mining</b>	\$11,200	\$14,600	\$15,400	\$16,100	\$16,400	\$15,500	39%
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	\$4,200	\$4,400	\$4,800	\$5,100	\$5,500	\$5,700	37%
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	\$3,100	\$3,600	\$3,400	\$3,800	\$4,200	\$4,200	35%
<b>Education and training</b>	\$5,100	\$5,500	\$6,100	\$6,000	\$6,400	\$6,600	28%
<b>Total</b>	\$4,300	\$6,100	\$6,500	\$6,900	\$7,300	\$7,300	71%

## 3.5 Occupation

**Table 35** shows that median time lost for serious workers' compensation claims rose in all eight major occupation groups between 2000–01 and 2017–18.

Sales workers recorded the largest increase in median time lost from work (up by 94%), while Managers had the longest median time lost (7.4 working weeks) in 2017–18.

Professionals recorded the smallest increase in median time lost from work (down by 32%), while Technicians and trades workers had the shortest median time lost (5.7 working weeks) in 2017–18.

**Table 35: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Occupation	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
Sales workers	3.4	5.6	5.7	6.0	6.2	6.6	94%
Machinery operators and drivers	4.4	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.6	6.9	56%
Clerical and administrative workers	4.8	6.6	6.6	6.4	7.0	7.2	50%
Community and personal service workers	4.0	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.7	6.0	50%
Managers	5.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.9	7.4	48%
Labourers	4.2	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.8	6.0	44%
Technicians and trades workers	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.2	5.7	42%
Professionals	4.6	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.9	6.0	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>48%</b>

**Table 36** shows that median compensation payments have increased in all major occupation groups from 2000–01 to 2017–18. Sales workers recorded the largest percentage increase, rising by 298% from \$2,400 in 2000–01 to \$9,700 in 2017–18; followed by Machinery operators and drivers (up by 218%) and Labourers (up by 214%). Professionals recorded the smallest increase in median compensation payments over the period, increasing by 143% from \$5,800 in 2000–01 to \$14,100 in 2017–18. However, most industries recorded only modest increases between 2016–17 and 2017–18.

Managers had the highest level of median compensation paid of all occupations for 5 of the 6 years shown in the table (\$17,900 in 2017–18). In contrast, Sales workers recorded the lowest level of median compensation paid in 3 of the 6 years (\$9,700 in 2017–18).

**Table 36: Serious claims: median compensation paid by occupation, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Occupation	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
Sales workers	\$2,400	\$7,800	\$8,600	\$9,100	\$9,600	\$9,700	298%
Machinery operators and drivers	\$4,700	\$12,000	\$13,100	\$14,200	\$15,100	\$15,000	218%
Labourers	\$3,700	\$8,700	\$9,400	\$10,500	\$11,200	\$11,600	214%
Technicians and trades workers	\$4,300	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$11,700	\$12,500	\$12,700	193%
Managers	\$6,100	\$13,100	\$14,700	\$15,800	\$18,200	\$17,900	191%
Clerical and administrative workers	\$6,000	\$13,300	\$14,700	\$15,000	\$16,500	\$16,600	177%
Community and personal service workers	\$3,900	\$7,100	\$7,700	\$8,600	\$9,800	\$10,200	161%
Professionals	\$5,800	\$10,300	\$11,600	\$12,700	\$13,900	\$14,100	143%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,400</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>194%</b>

## 3.6 Nature of injury and disease

**Table 37** shows that the median time lost for injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims was 4.0 working weeks in 2000–01 and has risen by 46% to 5.8 working weeks in 2017–18. Median time lost for claims involving diseases increased by 76% over the same period, from 6.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 12.0 working weeks in 2017–18.

Among injury claims, Injuries to nerves and spinal cord involved the longest median time lost from work in 2000–01 (26.2 weeks), but this had decreased by 23% to 20.1 working weeks in 2017–18. The median time lost increased for all other injury types over the period.

Among disease claims, median time lost decreased for Respiratory system diseases (down by 13%) and Circulatory system diseases (down by 4%) over the period but increased for all other disease types.

Neoplasms (cancer) recorded the largest increase in median time lost, rising by 123% from 2.9 working weeks in 2000–01 to 8.6 in 2017–18. This was followed by Mental health conditions (which account for the highest number of disease claims), which increased by 86% from 11.2 working weeks in 2000–01 to 20.8 weeks in 2017–18.

