

Safe Work Australia

# Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics /

2019-20

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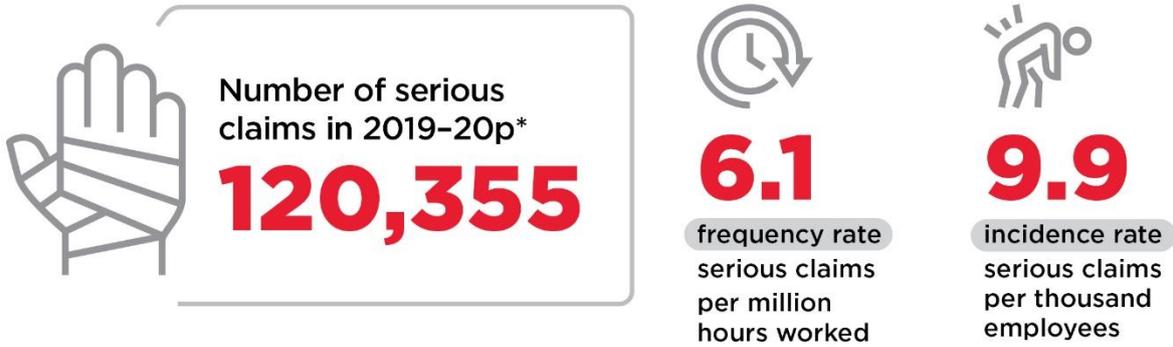
## Abbreviations and symbols

<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>p</b>	Preliminary data
<b>% chg</b>	Percentage change

# Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics

Report 2019-20\*

## Serious claims in 2019-20p\*



## Frequency rate of serious claims by gender 2019-20p\*



## Main causes of serious claims (by mechanism of incident) in 2019-20p\*



**Notes:**

\*preliminary data subject to revision in future years as further claims are finalised. Serious claims include all accepted workers' compensation claims for an incapacity that results in a total absence from work of one working week or more, excluding fatalities and journey claims.

Rates are calculated using unrounded numbers.

# Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics

Report 2019-20\*

## Serious claims in 2019-20\*

### Occupations with the highest frequency rates in 2019-20\*



Labourers

**18.1**

serious claims per million hours worked



Community and personal service workers

**13.9**

serious claims per million hours worked



Machinery operators and drivers

**11.4**

serious claims per million hours worked

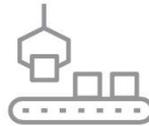
### Industries with the highest frequency rates of serious claims in 2019-20\*



Agriculture, forestry and fishing

**9.6**

serious claims per million hours worked



Manufacturing

**9.1**

serious claims per million hours worked



Transport, postal and warehousing

**8.9**

serious claims per million hours worked

## Serious claims 2009-10 and 2018-19



Frequency rate of serious claims per million hours worked

↓ **decreased by 23%**

from **7.5** to **5.8** serious claims per million hours worked



Median time lost for a serious claim

↑ **increased by 40%**

from **5.0** to **7.0** working weeks



The total number of serious claims in Australia

↓ **decreased by 7%**

from **124,365** to **115,707** serious claims

despite the number of workers increasing by **22%** over the same period.

#### Notes:

\*preliminary data subject to revision in future years as further claims are finalised. Serious claims include all accepted workers' compensation claims for an incapacity that results in a total absence from work of one working week or more, excluding fatalities and journey claims.

Rates are calculated using unrounded numbers.



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# Introduction

The statistics in this report show accepted serious workers' compensation claims that workers lodged between 2000–01 and 2019–20. The statistics are an indicator of Australia's work health and safety performance over the 20-year period. However, the data do not cover all work-related injuries and diseases that occurred during this period. Not all workers in Australia are eligible, or will necessarily always make a claim, for workers' compensation. In addition, changes in workers' eligibility for compensation over time and between jurisdictions also affect the data. Please see the [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.

Jurisdictions supplied the data used in this report for the 2019–20 financial year with updates back to 2014–15. The data presented may differ from jurisdictional annual reports. This is 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](#).

This report differs from previous Australia's Workers' Compensation Statistics reports, which rounded serious claims to the nearest five. This report no longer performs this rounding. This report suppresses serious claim numbers fewer than five.

Consider the broader context of the COVID-19 pandemic when interpreting these statistics. The [COVID-19 and Work Health and Safety Statistics](#) (link) report explores the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this data.

## 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. The report includes claims by workers in receipt of common-law payments. The report excludes claims arising from a journey to or from work or during a recess period as they are not compensable in some jurisdictions.

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 statistics are available on the [Preliminary work-related fatalities](#) page. Comprehensive information on work-related injury fatalities is available in the [Work-related traumatic injury fatalities database](#) page. The reports are based on information from workers' compensation data, coronial information, notifiable fatalities, and the media.

## Frequency and incidence rates

There are two types of rates in this publication:

- Frequency rates are the number of serious claims per million hours worked, and
- Incidence rates are 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. 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 between industries and/or different groups of workers.

**Section 1:**

# Serious claims 2019–20p

This section provides workers' compensation statistics for serious claims during the 2019–20 financial year. The 2019–20 data are preliminary (denoted by 'p'). They are likely to rise as revisions occur in future years.

As outlined in the [explanatory notes](#), 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. This aligns with most jurisdictions that have an employer excess of one week or less. Victoria is the exception. Safe Work Australia adjusts the claim numbers from Victoria to ensure they are comparable with other jurisdictions.

Tables in this publication show rounded data. Calculations use unrounded data. Similarly, tables on the number of employees and hours worked are rounded numbers but calculations use unrounded data.

## 1.1 Gender

In 2019–20p, male employees accounted for 63% of serious claims and 58% of hours worked. Female employees accounted for 37% of serious claims and 42% of hours worked (**Table 1**).

**Table 1: Percentage of serious claims and hours worked by gender, 2019–20p**

	Percentage of serious claims (%)	Percentage of hours worked (%)
Male	63	58
Female	37	42
Total	100	100

**Table 2** below shows that in 2019–20p, there was a larger difference between males and females in the incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees) than the frequency rate of serious claims (serious claims per million hours worked). This reflects the higher prevalence of part-time work among females. Both rates show that male employees were more likely than female employees to have a serious claim.

A higher percentage of male employees' serious claims arose from injury and musculoskeletal disorders (89% compared with 83% for female employees). A higher percentage of female employees' serious claims arose from diseases (17% compared with 11% for male employees).

**Table 2: Number, percentage and rates of serious claims by injury or disease and gender, 2019–20p**

	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	67,122	89	5.9	10.7
Diseases	8,117	11	0.7	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Female</b>				
Injury and musculoskeletal disorders	37,529	83	4.5	6.4
Diseases	7,452	17	0.9	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>All serious claims</b>				
Injury and musculoskeletal disorders	104,776	87	5.3	8.6
Diseases	15,580	13	0.8	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note 1: The totals include claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 1.2 Age group

**Table 3** below shows that in 2019–20p, older workers were more likely to make a serious claim, particularly those aged between 45 and 54 years. This age group accounted for 24% of serious claims. Younger workers aged under 25 years accounted for 13% of serious claims in 2019–20p.

**Table 3: Number of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2019–20p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder serious claims			Disease serious claims			All serious claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	2,768	1,043	3,822	99	60	159	2,867	1,103	3,981
20–24 years	7,288	3,155	10,461	315	378	694	7,603	3,533	11,155
25–29 years	8,127	3,546	11,692	587	695	1,282	8,713	4,241	12,974
30–34 years	7,496	3,229	10,742	753	769	1,523	8,249	3,997	12,265
35–39 years	6,930	3,235	10,180	906	815	1,722	7,836	4,049	11,901
40–44 years	6,474	3,561	10,044	927	910	1,837	7,401	4,471	11,882
45–49 years	7,272	4,816	12,105	1,189	1,162	2,353	8,461	5,978	14,458
50–54 years	7,041	5,222	12,270	1,192	1,052	2,246	8,233	6,274	14,515
55–59 years	6,928	5,135	12,069	1,165	927	2,094	8,093	6,062	14,163
60–64 years	4,732	3,291	8,025	708	511	1,218	5,439	3,802	9,243
65+ years	2,063	1,297	3,362	278	175	453	2,341	1,472	3,815
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,122</b>	<b>37,529</b>	<b>104,776</b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>7,452</b>	<b>15,580</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

**Table 4** shows that in 2019–20p, employees aged 60–64 years had the highest frequency rate of any age group (8.6 serious claims per million hours worked). By contrast, employees aged 30–34 years had the lowest frequency rate (4.9 serious claims per million hours worked).

**Table 4: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2019–20p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder serious claims			Disease serious claims			All serious claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	8.5	4.1	6.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	8.9	4.4	6.9
20–24 years	7.5	3.9	5.9	0.3	0.5	0.4	7.8	4.4	6.3
25–29 years	5.9	3.2	4.7	0.4	0.6	0.5	6.3	3.8	5.2
30–34 years	5.0	3.2	4.3	0.5	0.8	0.6	5.5	3.9	4.9
35–39 years	4.8	3.5	4.3	0.6	0.9	0.7	5.4	4.3	5.0
40–44 years	5.0	4.0	4.6	0.7	1.0	0.8	5.7	5.0	5.4
45–49 years	5.6	4.8	5.2	0.9	1.1	1.0	6.5	5.9	6.2
50–54 years	6.2	6.0	6.1	1.0	1.2	1.1	7.2	7.2	7.2
55–59 years	7.2	6.9	7.1	1.2	1.3	1.2	8.4	8.2	8.3
60–64 years	7.5	7.4	7.4	1.1	1.1	1.1	8.6	8.5	8.6
65+ years <sup>1</sup>	5.7	6.0	5.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	6.4	6.8	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Note 1: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

<sup>1</sup> Interpret rates data for the 65+ years age group with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

Generally, older workers recorded the highest incidence rates (**Table 5**). In 2019–20p, workers aged 50 to 64 years recorded the highest incidence rates of any age group. This was the case for both injury and musculoskeletal and disease claims.

**Table 5: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2019–20p**

Age group	Injury and musculoskeletal disorder serious claims			Disease serious claims			All serious claims		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<20 years	8.6	3.1	5.8	0.3	0.2	0.2	8.9	3.2	6.0
20–24 years	11.5	5.1	8.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	12.0	5.7	8.9
25–29 years	10.6	4.9	7.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	11.4	5.9	8.7
30–34 years	9.4	4.6	7.2	0.9	1.1	1.0	10.4	5.7	8.2
35–39 years	9.3	5.0	7.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	10.6	6.2	8.5
40–44 years	10.0	6.0	8.1	1.4	1.5	1.5	11.4	7.5	9.5
45–49 years	11.2	7.5	9.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	13.0	9.2	11.1
50–54 years	12.1	9.1	10.6	2.1	1.8	1.9	14.2	10.9	12.6
55–59 years	13.5	10.1	11.8	2.3	1.8	2.1	15.8	12.0	13.9
60–64 years	13.2	9.8	11.6	2.0	1.5	1.8	15.2	11.4	13.3
65+ years <sup>1</sup>	8.1	6.7	7.5	1.1	0.9	1.0	9.1	7.6	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note 1: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

<sup>1</sup> Interpret the rates data for the 65+ years age group with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

## 1.3 Industry

The following industries had the highest proportion of serious claims in 2019–20p:

- health care and social assistance industry (18%)
- construction (13%) and
- manufacturing (12%).