**Table 37: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Nature of injury/disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>							
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	26.2	9.1	13.4	10.8	11.3	20.1	-23%
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	8.4	8.6	8.8	9.0	9.0	9.8	16%
Fractures	6.8	7.8	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.2	21%
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	4.1	5.0	5.0	5.2	5.4	5.8	42%
Other injuries*	2.4	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.4	5.1	109%
Other claims**	3.8	4.4	3.7	4.8	6.8	4.0	5%
Intracranial injuries	2.6	5.0	3.6	4.3	3.4	3.8	46%
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0	25%
Burn	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.1	6%
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Diseases</b>							
Mental health conditions	11.2	15.4	16.6	16.9	18.6	20.8	86%
Circulatory system diseases	15.0	6.3	6.0	7.3	8.4	14.4	-4%
Other diseases*	5.7	3.4	4.0	4.5	8.1	10.1	75%
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	8.1	8.4	8.2	8.5	9.2	9.2	14%
Neoplasms (cancer)	3.9	5.3	4.7	5.3	3.6	8.6	123%
Digestive system diseases	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.4	6.0	6.0	4%
Respiratory system diseases	4.6	4.0	5.1	4.8	6.0	4.0	-13%
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.6	16%
Infectious and parasitic diseases	2.0	2.4	2.2	2.8	3.0	2.4	20%
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>76%</b>

\*'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

\*\* 'Other claims' refers to injury types that recorded small numbers and are combined in a single category for this table.

**Table 38** shows that the highest median compensation paid for any workers compensation claim was for Injury to nerves and spinal cord at \$57,700 in 2000–01. This has fallen by 35% since 2000–01, but remains the costliest injury type at \$37,300 in 2017–18.

Costs for all other injury and disease types increased from 2000-01 to 2017-18. The largest increases over the period were for Intracranial injuries (up 253%), Circulatory system diseases (up 226%), Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage (up 218%) and Mental health conditions (up by 209%). Mental health conditions also involved the highest median compensation amounts for all diseases in recent years.

**Table 38: Serious claims: median compensation paid by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Nature of injury/disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>							
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	\$57,700	\$16,900	\$37,700	\$24,100	\$23,900	\$37,300	-35%
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	\$5,900	\$12,700	\$13,900	\$15,000	\$15,800	\$15,800	168%
Fractures	\$9,900	\$12,200	\$13,200	\$14,200	\$15,300	\$15,100	52%
Other injuries*	\$2,400	\$7,300	\$7,200	\$8,800	\$9,300	\$11,800	386%
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	\$4,200	\$9,200	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$11,600	\$11,700	177%
Other claims**	\$3,300	\$6,900	\$5,800	\$8,700	\$9,900	\$9,700	193%
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	\$2,400	\$7,700	\$5,900	\$8,100	\$6,400	\$7,700	218%
Intracranial injuries	\$2,200	\$5,200	\$5,900	\$6,500	\$7,600	\$7,700	253%
Burn	\$1,200	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	155%
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>\$3,900</b>	<b>\$8,800</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,300</b>	<b>\$11,500</b>	<b>197%</b>
<b>Diseases</b>							
Mental health conditions	\$11,600	\$25,900	\$29,000	\$31,600	\$33,600	\$35,900	209%
Neoplasms (cancer)	\$13,800	\$14,100	\$12,700	\$16,800	\$15,100	\$28,400	106%
Circulatory system diseases	\$8,500	\$28,600	\$19,300	\$22,100	\$13,100	\$27,700	226%
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	\$8,400	\$15,000	\$15,800	\$18,100	\$19,100	\$18,400	119%
Other diseases*	\$4,600	\$6,400	\$4,900	\$8,200	\$22,000	\$17,100	272%
Digestive system diseases	\$6,800	\$12,300	\$13,000	\$13,600	\$14,500	\$14,100	107%
Respiratory system diseases	\$4,300	\$7,200	\$12,300	\$9,700	\$14,900	\$7,200	67%
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	\$2,000	\$3,700	\$4,000	\$3,900	\$5,000	\$5,200	160%
Infectious and parasitic diseases	\$1,400	\$3,100	\$3,700	\$4,400	\$6,500	\$4,100	193%
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$15,600</b>	<b>\$17,400</b>	<b>\$18,900</b>	<b>\$21,200</b>	<b>\$22,600</b>	<b>202%</b>
<b>Total: serious claims</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,400</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>194%</b>

\*'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

\*\* 'Other claims' refers to injury types that recorded small numbers and are combined in a single category for this table.

### 3.7 Mechanism of injury or disease

**Table 39** shows that between 2000–01 and 2017–18, median time lost increased for all mechanism categories except for Heat, electricity and other environmental factors which recorded no change. The largest increase was for Mental stress, which increased by more than eight working weeks, from 11.4 working weeks in 2000–01 to 21.0 working weeks in 2017–18.

Mental stress claims involved the longest median time lost for all years in the series. By 2017-18 median time lost for these claims had risen to more than three times the median time lost for all claims (21.0 working weeks, compared to 6.2 for all claims) and were the equivalent of the median time lost to vehicle incidents, body stressing and fall, trips and slips combined in 2017-18.

**Table 39: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2013–14 to 2017–18**

Mechanism of injury or disease	2000–01	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	% chg
<b>Mental stress</b>	11.4	16.2	17.2	17.4	19.0	21.0	84%
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	5.2	6.4	6.2	6.1	6.6	6.9	31%
Vehicle accident	6.0	7.6	7.0	7.0	7.3	7.6	27%
<b>Body stressing</b>	4.6	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.4	6.8	48%
Muscular stress while handling objects	4.6	6.2	6.1	6.2	6.6	7.2	57%
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	4.3	6.0	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.4	49%
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	4.0	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.5	38%
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	4.6	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.8	49%
Falls from a height	5.6	7.0	7.4	7.4	7.9	7.9	41%
Falls on the same level	4.2	5.6	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.4	53%
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	4.0	4.7	5.0	4.1	4.6	6.4	61%
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	3.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.2	29%
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.4	4.7	5.0	14%
Being assaulted by a person or persons	4.2	4.7	4.7	5.4	6.0	5.6	33%
Being bitten by an animal	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	6%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	3.1	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2	36%
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	25%
Hitting moving objects	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.8	17%
Hitting stationary objects	2.6	2.8	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.4	32%
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.4	2.5	14%
<b>Biological factors</b>	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.2	2.9	2.4	20%
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>48%</b>

**Table 40** shows that Mental stress claims also involved the highest median compensation paid amounts for all years in the series. In 2017-18, the median cost of a mental stress claim was \$36,600, almost three times the median compensation amount for all serious claims (\$12,600).

The largest increase in median compensation payments from 2000-01 to 2017-18 was for Hitting moving objects, which increased by 323% from \$2,000 in 2000-01 to \$8,300 in 2017-18.

**Table 40: Serious claims: median compensation paid by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000-01 and 2013-14 to 2017-18**

<b>Mechanism of injury or disease</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>% chg</b>
<b>Mental stress</b>	\$12,000	\$27,300	\$30,100	\$32,700	\$34,500	\$36,600	204%
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	\$4,300	\$10,900	\$11,600	\$11,000	\$12,500	\$17,400	301%
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	\$5,300	\$11,700	\$11,800	\$12,400	\$13,800	\$15,000	181%
Vehicle accident	\$7,000	\$12,900	\$12,800	\$13,200	\$14,100	\$15,900	128%
<b>Body stressing</b>	\$4,900	\$10,400	\$11,400	\$12,300	\$13,300	\$13,300	174%
Muscular stress while handling objects	\$4,800	\$10,500	\$11,300	\$12,200	\$13,400	\$13,500	181%
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	\$4,400	\$9,800	\$10,500	\$11,600	\$12,500	\$12,500	182%
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	\$4,700	\$9,300	\$10,600	\$11,700	\$11,900	\$12,200	157%
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	\$4,600	\$10,300	\$11,400	\$12,300	\$12,900	\$12,900	181%
Falls from a height	\$5,800	\$12,700	\$14,100	\$15,600	\$16,600	\$16,800	188%
Falls on the same level	\$4,200	\$9,800	\$10,800	\$11,800	\$11,900	\$12,200	194%
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	\$3,300	\$7,200	\$7,900	\$8,600	\$9,700	\$9,400	187%
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	\$5,300	\$10,200	\$13,000	\$12,700	\$13,400	\$12,800	142%
Being assaulted by a person or persons	\$4,000	\$7,000	\$7,700	\$9,100	\$11,400	\$10,500	161%
Being hit by an animal	\$3,600	\$7,500	\$7,400	\$8,700	\$10,300	\$10,800	197%
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	\$3,000	\$7,500	\$8,400	\$9,000	\$9,700	\$10,100	238%
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	\$2,100	\$5,300	\$5,900	\$6,700	\$7,700	\$7,900	266%
Hitting moving objects	\$2,000	\$5,400	\$5,600	\$6,900	\$7,900	\$8,300	323%
Hitting stationary objects	\$2,400	\$5,300	\$6,200	\$6,400	\$7,400	\$7,300	207%
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	\$1,800	\$3,300	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$4,700	\$4,500	153%
<b>Biological factors</b>	\$1,400	\$2,900	\$3,600	\$5,300	\$5,900	\$4,400	226%
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	\$1,300	\$2,500	\$2,300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,100	144%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,400</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>194%</b>