Together, these industries accounted for 43% of all serious claims, while making up only around 30% of the workforce (**Table 6**).

**Table 6: Workforce characteristics by industry, 2019–20p**

Industry	Employed persons (million) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of workforce (%) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage entitled to compensation (%) <sup>1,2</sup>	Jobs (million) <sup>3</sup>	Hours worked (billion)	Number of Serious claims <sup>4</sup>	Percentage of serious claims (%)	Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)
Health care and social assistance	1.763	13.8	94	1.754	2.517	21,603	17.9	8.6	12.3
Construction	1.179	9.2	77	0.954	1.833	15,567	12.9	8.5	16.3
Manufacturing	0.887	6.9	94	0.841	1.537	14,014	11.6	9.1	16.7
Public administration and safety	0.828	6.5	99	0.843	1.398	9,620	8.0	6.9	11.4
Transport, postal and warehousing	0.641	5.0	84	0.567	1.028	9,190	7.6	8.9	16.2
Retail trade	1.236	9.7	95	1.227	1.671	8,589	7.1	5.1	7.0
Education and training	1.085	8.5	95	1.109	1.712	7,396	6.1	4.3	6.7
Accommodation and food services	0.851	6.7	96	0.857	1.001	6,309	5.2	6.3	7.4
Wholesale trade	0.392	3.1	93	0.380	0.695	5,144	4.3	7.4	13.5
Administrative and support services	0.438	3.4	79	0.489	0.758	5,120	4.3	6.8	10.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.334	2.6	60	0.209	0.407	3,893	3.2	9.6	18.6
Other services	0.485	3.8	77	0.399	0.643	3,336	2.8	5.2	8.4
Mining	0.239	1.9	99	0.235	0.504	2,555	2.1	5.1	10.9
Professional, scientific and technical services	1.148	9.0	83	1.044	1.866	2,263	1.9	1.2	2.2
Arts and recreation services	0.226	1.8	83	0.217	0.274	2,193	1.8	8.0	10.1
Rental, hiring and real estate services	0.214	1.7	84	0.204	0.352	1,150	1.0	3.3	5.6
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.156	1.2	97	0.154	0.291	1,105	0.9	3.8	7.2
Financial and insurance services	0.467	3.7	94	0.461	0.833	695	0.6	0.8	1.5
Information media and telecommunications	0.205	1.6	90	0.200	0.337	489	0.4	1.4	2.4
Total <sup>4</sup>	12.774	100	89	12.143	19.657	120,355	100	6.1	9.9

Note 1: This table is sorted by number of serious claims.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

<sup>1</sup> From the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated as the number of employed persons who are employees or owner managers of incorporated or unincorporated enterprises with employees divided by total employed persons.

<sup>3</sup> The number of jobs is lower than the number of employed persons, as some people work in multiple jobs.

<sup>4</sup> Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

**Tables 7a, 7b and 7c** show that in 2019–20p, Agriculture, forestry and fishing had the highest frequency rate of any industry (9.6 serious claims per million hours worked). There were also high frequency rates in Manufacturing (9.1), Transport, postal and warehousing (8.9), Health care and social assistance (8.6) and Construction (8.5).

Within the broader Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, the Agriculture industry sub-division accounted for 75% of serious claims in 2019–20p, with 8.5 serious claims per million hours worked and 16.9 serious claims per 1,000 employees. Within the broader Transport, postal and warehousing industry, the Road transport industry sub-division accounted for nearly half of all serious claims with 10.7 serious claims per million hours worked and 20.6 claims per 1,000 employees.

The industries with the lowest frequency rates were Financial and insurance services (0.8 serious claims per million hours worked), Professional, scientific and technical services (1.2), and Information media and telecommunications (1.4).

The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest frequency rate for injury and musculoskeletal disorders (9.0 serious claims per million hours worked), almost twice the average for all industries (5.3).

The Public administration and safety industry recorded the highest frequency rate for diseases (1.8), more than twice the all industry average (0.8). Most disease claims (88%) in this industry related to mental health conditions.

**Table 7a: Number and rates of all serious claims by gender and industry, 2019–20p**

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	4,329	17,248	21,603	6.8	9.2	8.6	11.1	12.6	12.3
Construction	15,080	476	15,567	9.2	2.5	8.5	18.3	3.6	16.3
Manufacturing	12,032	1,968	14,014	10.2	5.5	9.1	19.7	8.6	16.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	7,808	1,375	9,190	9.3	7.2	8.9	17.6	11.3	16.2
<i>Road Transport</i>	4,036	318	4,357	11.4	6.1	10.7	22.7	9.5	20.6
Public administration and safety	6,695	2,924	9,620	8.9	4.5	6.9	15.6	7.0	11.4
Retail trade	4,339	4,242	8,589	5.1	5.1	5.1	8.1	6.2	7.0
Education and training	2,036	5,352	7,396	3.9	4.5	4.3	6.4	6.8	6.7
Accommodation and food services	3,079	3,209	6,309	6.3	6.3	6.3	8.1	6.8	7.4
Administrative and support services	3,269	1,840	5,120	8.0	5.3	6.8	13.7	7.3	10.5
Wholesale trade	4,186	953	5,144	8.5	4.7	7.4	16.6	7.5	13.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,870	1,016	3,893	9.4	9.8	9.6	20.0	15.5	18.6
<i>Agriculture</i>	2,044	874	2,924	8.1	9.4	8.5	17.7	15.1	16.9
Other services	2,329	1,002	3,336	5.5	4.5	5.2	10.1	6.0	8.4
Mining	2,304	250	2,555	5.4	3.3	5.1	11.8	6.3	10.9
Arts and recreation services	1,280	908	2,193	8.5	7.4	8.0	12.0	8.2	10.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,180	1,079	2,263	1.0	1.5	1.2	2.0	2.4	2.2
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	994	109	1,105	4.3	1.8	3.8	8.5	3.0	7.2
Rental, hiring and real estate services	798	352	1,150	3.9	2.4	3.3	7.6	3.6	5.6
Financial and insurance services	214	480	695	0.5	1.3	0.8	0.9	2.1	1.5
Information media and telecommunications	315	173	489	1.5	1.4	1.4	2.6	2.2	2.4
<b>Total: all serious claims</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note 1: This table is sorted by number of serious claims.

Note 2: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 3: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

**Table 7b: Number and rates of serious claims by nature of injury, gender and industry, 2019–20p**

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>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>									
Health care and social assistance	3,518	14,730	18,270	5.5	7.8	7.3	9.1	10.8	10.4
Construction	14,157	388	14,555	8.6	2.1	7.9	17.2	3.0	15.3
Manufacturing	10,946	1,700	12,660	9.3	4.7	8.2	17.9	7.4	15.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	7,049	1,190	8,246	8.4	6.2	8.0	15.8	9.7	14.5
<i>Road Transport</i>	3,712	255	3,970	10.5	4.9	9.8	20.9	7.6	18.8
Public administration and safety	5,101	1,932	7,034	6.8	3.0	5.0	11.9	4.7	8.3
Retail trade	3,953	3,788	7,749	4.7	4.6	4.6	7.4	5.5	6.3
Education and training	1,607	4,143	5,756	3.1	3.5	3.4	5.0	5.2	5.2
Accommodation and food services	2,871	2,923	5,815	5.9	5.7	5.8	7.5	6.2	6.8
Administrative and support services	3,025	1,576	4,612	7.4	4.5	6.1	12.7	6.3	9.4
Wholesale trade	3,817	792	4,614	7.8	3.9	6.6	15.1	6.2	12.2
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,690	954	3,650	8.8	9.2	9.0	18.8	14.5	17.5
<i>Agriculture</i>	1,931	823	2,759	7.6	8.9	8.0	16.7	14.2	15.9
Other services	2,098	787	2,890	5.0	3.5	4.5	9.1	4.7	7.2
Mining	2,079	219	2,299	4.9	2.9	4.6	10.7	5.5	9.8
Arts and recreation services	1,175	820	1,999	7.8	6.6	7.3	11.1	7.4	9.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	962	808	1,773	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.6	1.8	1.7
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	900	73	975	3.9	1.2	3.4	7.7	2.0	6.3
Rental, hiring and real estate services	708	267	975	3.4	1.8	2.8	6.7	2.7	4.8
Financial and insurance services	113	282	396	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.5	1.2	0.9
Information media and telecommunications	267	130	398	1.3	1.1	1.2	2.2	1.7	2.0
<b>Total: injuries and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>67,122</b>	<b>37,529</b>	<b>104,776</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>

Note 1: This table is sorted by number of serious claims.

Note 2: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 3: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information

**Table 7c: Number and rates of serious claims by disease, gender and industry, 2019–20p**

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>Diseases</b>									
Health care and social assistance	811	2,517	3,333	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.1	1.8	1.9
Construction	923	88	1,012	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.7	1.1
Manufacturing	1,086	268	1,354	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.8	1.2	1.6
Transport, postal and warehousing	759	185	944	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.5	1.7
<i>Road Transport</i>	324	63	387	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.8	1.9	1.8
Public administration and safety	1,594	992	2,586	2.1	1.5	1.8	3.7	2.4	3.1
Retail trade	386	454	839	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7
Education and training	429	1,209	1,640	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.5
Accommodation and food services	208	286	494	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
Administrative and support services	244	264	507	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.0
Wholesale trade	369	161	530	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.4
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	179	62	242	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.9	1.2
<i>Agriculture</i>	113	51	165	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.0
Other services	231	215	446	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.1
Mining	225	31	256	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.2	0.8	1.1
Arts and recreation services	105	88	194	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.9
Professional, scientific and technical services	218	271	489	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.5
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	94	36	130	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.8	1.0	0.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	90	85	175	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.9
Financial and insurance services	101	198	299	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.6
Information media and telecommunications	48	43	91	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>7,452</b>	<b>15,580</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>

Note 1: This table is sorted by number of serious claims.

Note 2: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 3: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information

## 1.4 Occupation

**Table 8** shows that Labourers accounted for almost a quarter (24%) of serious claims in 2019–20p. There were also relatively high serious claims from Community and personal service workers and Technicians and trades workers. These each accounted for 19% of serious claims. Together, employees working in these occupations accounted for 60% of all serious claims while representing just 34% of the workforce.

**Table 8: Workforce characteristics by occupation, 2019–20p**

Occupation	Employed persons (million) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of workforce (%) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage entitled to compensation (%) <sup>1,2</sup>	Jobs (million) <sup>3</sup>	Hours worked (billion)	Number of Serious claims <sup>4</sup>	Percentage of serious claims (%)	Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees)
Labourers	1.219	10	88	1.137	1.571	28,360	24	18.1	24.9
Community and personal service workers	1.340	10	93	1.349	1.688	23,405	19	13.9	17.3
Technicians and trades workers	1.775	14	83	1.537	2.833	22,454	19	7.9	14.6
Machinery operators and drivers	0.835	7	88	0.773	1.438	16,446	14	11.4	21.3
Professionals	3.194	25	90	3.109	5.285	11,699	10	2.2	3.8
Managers	1.574	12	85	1.399	2.793	5,935	5	2.1	4.2
Sales workers	1.076	8	94	1.085	1.366	5,205	4	3.8	4.8
Clerical and administrative workers	1.760	14	94	1.754	2.684	5,193	4	1.9	3.0
<b>Total<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>12.774</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>12.143</b>	<b>19.657</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note 1: This table is sorted by number of serious claims.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

<sup>1</sup> From the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated as the number of employed persons who are employees or owner managers of incorporated or unincorporated enterprises with employees divided by total employed persons.