### 3.8 Breakdown agency of injury or disease

**Table 41** shows that all breakdown agencies recorded an increase in median time lost between 2000-01 and 2017-18. Chemicals and chemical products involved both the shortest median time lost in each year of the series, and the lowest increase over the period (15%).

Mobile plant and transport involved the longest median time lost in 3 of the 6 years of the series, while the largest increase over the period involved Environmental agencies.

**Table 41: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000-01 and 2013-14 to 2017-18**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000-01	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% chg
Environmental agencies	4.0	5.6	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.6	64%
Animal, human and biological agencies	4.6	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.7	7.0	53%
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	3.6	5.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.3	47%
Mobile plant and transport	4.5	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.6	6.6	46%
Other and unspecified agencies	5.8	7.0	7.4	7.1	8.0	8.4	45%
Materials and substances	3.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	5.0	5.4	44%
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	4.0	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.5	5.3	33%
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	4.2	5.0	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.0	19%
Chemicals and chemical products	2.6	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.6	3.0	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>48%</b>

**Table 42** shows that between 2000-01 and 2017-18 all major breakdown agencies recorded an increase in median compensation paid. Three breakdown agencies (Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant; Animal, human and biological agencies; and Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment) recorded percentage changes over 200% (and higher than the increase for all claims of 194%).

**Table 42: Serious claims: median compensation paid by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000-01 and 2013-14 to 2017-18**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000-01	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% chg
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	\$4,100	\$9,700	\$11,500	\$12,000	\$13,800	\$13,000	219%
Animal, human and biological agencies	\$4,100	\$8,900	\$9,800	\$11,000	\$12,200	\$12,900	215%
Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment	\$3,400	\$8,400	\$9,100	\$9,800	\$10,500	\$10,700	212%
Other and unspecified agencies	\$6,400	\$13,400	\$14,300	\$15,900	\$17,500	\$18,800	195%
Environmental agencies	\$4,200	\$9,700	\$11,100	\$11,700	\$12,500	\$12,300	193%
Mobile plant and transport	\$4,900	\$11,300	\$12,300	\$12,900	\$14,500	\$14,100	191%
Materials and substances	\$3,800	\$8,700	\$9,100	\$9,900	\$10,700	\$10,800	189%
Chemicals and chemical products	\$2,300	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$7,600	\$6,400	171%
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	\$4,900	\$9,600	\$10,800	\$11,500	\$12,100	\$11,700	140%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$9,600</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,400</b>	<b>\$12,400</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>194%</b>

# Glossary

## Age

The age of the employee at the time of injury or the date when the disease was first reported to their employer.

## Bodily location of injury or disease

The part of the body most seriously affected by the most serious injury or disease experienced by the employee.

## Breakdown agency of injury or disease

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.

## Compensation paid

Payments include compensation paid to claimants for: benefits paid to an employee or the employee's surviving dependents; outlays for goods and services such as medical treatment and funeral expenses; rehabilitation services; noncompensation payments such as legal costs, transport and interpreter services; and common law settlements, which may incorporate estimates of future liability and indirect costs such as loss of productivity.