<sup>3</sup> The number of jobs is lower than the number of employed persons, as some people work in multiple jobs.

<sup>4</sup> Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

**Table 9** shows that Labourers had the highest serious claims frequency rate of 18.1 per million hours worked in 2019–20p. The national average was 6.1 serious claims per million hours worked. Other occupations with rates higher than the national average were Community and personal service workers (13.9), Machinery operators and drivers (11.4) and Technicians and trades workers (7.9).

Labourers also had the highest frequency rate for the injury and musculoskeletal disorders subset of serious claims (16.6 serious claims per million hours worked). This was more than three times the rate for all occupations (5.3).

Community and personal service workers recorded the highest frequency rate of diseases (2.3 serious claims per million hours worked), followed by Labourers (1.4). Both were higher than the national rate of 0.8.

**Table 9: Number and rates of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and occupation, 2019–20p**

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	20,501	7,822	28,360	18.3	17.3	18.1	27.4	20.1	24.9
Community and personal service workers	8,727	14,655	23,405	15.4	13.1	13.9	21.5	15.5	17.3
Technicians and trades workers	19,883	2,557	22,454	8.0	7.1	7.9	15.4	10.3	14.6
Machinery operators and drivers	14,493	1,941	16,446	11.1	14.5	11.4	21.1	22.7	21.3
Professionals	3,342	8,342	11,699	1.3	3.1	2.2	2.4	4.8	3.8
Managers	3,482	2,448	5,935	1.9	2.5	2.1	4.1	4.5	4.2
Sales workers	1,846	3,352	5,205	2.9	4.7	3.8	4.3	5.1	4.8
Clerical and administrative workers	1,920	3,268	5,193	2.2	1.8	1.9	4.0	2.6	3.0
<b>Total: all serious claims</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>9.9</b>
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>									
Labourers	18,970	7,111	26,117	17.0	15.7	16.6	25.4	18.3	23.0
Technicians and trades workers	18,468	2,258	20,739	7.5	6.3	7.3	14.3	9.1	13.5
Community and personal service workers	6,906	12,613	19,537	12.2	11.2	11.6	17.0	13.4	14.5
Machinery operators and drivers	13,253	1,748	15,013	10.2	13.1	10.4	19.3	20.4	19.4
Professionals	2,554	6,397	8,963	1.0	2.4	1.7	1.9	3.7	2.9
Managers	2,847	1,707	4,559	1.6	1.7	1.6	3.3	3.1	3.3
Sales workers	1,596	2,880	4,482	2.5	4.0	3.3	3.7	4.4	4.1
Clerical and administrative workers	1,567	2,278	3,849	1.8	1.2	1.4	3.3	1.8	2.2
<b>Total: injury and MSDs</b>	<b>67,122</b>	<b>37,529</b>	<b>104,776</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Diseases</b>									
Community and personal service workers	1,821	2,042	3,868	3.2	1.8	2.3	4.5	2.2	2.9
Professionals	789	1,946	2,736	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.9
Labourers	1,531	711	2,243	1.4	1.6	1.4	2.0	1.8	2.0
Technicians and trades workers	1,414	299	1,714	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.1	1.2	1.1
Machinery operators and drivers	1,240	193	1,433	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.8	2.3	1.9
Managers	635	741	1,376	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.7	1.4	1.0
Clerical and administrative workers	353	990	1,344	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.8
Sales workers	250	473	723	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>7,452</b>	<b>15,580</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>

Note 1: Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 1.5 Mechanism of injury or disease

The mechanism of injury or disease classification describes the action, exposure or event that was the direct cause of the most serious injury or disease leading to a serious claim. **Table 10** shows that in 2019–20p, the most common mechanism of injury or disease that resulted in a serious claim was Body stressing (37%). Falls, trips and slips of a person (23%) and Being hit by moving objects (16%) were also common. These three mechanisms together accounted for three quarters of all serious claims (76%).

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 6% of claims by males but 13% of claims by females. Falls, trips and slips of a person, Biological factors and Mental stress were the only mechanisms that accounted for a higher proportion of claims by females than by males.

**Table 10: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease and gender, 2019–20p**

Mechanism of injury or disease	Number of serious claims			Percentage of serious claims (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Body stressing	27,970	16,412	44,420	37	36	37
Falls, trips and slips of a person	16,213	11,574	27,819	22	26	23
Being hit by moving objects	13,402	5,988	19,417	18	13	16
Mental stress	4,200	5,877	10,084	6	13	8
Hitting objects with a part of the body	6,734	1,964	8,713	9	4	7
Vehicle incidents and other	4,526	1,974	6,506	6	4	5
Heat, electricity and other environmental factors	1,054	618	1,679	1	1	1
Chemicals and other substances	787	306	1,094	1	1	1
Biological factors	241	234	474	0	1	0
Sound and pressure	114	34	149	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note 1: Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 1.6 Nature of injury or disease

The nature of injury/disease identifies the type of hurt or harm that impacted the worker leading to the serious claim. Injury and musculoskeletal disorders accounted for 87% of serious claims in 2019-2020p. Among this category, Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injuries were the most common. These two categories accounted for 43% of injury and musculoskeletal disorders claims, and 38% of serious claims overall. Diseases were responsible for 13% of serious claims. Mental health conditions were the most common type of disease, accounting for 69% of disease claims and 9% of claims overall (**Table 11**).

Serious claims for Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage were more common among males than females (accounting for 19% of male employees' serious claims, compared with 10% for females).

Mental health conditions accounted for 14% of female employees' serious claims. This compared to 6% of males.

**Table 11: Number and percentage of serious claims by nature of injury or disease and gender, 2019–20p**

Nature of injury or disease	Number of serious claims			Percentage of serious claims (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>						
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	27,541	17,698	45,285	37	39	38
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	13,029	8,550	21,605	17	19	18
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	14,008	4,689	18,729	19	10	16
Fractures	8,657	4,275	12,942	12	10	11
Other injuries <sup>1</sup>	1,811	1,018	2,832	2	2	2
Burns	1,194	620	1,821	2	1	2
Intracranial injuries	588	507	1,096	1	1	1
Other claims <sup>2</sup>	156	109	265	0	0	0
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	138	64	202	0	0	0
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>67,122</b>	<b>37,529</b>	<b>104,776</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Diseases</b>						
Mental health conditions	4,552	6,217	10,776	6	14	9
Digestive system diseases	1,956	135	2,091	3	0	2
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	732	577	1,311	1	1	1
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	319	132	452	0	0	0
Respiratory system diseases	238	169	408	0	0	0
Neoplasms (cancer)	107	75	182	0	0	0
Infectious and parasitic diseases	89	73	162	0	0	0
Circulatory system diseases	79	43	122	0	0	0
Other diseases <sup>1</sup>	45	31	76	0	0	0
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>7,452</b>	<b>15,580</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total: all serious claims</b>	<b>75,240</b>	<b>44,982</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note 1: Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

<sup>1</sup> 'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> '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 identifies the object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in, or most associated with, the point at which things started to go wrong. This ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease experienced by a worker. In 2019–20p, the most common breakdown agency leading to a serious claim was Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment. This accounted for almost a quarter of all serious claims (24%) (Table 12).

**Table 12: Number and percentage of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2019–20p**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	Number of serious claims	Percentage of serious claims (%)
<b>Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment</b> (e.g. edged tools, fastening equipment, furniture, ladders and scaffolding)	28,303	24
<b>Environmental agencies</b> (e.g. weather and water, surface features, building features, vegetation, underground environmental hazards)	19,195	16
<b>Animal, human and biological agencies</b> (e.g. live animals, other people, personal fatigue)	19,092	16
<b>Materials and substances</b> (e.g. hazardous materials, cement, rocks, glass, fire and smoke, sewerage)	16,916	14
<b>Other and unspecified agencies</b> (e.g. non-physical agencies, such as trauma or work pressures; other agencies not elsewhere classified)	13,449	11
<b>Mobile plant and transport</b> (e.g. vehicles, pneumatic tools, drilling rigs)	11,506	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)	5,656	5
<b>Powered equipment, tools and appliances</b> (e.g. electric tools (including battery-operated tools), kitchen appliances, IT equipment)	5,320	4
<b>Chemicals and chemical products</b> (e.g. nominated chemicals, basic chemicals, detergents, paints)	918	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>

Note 1: Total include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 1.8 Mechanism of injury or disease and breakdown agency

Body stressing caused 37% of all serious claims in 2019–20p. Falls, trips and slips led to a further 23% of serious claims. One-third of Body stressing claims involved Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment (33%). Environmental agencies (e.g. steps, uneven ground, traffic etc.) caused most (54%) 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, 2019–20p**

Mechanism of injury or disease Breakdown agency of injury or disease	Number of serious claims	Percentage of serious claims (%)
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>44,420</b>	<b>37</b>
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	14,776	33
Materials and substances	7,693	17
Animal, human and biological agencies	6,112	14
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>27,819</b>	<b>23</b>
Environmental agencies	14,997	54
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	5,039	18
Mobile plant and transport	2,649	10
Materials and substances	1,995	7
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>19,417</b>	<b>16</b>
Animal, human and biological agencies	5,587	29
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	4,358	22
Materials and substances	3,679	19
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	1,944	10
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>10,084</b>	<b>8</b>
Other and unspecified agencies	5,182	51
Animal, human and biological agencies	4,701	47
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>8,713</b>	<b>7</b>
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	3,589	41
Materials and substances	2,114	24
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	835	10
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>6,506</b>	<b>5</b>
Other and unspecified agencies	2,489	38
Mobile plant and transport	2,307	35
Animal, human and biological agencies	643	10
Environmental agencies	349	5
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>1</b>
Materials and substances	802	48
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	258	15
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	203	12
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>1</b>
Chemicals and chemical products	479	44
Materials and substances	301	27
Animal, human and biological agencies	165	15
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>0</b>
Animal, human and biological agencies	379	80
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>

Note 1: The table above only features the most common breakdown agencies. As a result, the percentages and numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 1.9 Mechanism of injury or disease and bodily location

**Table 14** shows the mechanism of injury or disease broken down by the part of the body affected by the most serious injury or disease. In 2019–20p, more than one third of Body stressing claims affected the upper or lower back (37% of these claims). Injuries to knees accounted for one-fifth 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, 2019–20p**

Mechanism of injury or disease Bodily location of injury or disease	Number of serious claims	Percentage of serious claims (%)
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>44,420</b>	<b>37</b>
Back - upper or lower	16,451	37
Shoulder	8,609	19
Knee	4,037	9
Wrist	2,668	6
Abdomen and pelvic region	2,224	5
Elbow	1,607	4
Hand, fingers and thumb	1,602	4
Neck	1,231	3
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>27,819</b>	<b>23</b>
Knee	5,493	20
Ankle	4,897	18
Back - upper or lower	3,145	11
Shoulder	2,468	9
Wrist	1,587	6
Foot and toes	1,539	6
Lower leg	1,017	4
Hand, fingers and thumb	1,011	4
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>19,417</b>	<b>16</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	7,097	37
Foot and toes	1,679	9
Back - upper or lower	954	5
Shoulder	941	5
Knee	872	4
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>10,084</b>	<b>8</b>
Psychological system	9,829	97
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>8,713</b>	<b>7</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	4,892	56
Knee	531	6
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>6,506</b>	<b>5</b>
Back - upper or lower	1,049	16
Shoulder	716	11
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>1</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	536	32
Forearm	200	12
Foot and toes	144	9
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>1</b>
Eye	197	18
Respiratory system	159	15
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,355</b>	<b>100</b>

Note 1: The table above only includes the most common bodily locations. As a result, the percentages and numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Section 2:

# Trends in serious claims 2000–01 to 2019–20p

The National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS) commenced as a standard set of data collected by each jurisdiction in 1987. Reporting requirements changed significantly for the 2000–01 financial year after a review. The statistics in this chapter cover serious claims lodged since 2000–01.