## Disease

A condition resulting from repeated or long-term exposure to an agent or event. This is consistent with the International Conference of Labour Statisticians' definition of occupational diseases: 'a disease contracted as a result of an exposure over a period of time to risk factors arising from work activity' (International Labour Organization 1998).

## Employee

The ABS defines an employee as 'a person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, a retainer fee from their employer while working on a commission basis, tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind; or a person who operates his or her own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees' (ABS 2007).

In calculating incidence rates, Safe Work Australia uses an estimate of the number of jobs worked by employees. Employees with more than one job (multiple jobholders) face exposures to distinct risks of injury and disease in each separate job. Therefore, the ABS supplies Safe Work Australia with derived estimates of employee jobs for use as the denominators in calculating incidence rates (see explanatory note 12). The employee count is an estimate of how many jobs were worked by people classified as employees in their main jobs on average over the reference period.

## Financial year

A financial year begins on 1 July and ends on 30 June.

## Frequency rate

The number of serious claims per million hours worked is calculated using the following formula:  
$$\text{number of serious claims} / \text{number of hours worked annually by employees} \times 1,000,000.$$

## Hours usually worked

The number of hours the employee or claimant usually works in a week, whether full-time or part-time as defined by the jurisdiction for compensation purposes.

## Hours worked

The ABS supplies Safe Work Australia with estimates of the total number of hours worked by all employees in the reference period. These estimates provide a measure of the time that employees are exposed to work-related risks. Hours worked does not include paid leave such as annual leave or sick leave.

## Incidence rate

The number of serious claims per 1,000 employees is calculated using the following formula: number of serious claims / number of employees x 1,000.

## Industry

The industry of the claimant's employer, which is coded using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006.

## Injury

A condition resulting from a single traumatic event where the harm or hurt is immediately apparent. For example, a cut resulting from an incident with a knife or burns resulting from an acid splash. This is consistent with the International Conference of Labour Statisticians' definition of occupational injuries: 'any personal injury, disease or death resulting from an occupational accident' which is defined as 'an unexpected and unplanned occurrence, including acts of violence, arising out of or in connection with work which results in one or more workers incurring a personal injury, disease or death' (International Labour Organization 1998).

## Mechanism of injury or disease

The action, exposure or event that directly caused the most serious injury or disease experienced by the employee.

## Median

The value that is in the middle when observations are ranked from lowest to highest. Half of the observations are higher than the median and half are lower. For an even number of observations, the median is the arithmetic mean of the two values in the middle.

## Nature of injury or disease

The nature of injury or disease classification provides the framework for coding the most serious injury or disease experienced by the employee.

## Occupation

The claimant's occupation, which is coded using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition.

## Serious claim

A serious claim is an accepted workers' compensation claim for an incapacity that results in a total absence from work of one working week or more. Claims in receipt of common-law payments are also

included. Claims arising from a journey to or from work or during a recess period are not compensable in all jurisdictions and are excluded. Serious claims exclude compensated fatalities.

### **Time lost from work**

The number of compensated hours an employee was absent from work.

### **Working week**

The number of working weeks lost is calculated by dividing the amount of time lost by the hours usually worked by an employee per week. Claims requiring one working week or more of time off are classified as serious claims.

# Explanatory notes

## 1. Scope and coverage

The NDS is comprised of accepted workers' compensation claims, which are presented by the financial year of lodgement. A financial year begins on 1 July and ends on 30 June.

The NDS does not cover all cases of work-related injuries and diseases for the reasons below:

- While state, territory and Commonwealth Government workers' compensation legislation provides coverage for the majority of employees, some specific groups of workers are covered under separate legislation. Claims lodged by police in Western Australia and military personnel of the Australian Defence Forces are not included.
- Work-related injuries and diseases of self-employed workers are under-represented because workers' compensation schemes do not generally cover self-employed workers. Around 10% of Australian workers are self-employed. Denominators used to calculate rates only include the jobs and hours of employees who are eligible for workers' compensation.
- Mesothelioma claims are under-represented because many mesothelioma cases, which are commonly linked to work-related exposure to asbestos, are compensated through mechanisms other than workers' compensation.
- Diseases are under-represented because many diseases result from long-term exposure to agents or have long latency periods, which makes the link between the work-related disease and the workplace difficult to establish.