Data for 2019–20 are preliminary and likely to change. It is therefore advisable to avoid using this data to examine trends or calculate percentage changes. This chapter shows the base year and the most recent five years of serious workers' compensation claims for comparison. A range of factors can affect trends over time. This includes 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

**Table 15** shows the number of serious claims fell 13% from 133,041 claims in 2000–01 to 115,707 claims in 2018–19. Over the same period, the frequency rate (number of serious claims per million hours worked) fell by 39%, while the incidence rate (number of serious claims per 1,000 employees) fell by 41%. Both rates have remained relatively stable since 2015–16.

**Table 15: Number and rates of serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees, 2000–01 to 2019–20p**

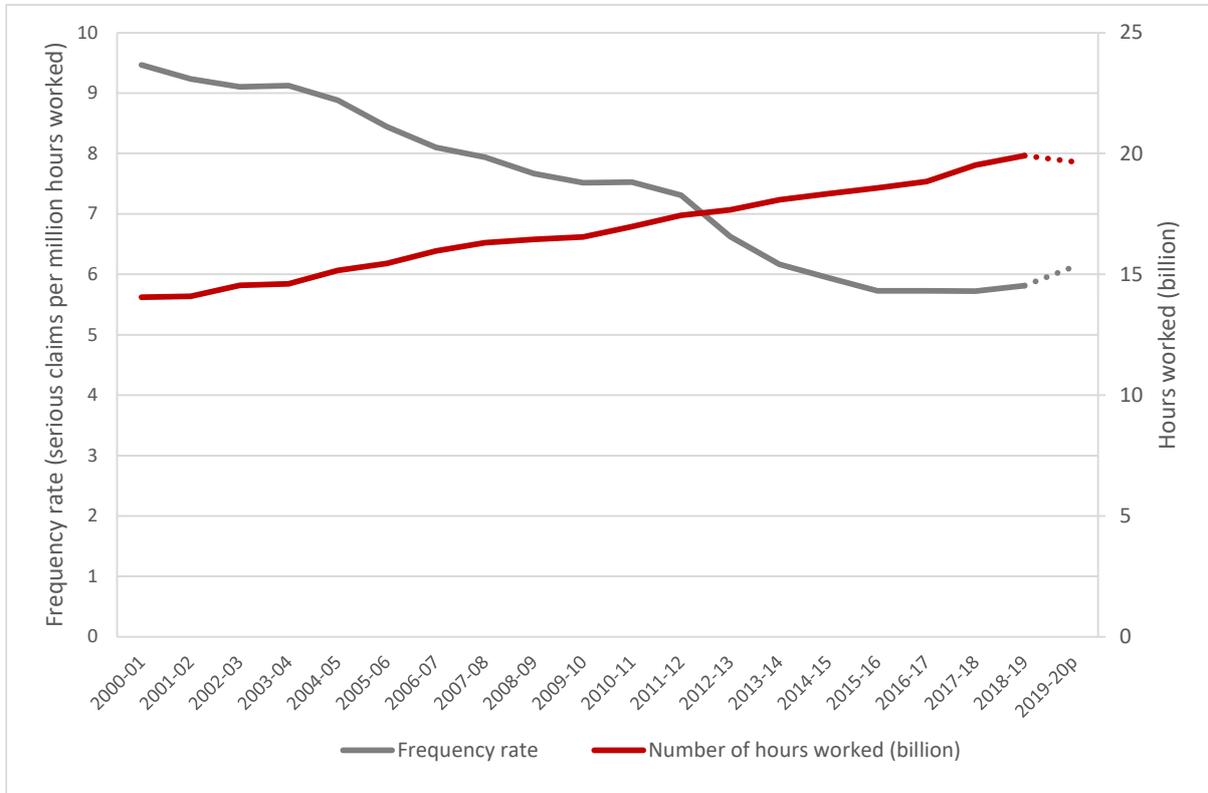
Year of lodgement	Number of serious claims	Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked)	Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees)	Total hours worked (billion)	Number of employees (million)
2000–01	133,041	9.5	16.3	14.1	8.2
2001–02	130,112	9.2	15.8	14.1	8.3
2002–03	132,384	9.1	15.6	14.5	8.5
2003–04	133,263	9.1	15.4	14.6	8.7
2004–05	134,726	8.9	15.1	15.2	8.9
2005–06	130,358	8.4	14.2	15.4	9.2
2006–07	129,412	8.1	13.6	16.0	9.5
2007–08	129,488	7.9	13.4	16.3	9.7
2008–09	126,116	7.7	12.8	16.4	9.9
2009–10	124,365	7.5	12.5	16.5	10.0
2010–11	127,701	7.5	12.5	17.0	10.2
2011–12	127,417	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	108,965	5.9	9.9	18.3	11.0
2015–16	106,425	5.7	9.5	18.6	11.2
2016–17	107,836	5.7	9.4	18.8	11.4
2017–18	111,632	5.7	9.5	19.5	11.8
2018–19	115,707	5.8	9.5	19.9	12.2
% chg 2000–01 to 2018–19	-13	-39	-41	42	49
2019–20p	120,355	6.1	9.9	19.7	12.1

Note 1: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Note 2: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

**Figure 1** shows that frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) have trended downwards while the total number of hours worked (in billions) has been increasing. Preliminary data for 2019–20 shows the opposite. However, it is too early to know if this is a change in the trend, standard annual variance, or a temporary change due to fewer hours worked due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

**Figure 1: Frequency rates and total hours worked, 2000–01 to 2019–20p**



## 2.2 Gender

Over the period from 2000–01 to 2018–19, the number of serious claims has decreased by 21% for male employees and increased 4% for female employees (**Table 16**). Frequency rates have fallen over the same period for both genders—by 42% for male employees and 31% 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 2019–20p**

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	42,046	7.6	11.0
2001–02	88,196	10.3	20.2	41,916	7.5	10.8
2002–03	89,510	10.2	20.1	42,874	7.4	10.6
2003–04	89,347	10.1	19.5	43,916	7.6	10.8
2004–05	90,010	9.8	19.2	44,716	7.4	10.6
2005–06	87,147	9.4	18.1	43,211	7.0	9.9
2006–07	86,508	9.0	17.3	42,904	6.7	9.5
2007–08	85,253	8.7	16.7	44,235	6.7	9.6
2008–09	81,836	8.4	15.9	44,281	6.6	9.4
2009–10	79,352	8.1	15.3	45,012	6.7	9.5
2010–11	81,162	8.0	15.1	46,538	6.8	9.6
2011–12	80,679	7.8	14.8	46,738	6.6	9.4
2012–13	74,237	7.0	13.4	42,809	6.0	8.5
2013–14	71,249	6.6	12.5	40,215	5.5	7.8
2014–15	69,853	6.4	12.1	39,109	5.3	7.4
2015–16	68,558	6.3	11.7	37,863	5.0	7.0
2016–17	69,019	6.2	11.6	38,813	5.0	7.1
2017–18	70,698	6.2	11.6	40,934	5.0	7.2
2018–19	72,099	6.2	11.5	43,598	5.2	7.4
% chg 2000–01 to 2018–19	-21	-42	-45	4	-31	-33
2019–20p	75,240	6.6	12.0	44,982	5.4	7.6

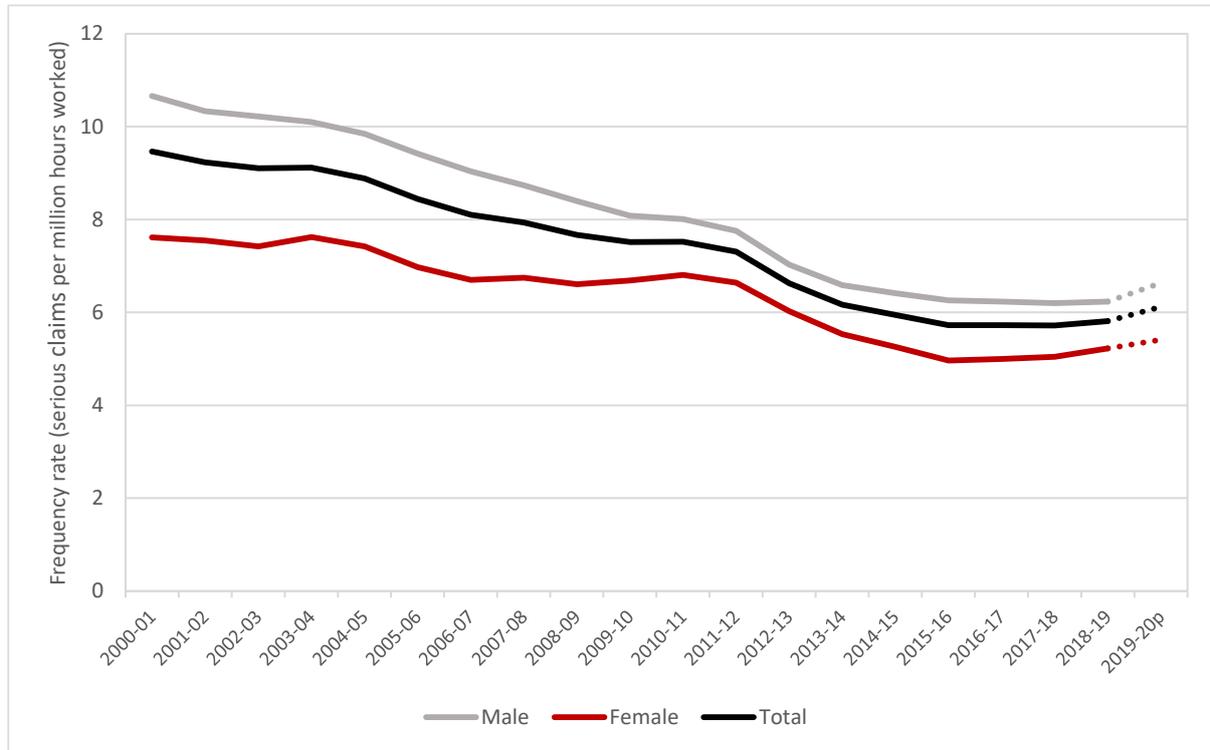
Note 1: The Totals do not include serious claims where information on gender was unknown.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Note 3: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations and percentage changes use unrounded data.

**Figure 2** shows that the frequency rates of serious claims for both males and females trended downward until 2015–16. It was stable before beginning to rise in 2018–19. 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 2019–20p**



## 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 between 2000–01 and 2019–20p. Table 17 shows that the number of serious claims fell over this period for employees aged under 55. In contrast, they increased for employees aged 55 and over. The ageing of the Australian workforce may partly explain this rise for older workers. 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 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Age group	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
15–19 years	6,646	3,604	3,551	3,574	3,834	3,779	-43	3,981
20–24 years	13,559	9,881	9,604	9,963	9,934	10,134	-25	11,155
25–29 years	15,790	10,786	10,527	10,785	11,370	11,901	-25	12,974
30–34 years	16,512	10,804	10,519	10,473	10,821	11,477	-30	12,265
35–39 years	17,893	10,590	10,365	10,241	10,823	11,327	-37	11,901
40–44 years	18,423	13,320	12,346	11,806	11,943	12,218	-34	11,882
45–49 years	16,613	13,799	13,394	13,862	14,207	14,496	-13	14,458
50–54 years	15,031	14,477	14,095	14,105	14,148	14,319	-5	14,515
55–59 years	8,278	11,720	12,018	12,339	13,051	13,661	65	14,163
60–64 years	3,575	7,413	7,398	7,777	8,258	8,897	149	9,243
65+ years	711	2,561	2,607	2,910	3,244	3,497	392	3,815
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

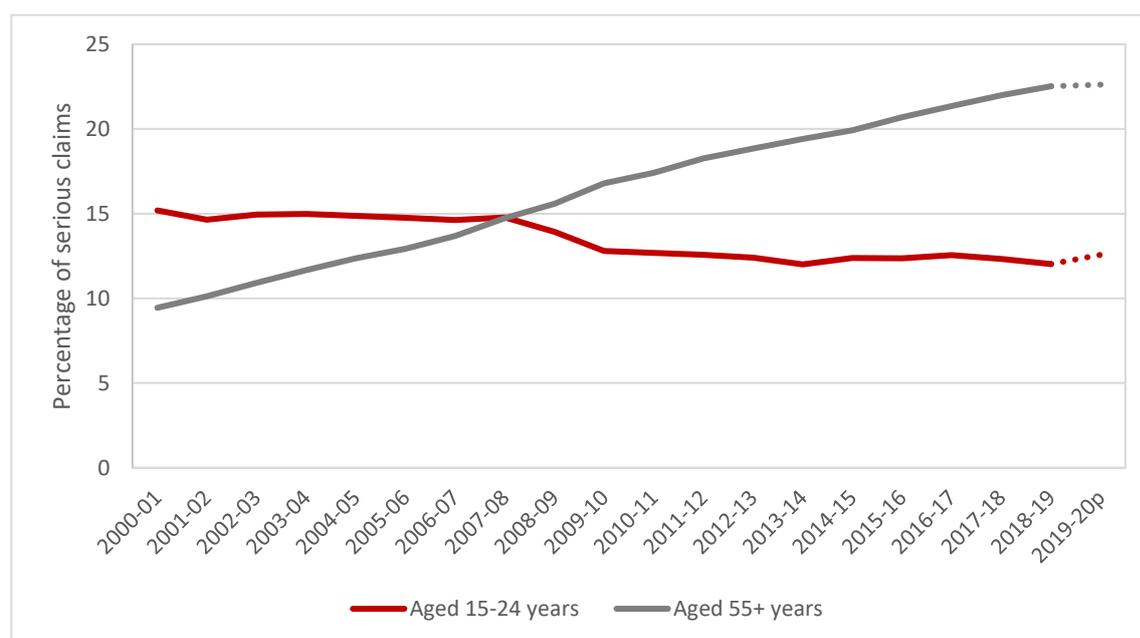
Note 1: Totals include serious claims where age is not stated.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of Section 1 for more information.

Note 3: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Figure 3 shows the proportion of serious claims made by employees aged 55 years and above has been trending steadily upward. It increased from 9% of all serious claims in 2000–01 to 23% in 2018–19. 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 selected age group, 2000–01 to 2019–20p**



Tables 18 and 19 show that frequency and incidence rates declined for all age groups from 2000–01 to 2018–19. The largest fall occurred in employees aged 35–39 years, with the frequency rate down by 53% and incidence rate down by 55%. Compared with Table 17 this illustrates that while the total number of serious claims among older workers has risen, the rates of injury and diseases among this cohort have actually fallen once the increasing size of the ageing workforce is considered.

**Table 18: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by age group, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Age group	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
15–19 years	9.4	6.0	5.9	6.3	6.3	5.9	-38	6.9
20–24 years	8.1	5.5	5.3	5.6	5.4	5.4	-33	6.3
25–29 years	8.0	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.6	-42	5.2
30–34 years	9.2	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	-51	4.9
35–39 years	10.1	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	-53	5.0
40–44 years	10.0	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.5	-45	5.4
45–49 years	9.9	6.5	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.3	-37	6.2
50–54 years	10.6	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.2	-32	7.2
55–59 years	10.2	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.6	7.9	-22	8.3
60–64 years	11.8	8.1	7.8	7.9	8.1	8.4	-29	8.6
65+ years <sup>1</sup>	7.2	6.3	5.9	6.2	6.1	6.1	-16	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>6.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Interpret rates data for the 65+ years age group with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.

Note 1: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

Note 2: Totals include serious claims where age is not stated.

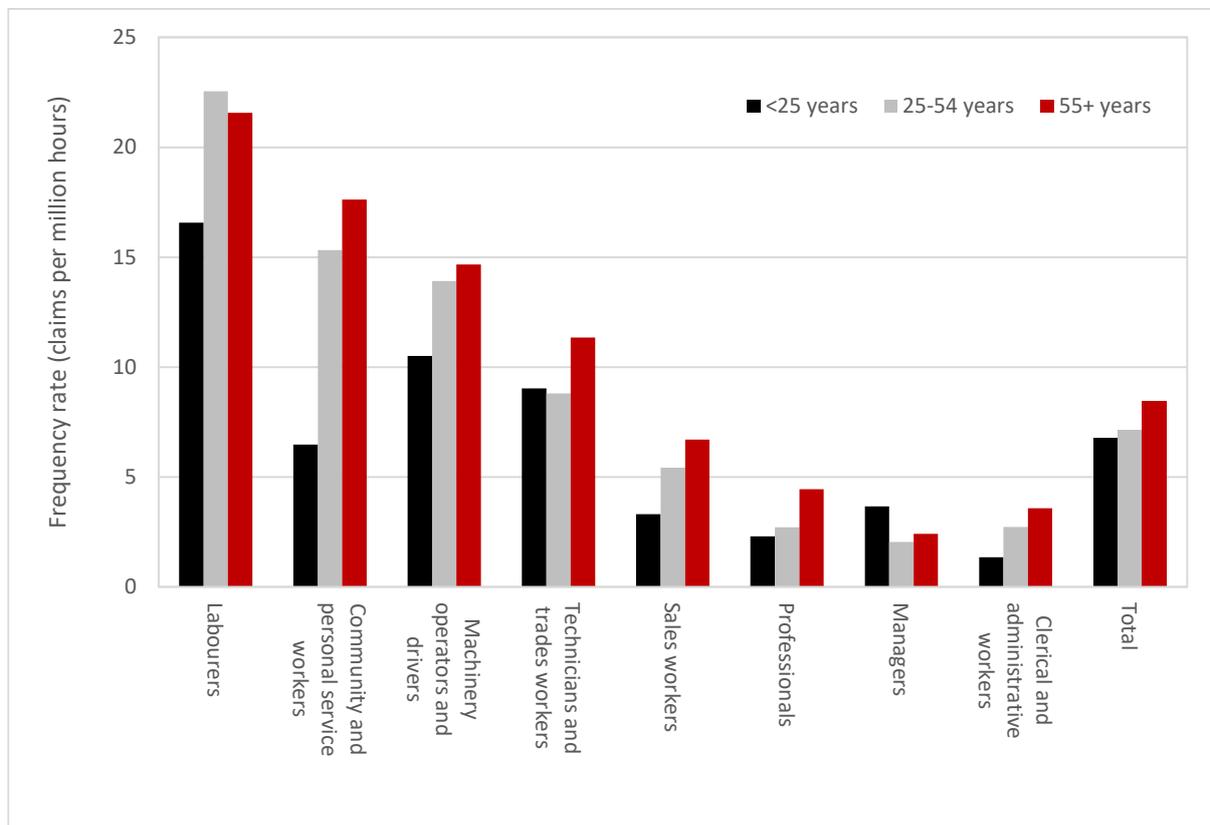
**Table 19: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by age group, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Age group	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
15–19 years	9.7	5.4	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.3	-46	6.0
20–24 years	13.3	8.3	7.7	8.1	7.9	7.8	-41	8.9
25–29 years	14.7	8.0	7.7	7.7	7.8	8.0	-46	8.7
30–34 years	16.7	8.2	7.8	7.5	7.6	7.9	-53	8.2
35–39 years	18.2	9.1	8.7	8.2	8.3	8.3	-55	8.5
40–44 years	18.1	10.7	10.1	9.6	9.6	9.7	-46	9.5
45–49 years	18.1	11.8	11.2	11.4	11.1	11.3	-38	11.1
50–54 years	19.3	12.9	12.4	12.6	12.6	12.6	-34	12.6
55–59 years	18.0	12.9	12.9	12.8	13.1	13.5	-25	13.9
60–64 years	19.2	12.9	12.3	12.5	12.8	13.0	-33	13.3
65+ years <sup>1</sup>	10.0	8.1	7.8	8.3	8.3	8.1	-19	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>-41</b>	<b>9.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Interpret the rates data for the 65+ years age group with caution. See explanatory notes for further information.  
 Note 1: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.  
 Note 2: Totals include serious claims where age is not stated.

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 2019–20p combined**



## 2.4 Industry

**Table 20** shows that from 2000–01 to 2018–19, the number of serious claims fell in 12 of Australia's 19 industry divisions. The largest falls were in Information, media and telecommunications (down 61%), Manufacturing (down 51%), and Financial and insurance services (down 46%).

The number of serious claims also fell for both the Road transport (down 18%) and Agriculture (down 35%) industry sub-divisions over the same period.

The largest rises were for Mining (up 38%), Health care and social assistance (up 31%) and Education and Training (up 25%).

**Table 20: Number of serious claims by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Industry	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Health care and social assistance	15,313	17,306	16,661	17,393	18,109	19,988	31	21,603
Construction	12,296	12,659	13,142	13,299	14,222	14,347	17	15,567
Manufacturing	27,025	13,976	13,232	13,152	13,446	13,372	-51	14,014
Public administration and safety	8,120	8,619	8,185	8,128	8,461	9,185	13	9,620
Transport, postal and warehousing	11,556	9,067	8,511	8,699	8,921	9,030	-22	9,190
<i>Road transport</i>	5,260	4,309	4,163	4,275	4,341	4,334	-18	4,357
Retail trade	11,893	8,955	8,855	8,497	8,555	8,350	-30	8,589
Education and training	6,098	6,971	6,672	6,978	7,264	7,639	25	7,396
Accommodation and food services	7,402	6,287	6,242	6,115	6,078	6,275	-15	6,309
Wholesale trade	5,910	4,667	4,602	4,466	4,836	4,984	-16	5,144
Administrative and support services	6,263	3,857	4,254	4,712	4,993	5,267	-16	5,120
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5,457	3,461	3,634	3,723	3,657	3,631	-33	3,893
<i>Agriculture</i>	4,156	2,651	2,835	2,854	2,805	2,716	-35	2,924
Other services	4,272	3,073	2,897	3,005	3,050	3,010	-30	3,336
Mining	1,903	2,235	2,189	2,173	2,335	2,622	38	2,555
Professional, scientific and technical services	2,109	1,849	1,745	1,805	2,006	2,174	3	2,263
Arts and recreation services	2,318	2,212	2,143	2,197	2,210	2,269	-2	2,193
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1,028	1,048	996	1,006	1,074	1,092	6	1,150
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1,417	1,191	1,139	1,212	1,171	1,195	-16	1,105
Financial and insurance services	1,310	789	695	612	719	711	-46	695
Information media and telecommunications	1,221	606	551	600	490	480	-61	489
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: Totals include serious claims where industry is not stated.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

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 falls in industry frequency rates over the period occurred in:

- Financial and insurance services (down 58%),
- Information media and telecommunications (down 57%),
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (down 56%) and
- Mining (down 54%).