## 2. Age of employee

The age of an employee is derived from their date of birth and the date on which the injury occurred or the disease was first reported to the employer. Data related to the 65+ years age group should be used with caution as claims can be made by people who are no longer in the workforce, particularly for work-related diseases that arise after employees retire. The employee estimates only count people who are currently working. Rates for this age group may overstate the actual rates.

## 3. Time lost from work

Time lost from work is measured in working weeks and excludes estimates of future absences. Time lost from work comprises the total period of time for which compensation was paid. The time lost is not necessarily continuous and may occur over a number of separate periods. Where an employee returns to work part-time, they may continue to receive pro-rata payments and the total number of hours for which compensation has been paid is included in calculating the time lost.

The median is used as the measure of central tendency because long-term claims that involve lengthy periods of time lost from work would significantly skew an arithmetic mean.

Data from the preliminary year are excluded when reporting time lost from work because claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open and claimants may accrue more time off work in subsequent years.

## 4. Compensation paid

The median is used as the measure of central tendency because long-term claims that involve lengthy periods of time lost from work would significantly skew an arithmetic mean. The calculation of median compensation payments includes payments for all serious claims for each financial year, including zero-dollar claims. Amounts of compensation paid are rounded to the nearest \$100.

Data from the preliminary year are excluded when reporting compensation paid because claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open and claimants may accrue more compensation payments in subsequent years.

## 5. Industry classification

Information about the industry of the claimant's employer is coded using the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006*.

Because industry is based on the claimant's employer, a claim made by a person employed under labour hire arrangements is coded to the labour supply services industry class, which is in the Administrative and support services industry. Industry of employer will be different to industry of workplace for some employees.

## 6. Occupation classification

Information about the occupation of the claimant is coded using the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition*.

## 7. Details of injuries and diseases

Information about injuries and diseases of claimants is coded using the *Type of Occurrence Classification System, Third Edition, Revision 1*. The classification system is used to code the:

- nature of injury or disease
- bodily location of injury or disease
- mechanism of injury or disease
- breakdown agency of injury or disease, and
- agency of injury or disease.

## 8. Insufficiently coded data

Some claims are not fully coded due to insufficient information being provided at the time of the claim. Where there is a significant number of incompletely coded claims, they may be separately identified in residual categories like 'other and unspecified' or 'not elsewhere classified'. These claims are included when totals are calculated.

## 9. Confidentiality

Claim numbers are rounded to the nearest five to help protect confidential information about employers and employees. Due to rounding, differences may appear between the reported totals and the sums of rows or columns.

## 10. Time-series analyses

Caution should be used when comparing preliminary and non-preliminary data. Non-preliminary data are more likely to have been finalised and are generally more accurate than preliminary data.

When analysing trends over time, consideration needs to be given to legislative changes that may influence trends in workers' compensation data. Information on workers' compensation arrangements can be found in Safe Work Australia's *Comparison of Workers' Compensation Arrangements in Australia and New Zealand*.

## 11. Frequency and incidence rates

Frequency rates are expressed as the number of serious claims per million hours worked, while incidence rates are expressed as the number of serious claims per 1,000 employees.

Compared with an incidence rate, a frequency rate is a more precise and accurate measure of work health and safety because it reflects the number of injuries and diseases per hour worked. It is important to account for the number of hours worked because there are significant differences in the number of hours worked by different groups of employees and employees at different points in time. The differences in the number of hours worked mean that employees' exposure to work-related risks vary considerably. A frequency rate accounts for these differences and allows accurate comparisons to be made of different groups of employees and employees at different points in time.

## 12. Denominators used to calculate rates

Estimates of the number of employees and hours worked for each Australian workers' compensation jurisdiction are supplied annually by the ABS. The data are primarily derived from the Labour Force Survey, which are adjusted to account for differences in scope between the Labour Force Survey and workers' compensation coverage.

The ABS provides two sets of estimates for each jurisdiction—one is split by gender, age and industry and the second is split by occupation. This restricts presentation of rates to the categories supported by the ABS data. Therefore, it is not possible to calculate rates for occupational groups within specific industries. As these two sets of estimates are based on different data sources, total employment and hours worked estimates may vary slightly. As a result rates and percentage changes may also differ slightly for estimates calculated from the occupation data set.