The smallest improvements occurred in Wholesale trade (down 14%), Education and training (down 16%), and Public administration and safety (down 27%).

Frequency rates also fell in the Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries, by 42% and 37% respectively.

**Table 21: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Industry	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	14.3	9.9	9.4	9.6	8.9	9.4	-35	9.6
<i>Agriculture</i>	13.6	9.1	8.6	9.5	8.5	8.5	-37	8.5
Manufacturing	13.9	8.7	8.7	8.2	8.4	8.4	-40	9.1
Transport, postal and warehousing	14.9	8.6	8.0	8.4	8.1	8.3	-44	8.9
<i>Road transport</i>	16.2	10.2	9.7	10.3	9.2	9.4	-42	10.7
Health care and social assistance	12.1	8.5	7.6	7.8	7.6	8.3	-32	8.6
Construction	13.5	8.0	8.3	8.0	7.7	7.7	-43	8.5
Arts and recreation services	13.7	7.8	7.1	8.0	7.1	7.4	-46	8.0
Wholesale trade	8.2	6.5	6.8	6.8	7.2	7.1	-14	7.4
Public administration and safety	8.8	6.9	6.5	6.2	6.7	6.4	-27	6.9
Administrative and support services	11.6	5.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	7.0	-40	6.8
Accommodation and food services	8.9	6.0	6.0	5.6	5.4	5.5	-38	6.3
Other services	7.8	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.3	-45	5.2
Retail trade	8.8	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.8	4.8	-46	5.1
Mining	10.8	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.9	-54	5.1
Education and training	5.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	-16	4.3
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	9.3	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.1	4.0	-56	3.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	4.6	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	-35	3.3
Information media and telecommunications	3.1	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.3	-57	1.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	2.0	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	-40	1.2
Financial and insurance services	2.2	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	-58	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Note 1: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

Note 2: Totals include serious claims where industry is not stated.

The incidence rates have also fallen in all industries from 2000–01 to 2018–19 (**Table 22**). The largest falls occurred in:

- Finance and insurance services (down 60%),
- Information media and telecommunications and Mining (both down 57%)
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (down 56%) and
- Arts and recreation services (down 50%).

**Table 22: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Industry	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	27.8	19.0	18.4	18.9	17.1	17.5	-37	18.6
<i>Agriculture</i>	26.1	17.6	17.1	18.8	16.4	16.0	-39	16.9
Manufacturing	27.3	16.3	16.1	15.5	15.8	15.6	-43	16.7
Construction	27.7	15.9	16.5	16.0	15.4	15.3	-45	16.3
Transport, postal and warehousing	29.3	16.3	15.1	15.6	15.4	15.4	-47	16.2
<i>Road transport</i>	34.6	20.8	19.8	21.0	18.7	18.6	-46	20.6
Wholesale trade	16.2	12.5	12.8	12.8	13.7	13.2	-18	13.5
Health care and social assistance	17.9	12.1	11.0	11.3	10.9	11.9	-34	12.3
Public administration and safety	15.5	11.6	10.8	10.2	11.3	10.8	-30	11.4
Mining	25.2	10.2	9.9	10.0	10.5	10.8	-57	10.9
Administrative and support services	19.2	9.1	9.3	10.0	11.1	11.1	-42	10.5
Arts and recreation services	18.6	9.7	9.7	10.2	9.1	9.4	-50	10.1
Other services	13.7	7.8	7.7	7.4	7.5	7.2	-47	8.4
Accommodation and food services	11.9	7.6	7.4	7.1	6.7	6.9	-42	7.4
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	17.8	8.5	8.1	8.9	8.0	7.8	-56	7.2
Retail trade	12.2	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.5	-46	7.0
Education and training	9.1	7.3	6.8	6.9	6.9	7.2	-21	6.7
Rental, hiring and real estate services	8.8	5.2	4.9	5.0	5.3	5.4	-39	5.6
Information media and telecommunications	5.4	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.3	-57	2.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	3.8	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.2	-44	2.2
Financial and insurance services	4.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.6	-60	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>-41</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note 1: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

Note 2: Totals include serious claims where industry is not stated.

## 2.5 Occupation

**Table 23** shows the number of serious workers' compensation claims fell in 5 of the 8 major occupation groups. The largest percentage falls from 2000–01 to 2018–19 occurred among Clerical and administrative workers (down by 34%), Sales workers (down by 31%) and Labourers (down by 30%).

In contrast, the number of serious claims made by Community and personal service workers increased by 45% over the period. This is largely due to the growth in these occupations rather than higher rates of injury. **Table 24** takes the size of the workforce into account.

**Table 23: Number of serious claims by occupation, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Occupation	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Labourers	38,570	26,525	26,462	26,322	27,220	27,183	-30	28,360
Community and personal service workers	15,019	18,432	17,483	18,232	19,145	21,834	45	23,405
Technicians and trades workers	27,155	20,168	19,679	20,481	20,432	20,705	-24	22,454
Machinery operators and drivers	20,292	16,614	15,774	15,806	15,659	16,327	-20	16,446
Professionals	10,406	10,732	9,737	10,772	10,983	11,603	12	11,699
Managers	5,200	4,788	4,828	5,019	5,149	5,638	8	5,935
Sales workers	7,392	5,762	5,580	5,501	5,256	5,121	-31	5,205
Clerical and administrative workers	7,954	5,423	5,014	4,757	5,139	5,244	-34	5,193
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: Totals include serious claims where occupation is not stated.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

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 both the frequency and incidence rates. For this occupation, the rates fell 45% and 47% respectively.

The smallest fall in frequency and incidence rates was for Community and personal service workers. For this occupation, rates fell 18% and 22% respectively.

**Table 24: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Occupation	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Labourers	26.6	17.9	17.8	16.6	16.8	16.5	-38	18.1
Community and personal service workers	15.0	12.1	10.9	11.1	11.2	12.3	-18	13.9
Machinery operators and drivers	18.1	11.8	11.8	11.4	10.6	10.7	-41	11.4
Technicians and trades workers	12.7	7.2	7.1	7.4	7.0	7.0	-45	7.9
Sales workers	5.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.6	-38	3.8
Professionals	3.4	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	-33	2.2
Managers	3.2	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.0	-37	2.1
Clerical and administrative workers	3.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	-42	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Note: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

**Table 25: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Occupation	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Labourers	39.2	25.7	25.4	23.7	24.2	23.8	-39	24.9
Machinery operators and drivers	35.3	23.2	22.8	22.2	20.8	20.4	-42	21.3
Community and personal service workers	20.3	15.6	13.9	14.3	14.3	15.8	-22	17.3
Technicians and trades workers	24.9	13.9	13.6	14.1	13.4	13.3	-47	14.6
Sales workers	7.7	5.2	4.9	5.0	4.6	4.5	-41	4.8
Managers	7.4	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	4.1	-44	4.2
Professionals	6.4	4.2	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.9	-39	3.8
Clerical and administrative workers	5.3	3.3	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.0	-44	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>-42</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Note: This table presents rates rounded to one decimal place. Calculations for percentage changes use unrounded data.

## 2.6 Nature of injury or disease

**Table 26** shows that the falls in serious claims have been driven by injury and musculoskeletal disorders. They fell 16% from 119,731 claims in 2000–01 to 100,432 claims in 2018–19. Within this group, the largest percentage decrease was for Wounds, lacerations, amputations, and internal organ damage (23% decrease). Intracranial injuries more than doubled over the same period, although they are a relatively small proportion of injuries overall. Small numbers can exaggerate percentage changes.

In comparison, serious claims for diseases increased by 15% over the same period. This was overwhelmingly due to an increase in the number of serious claims for Mental health conditions. These grew by 58% over the same period and represented 68% of all disease claims in 2018–19.

While not included in the trend analysis, there has been a large increase in the number of respiratory system diseases—from 256 serious claims in 2017–18 to 469 in 2018–19. This was due to the establishment of dust disease compensation schemes in a number of jurisdictions over the last few years. Please note that this is an underestimate as not all jurisdictions provide data from these schemes to Safe Work Australia.

**Table 26: Number of serious claims by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Nature of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>								
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	80,702	64,982	61,558	61,551	62,033	64,026	-21	66,890
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	22,762	15,973	16,494	16,399	17,079	17,515	-23	18,729
Fractures	11,287	10,753	10,607	11,582	12,038	12,136	8	12,942
Burns	2,109	1,636	1,600	1,586	1,700	1,714	-19	1,821
Intracranial injuries	414	668	630	810	852	958	131	1,096
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	85	169	151	141	126	165	95	202
<b>Total: Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>119,731</b>	<b>97,414</b>	<b>94,927</b>	<b>95,431</b>	<b>98,459</b>	<b>100,432</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>104,776</b>
<b>Diseases</b>								
Mental health conditions	6,617	6,763	6,915	7,819	8,679	10,429	58	10,776
Digestive system diseases	3,229	2,375	2,296	2,219	2,146	2,220	-31	2,091
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	1,595	1,216	1,124	1,174	1,186	1,226	-23	1,311
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	854	444	480	463	451	429	-50	452
Respiratory system diseases	283	232	216	250	256	469	66	408
Neoplasms (cancer)	61	43	36	64	46	71	16	182
Infectious and parasitic diseases	304	292	227	216	188	211	-31	162
Circulatory system diseases	191	97	112	118	110	138	-28	122
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>13,310</b>	<b>11,552</b>	<b>11,498</b>	<b>12,405</b>	<b>13,173</b>	<b>15,275</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15,580</b>
<b>Total: serious claims</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: 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.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Note 3: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of Section 1 for more information.

## 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. Upper limbs accounted for over one third (35%) of all serious claims in 2019–20p. Within this group, serious claims for the Shoulder have risen by 20% (from 10,651 claims in 2000–01 to 12,756 claims in 2018–19).

The Trunk accounted for nearly one quarter (22%) of all serious claims in 2019–20p. This group of claims fell 39%, from 42,588 claims in 2000–01 to 25,774 claims in 2018–19. The largest contributor to this fall was Back — upper or lower claims. This fell from 35,259 claims in 2000–01 to 20,636 claims in 2018–19.

However, serious claims for Non-physical locations increased by 58%. 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 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Bodily location of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
<b>Upper limbs</b>	<b>43,044</b>	<b>38,078</b>	<b>37,121</b>	<b>38,097</b>	<b>39,039</b>	<b>40,828</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>42,637</b>
Hand, fingers and thumb	17,626	14,192	14,059	14,507	14,770	14,992	-15	15,955
Shoulder	10,651	11,834	11,351	11,656	11,790	12,756	20	12,957
Wrist	6,117	5,115	4,912	5,048	5,311	5,656	-8	5,767
Elbow	3,111	2,748	2,529	2,697	2,756	2,918	-6	2,925
Forearm	2,165	1,607	1,608	1,521	1,639	1,720	-21	1,971
<b>Lower limbs</b>	<b>26,344</b>	<b>25,007</b>	<b>24,289</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>25,917</b>	<b>26,719</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27,742</b>
Knee	10,459	10,870	10,238	10,394	10,622	11,021	5	11,461
Ankle	5,915	5,510	5,393	5,738	5,997	6,129	4	6,289
Foot and toes	4,546	3,784	3,738	3,881	4,025	4,146	-9	4,282
Lower leg	2,245	2,236	2,213	2,332	2,406	2,543	13	2,847
Upper leg	1,014	830	933	919	981	1,101	9	1,140
Hip	779	856	859	889	935	1,004	29	1,017
<b>Trunk</b>	<b>42,588</b>	<b>27,422</b>	<b>25,936</b>	<b>25,200</b>	<b>25,450</b>	<b>25,774</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>26,942</b>
Back - upper or lower	35,259	22,367	21,046	20,207	20,499	20,636	-41	21,842
Abdomen and pelvic	4,747	3,150	3,023	2,985	2,879	2,955	-38	2,925
Chest (thorax)	2,350	1,692	1,656	1,835	1,879	2,020	-14	2,058
<b>Non-physical locations</b>	<b>6,608</b>	<b>6,764</b>	<b>6,911</b>	<b>7,820</b>	<b>8,677</b>	<b>10,419</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>10,766</b>
<b>Head</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>3,433</b>	<b>3,379</b>	<b>3,468</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>3,944</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4,539</b>
Cranium	830	940	917	1,118	1,129	1,273	53	1,440
Eye	1,154	861	844	782	892	838	-27	1,068
Face, not elsewhere	639	580	616	564	582	609	-5	656
Nose	232	222	217	223	199	234	1	231
Mouth	136	139	163	171	158	201	48	227
Ear	169	118	108	111	164	130	-23	158
<b>Multiple locations</b>	<b>6,181</b>	<b>5,017</b>	<b>4,620</b>	<b>4,744</b>	<b>4,592</b>	<b>4,565</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>3,976</b>
<b>Neck</b>	<b>3,699</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>2,081</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>2,216</b>	<b>2,392</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>2,553</b>
<b>Systemic locations</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>654</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: The table above doesn't include all bodily locations. As a result, numbers of serious claims do not add to the stated totals.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Note 3: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of Section 1 for more information.

## 2.8 Mechanism of injury or disease

The mechanism of incident identifies the 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 37% of all serious claims in 2019–20p. However, claims for Body stressing injuries declined by 27% between 2000–01 and 2018–19. This was the main driver of the total reduction in all serious claims over the same period.

Serious claims for Being assaulted by a person or persons more than doubled since 2000–01 (up by 128%). This is the largest percentage increase in any mechanism of injury or disease.

**Table 28: Number of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Mechanism of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>58,175</b>	<b>44,270</b>	<b>41,730</b>	<b>41,021</b>	<b>40,842</b>	<b>42,319</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>44,420</b>
Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying	18,833	18,047	17,381	16,468	17,594	18,634	-1	19,624
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	28,610	16,969	15,920	15,999	15,097	15,064	-47	15,376
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	6,326	5,607	5,251	5,604	5,335	5,418	-14	5,856
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>26,144</b>	<b>24,731</b>	<b>23,996</b>	<b>25,151</b>	<b>25,657</b>	<b>26,100</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>27,819</b>
Falls on the same level	15,557	15,732	15,212	15,967	16,784	17,256	11	18,805
Falls from a height	8,842	6,839	6,571	6,876	6,749	6,764	-24	6,836
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>18,173</b>	<b>16,272</b>	<b>15,940</b>	<b>16,557</b>	<b>17,550</b>	<b>18,142</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>19,417</b>
Being hit by moving and flying objects	5,911	5,531	5,505	5,289	6,036	5,984	1	6,461
Being hit by falling objects	4,203	3,536	3,462	3,616	3,664	3,608	-14	3,878
Being assaulted by a person or persons	1,104	2,250	2,072	2,362	2,343	2,519	128	2,895
Being trapped between stationary and moving objects	2,479	2,252	2,067	2,150	2,344	2,585	4	2,394
Being hit by a person accidentally	1,321	784	848	948	1,092	1,254	-5	1,301
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>6,293</b>	<b>6,363</b>	<b>6,476</b>	<b>7,269</b>	<b>8,240</b>	<b>9,894</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>10,084</b>
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>10,577</b>	<b>7,652</b>	<b>7,638</b>	<b>8,038</b>	<b>7,642</b>	<b>7,676</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>8,713</b>
Hitting moving objects	5,313	3,876	4,078	4,299	4,056	3,887	-27	4,568
Hitting stationary objects	5,112	3,733	3,518	3,692	3,532	3,737	-27	4,090
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>9,432</b>	<b>6,770</b>	<b>7,807</b>	<b>7,072</b>	<b>8,854</b>	<b>8,441</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>6,506</b>
Vehicle accident	2,728	2,354	2,540	2,645	2,648	2,692	-1	2,640
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>1,538</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>1,679</b>
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>1,094</b>
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>474</b>
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note 1: The table above only features the most common types of mechanism subcategories. As a result, numbers of serious claims in each subcategory do not add to the stated totals.

Note 2: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of Section 1 for more information.

## 2.9 Breakdown agency of injury or disease

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

**Table 29** shows that serious claims due to the use of Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment fell 25% between 2000–01 and 2018–19. Despite this fall, they consistently had the highest number of serious claims over the period.

From 2000–01 to 2018–19, the largest declines in the number of serious claims were in 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). It fell 0.2%.

Only Animal, human and biological agencies (up by 27%) and Materials and substances (up by 5%) both rose over the period.

**Table 29: Number of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20p**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg	2019–20p
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	35,669	26,426	25,754	25,591	25,442	26,789	-25	28,303
Environmental agencies	18,054	17,330	17,102	18,081	17,442	18,015	-0.2	19,195
Animal, human and biological agencies	13,958	15,158	14,538	15,338	16,152	17,702	27	19,092
Materials and substances	14,830	15,860	15,096	14,975	16,128	15,588	5	16,916
Other and unspecified agencies	22,022	13,048	13,385	13,016	14,808	15,741	-29	13,449
Mobile plant and transport	11,447	10,406	10,152	10,349	10,834	11,054	-3	11,506
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	9,297	5,135	5,040	5,176	5,271	5,178	-44	5,656
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	6,374	4,870	4,616	4,607	4,738	4,820	-24	5,320
Chemicals and chemical products	1,391	732	743	702	817	820	-41	918
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,041</b>	<b>108,965</b>	<b>106,425</b>	<b>107,836</b>	<b>111,632</b>	<b>115,707</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>120,355</b>

Note: This table shows rounded numbers, so may not sum to the total. Calculations are based on unrounded data. Please see the beginning of Section 1 for more information.

### Section 3:

# Time lost and compensation

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

Time lost refers to working weeks lost from work and excludes estimates of future absences. It reflects the total period included in compensation paid and does not have to occur consecutively.

This chapter provides median measures. This is because there are some long-term claims that involve lengthy periods of time lost or high amounts of compensation. These unusual records skew an arithmetic mean so can be misleading. It is not possible to calculate the total time lost or the total compensation paid by multiplying the median by the number of claims.

Time lost and compensation paid exclude preliminary data (2019–20). Claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open and claimants may accrue more time lost or more compensation payments in future years. Percentage changes for median compensation payments use unrounded data for 2000–01 and 2018–19.

This chapter only includes claims with a compensation payment. Compensation payments may be zero when payments are for other expenses. This includes investigation expenses, legal costs, and overpayment recovery. However, as data changes as a case progresses, zero-dollar claims may also reflect missing data. As it is not possible to differentiate between legitimate cases and missing data, this report excludes all records where compensation payment claims are zero. This is a change in reporting compared to the last two editions of this report.

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

Between 2000–01 and 2018–19, the median time lost for a serious claim rose by 67% from 4.2 to 7.0 working weeks. Over the same period, the median compensation paid for a serious claim rose by 180% from \$5,200 to \$14,500 (**Table 30**). These increases in time lost and compensation paid contrast to the long-term trend (shown in Section 2) of a reduction in serious workers' compensation claim numbers and rates. 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 ABS Wage Price Index<sup>1</sup> (WPI) adjusts the median compensation amounts in original terms to remove the effects of wage inflation. This allows a more meaningful comparison with the median time lost since 2000–01. The median WPI adjusted compensation paid rose by 58% between 2000–01 and 2018–19.

In all adjustments, the 2000–01 financial year is the base period for comparison. The WPI is not available for all the categories in this chapter. As a result, WPI adjusted median compensation paid figures are available at the 'overall' and 'industry' levels. Only non-adjusted figures are available for all other categories (occupation, nature of injury, mechanism, breakdown agency).

**Figure 5** illustrates the difference between nominal and WPI adjusted median compensation.

**Table 30: Serious claims: median time lost (weeks) and compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2018–19**

Financial year	Serious claims lodged	Median time lost (working weeks)	Median compensation paid (\$)	Median compensation (WPI adjusted) (\$)
2000–01	133,041	4.2	5,200	5,200
2001–02	130,112	4.3	5,400	5,300
2002–03	132,384	4.4	5,500	5,100
2003–04	133,263	4.0	5,100	4,600
2004–05	134,726	4.0	5,700	5,000
2005–06	130,358	4.3	5,700	4,800
2006–07	129,412	4.4	6,200	5,000
2007–08	129,488	4.6	6,800	5,200
2008–09	126,116	5.0	8,000	5,900
2009–10	124,365	5.0	8,600	6,200
2010–11	127,701	5.4	9,100	6,300
2011–12	127,417	5.6	9,100	6,100
2012–13	117,045	5.2	10,000	6,400
2013–14	111,465	5.4	10,700	6,700
2014–15	108,965	5.8	11,600	7,100
2015–16	106,425	5.9	12,500	7,500
2016–17	107,836	6.2	13,600	8,000
2017–18	111,632	6.6	14,100	8,200
2018–19	115,707	7.0	14,500	8,200