In 2008, the ABS conducted a review of the methodology used to calculate the number of employees in each industry and the number of hours worked by each employee. After the review, the ABS made changes to its methodology, which increased its estimates. As the ABS could only supply new estimates from 2005–06 onwards, estimates for previous years were adjusted based on the movement between the old and new estimates for 2005–06 to avoid a break in the time series. Reports from 2007–08 onwards use these new estimates.

Following the review, the major change to the estimates was in the industry coding of 'jobs other than the main job' of multiple job holders. Where previously the second job was combined into the industry of the first job, these have now been separated to be shown in the industry in which the employee works in each separate job. This resulted in changes to rates in some industries. In particular, a decrease in employee estimates occurred in Public administration and safety, Manufacturing, and Health care and social assistance as these were the industries where a greater proportion held a second job. An increase occurred in Arts and recreation services, and Accommodation and food services as these were the industries where the second job was most commonly worked.

While the ABS is able to adjust the employee estimates to account for the industries where the second job was worked, it is unable to adjust the hours worked in a similar manner. All hours worked are allocated to the industry of the main job.

Because eligibility for workers' compensation varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, further adjustments are necessary. The most significant adjustments are outlined below:

- Police in Western Australia, who are covered by a separate scheme that does not report data to Safe Work Australia, are excluded from the denominators.
- Under previous Queensland legislation, owner-managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIEs), who are included in the standard definition of 'employee', had the option of purchasing workers' compensation insurance. Based on 2006 census data, 10% of employed people in Queensland were OMIEs, an unknown number of whom were covered by workers' compensation. Prior to the legislation change (1 July 2013), this population was excluded

from denominator and claims data. Data from 1 July 2013 onwards will explicitly include OMIes in both denominator and numerator data.

## 13. Adjustment of Victorian data

Safe Work Australia uses one working week of time lost from work as the cut-off for the classification of a 'serious claim' – a nationally standardised measure. This cut-off was chosen because most jurisdictions have an employer excess of one week or less. Since claims with an absence of at least one week are generally processed by the workers' compensation authority, the use of a one-week cut-off ensures comparable data are compiled from all jurisdictions so that an accurate national estimate can be produced.

However, under the Victorian workers' compensation scheme, employers are liable for the first 10 working days lost by the injured or ill worker (for an employee working two days per week, for instance, that would amount to five weeks' pay), plus the first \$707 of medical services (for the year 2018/19—indexed annually), unless the employer elects an 'excess buy-out' option. Since information on claims paid solely by employers is not always provided to the workers' compensation authority, the national count of serious claims is affected.

To correct for this under-counting, Victorian claims of one to two weeks' duration are increased by a factor to represent the 'missing claims'. The factor is calculated by comparing the percentage of claims of one to two weeks' duration for Victoria with the percentage of claims of one to two weeks' duration for all other Australian jurisdictions at the industry division level and by nature of injury or disease. The factoring makes the percentage of claims in each industry and nature group in Victoria match the Australian average for claims of this duration. This factoring increases Victorian claims by around 13% in 2018–19 and the Australian count by less than 3%.

## 14. Reliability of data

Data are subject to two types of errors—non-sampling errors and sampling errors.

### Non-sampling error

Non-sampling errors may occur in any statistical collection due to:

- incorrect inclusion or exclusion of respondents or cases
- non-response of respondents
- inaccurate information from respondents
- inaccurate recording of information by data collectors
- deficiencies in data collection materials and processes, and
- errors that occur during the entry, coding and editing of data.

Non-sampling errors may affect the numerator and denominator data, and is difficult to quantify.

### Sampling error

Sampling error is a measure of the variation that occurs when a sample, rather than an entire population, is surveyed. Standard error indicates the extent to which an estimate of a sample varies from the estimate of the population from which it is drawn. When a standard error is expressed as a percentage of the estimate to which it relates, it is known as a relative standard error (RSE).

The denominator data used to calculate rates of serious claims are subject to sampling error. Rates that are calculated using denominators with high RSEs are annotated with one asterisk (\*) to indicate that the RSE of the denominator is 25% or higher and two asterisks (\*\*) if the RSE is 50% or higher.

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## Further information

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## Jurisdictional contacts

Contact details for jurisdictional work health and safety regulators are available on the following website: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/whs-authorities-contact-information>