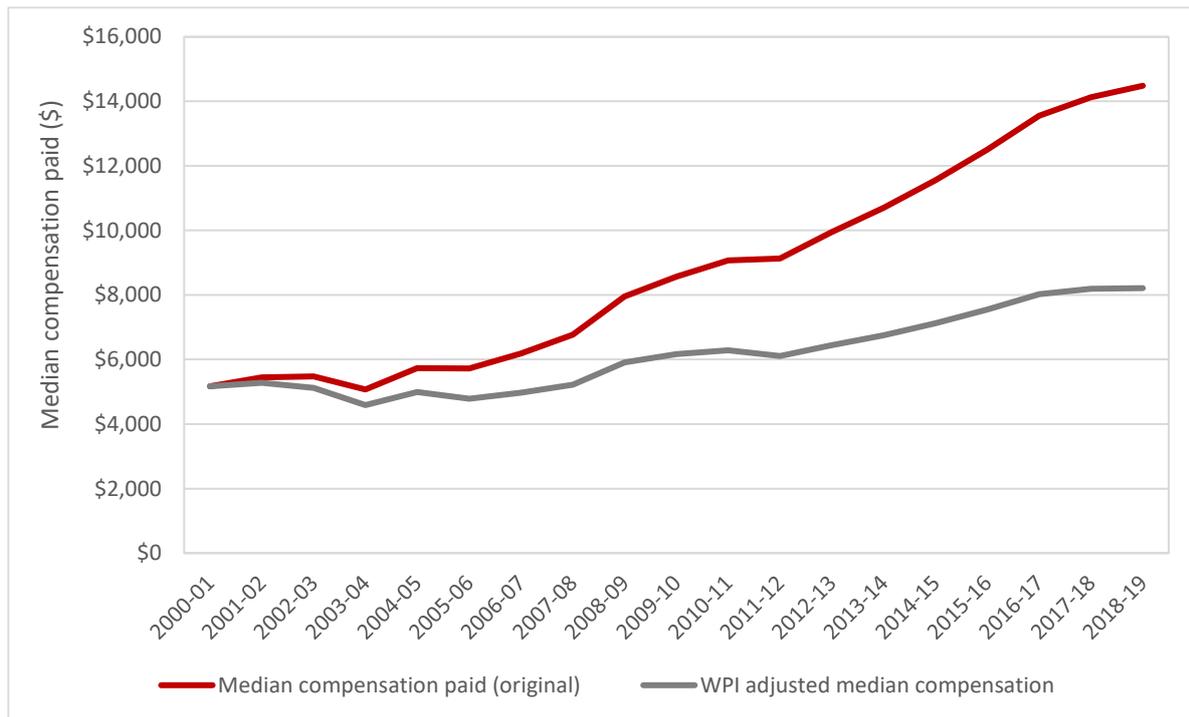
Note 1: Median compensation payments and median compensation (WPI adjusted) are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest five. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2014–15 are revised data.

Note 3: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

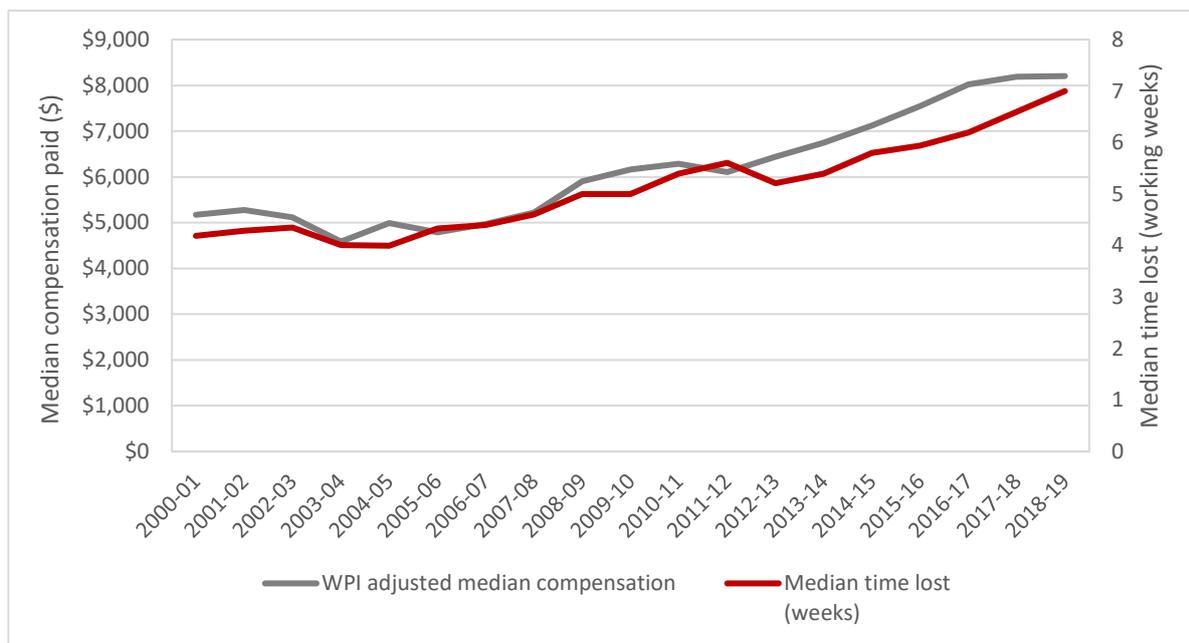
<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Wage Price Index, Australia*.

**Figure 5: Median compensation paid (original) and WPI adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2018–19**



**Figure 6** shows a comparison between median time lost and the WPI adjusted median compensation paid between 2000–01 and 2018–19. It shows that median compensation paid has broadly 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.

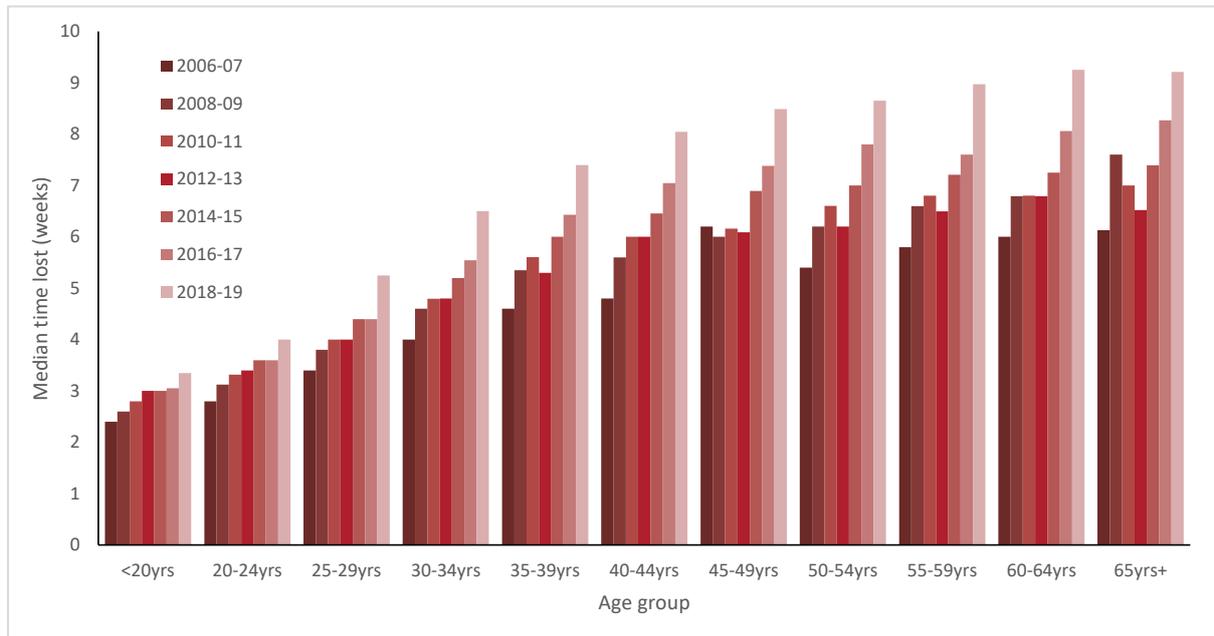
**Figure 6: Median time lost and inflation adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2018–19**



## 3.2 Age group

**Figure 7** shows that median time lost tends to increase with age. All age groups have recorded an increase in median time lost between 2006–07 and 2018–19. There were rises in all age groups in 2018–19.

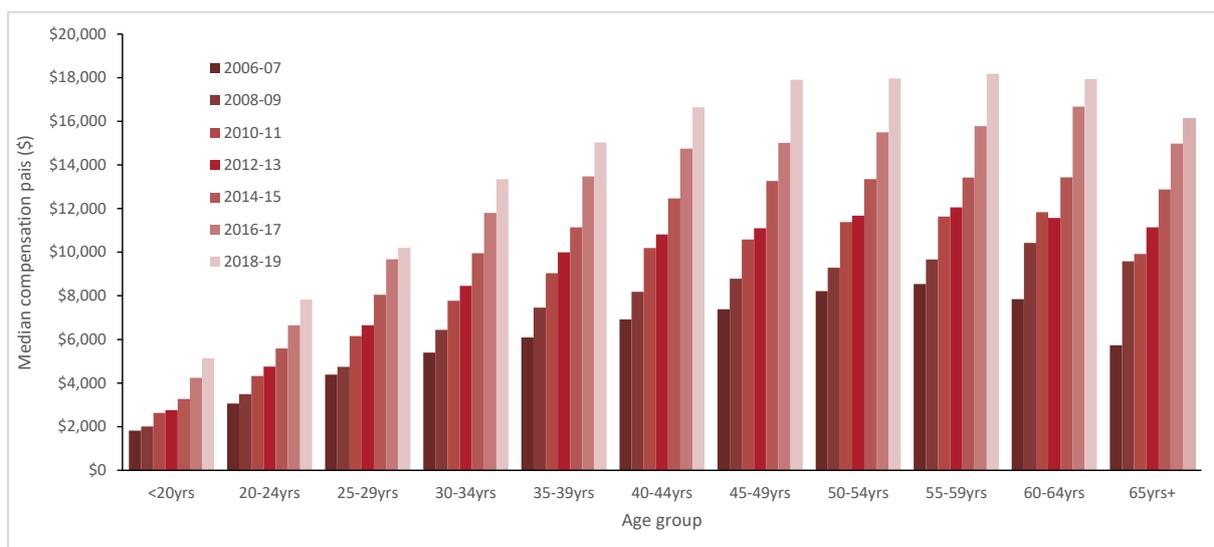
**Figure 7: Serious claims: median time lost by age group, 2006–07 to 2018–19**



Note: This figure only shows every second year's data since 2006–07, thus covering a greater span of time.

Similar to median time lost, **Figure 8** shows that median compensation paid generally tends to increase with age. However, the differences between age groups are less pronounced among workers aged over 50. 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 2006–07 and 2018–19.

**Figure 8: Serious claims: median compensation paid by age group, 2006–07 to 2018–19**



Note: This figure only shows every second year's data since 2006–07, thus covering a greater span of time.

### 3.3 Gender

In 2018–19, the median time lost for a serious claim was 6.9 working weeks for male employees and 7.6 working weeks for female employees. The median compensation paid for a serious claim was \$15,400 for male employees and \$12,900 for female employees.

**Table 31** shows that the median compensation amount paid to males has increased by 208% from \$5,000 in 2000–01 to \$15,400 in 2018–19. The median compensation amount paid to females increased by 131% from \$5,600 in 2000–01 to \$12,900 in 2018–19. From 2007–08 onward, median payments for female employees were lower than the median payments for male employees.

**Table 31: Serious claims: median time lost and compensation paid by gender, 2000–01 to 2018–19**

Financial year	Median time lost (working weeks)		Median compensation paid (\$)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000–01	4.0	4.7	5,000	5,600
2001–02	4.0	5.0	5,200	6,000
2002–03	4.1	5.0	5,300	6,000
2003–04	4.0	4.7	4,900	5,400
2004–05	4.0	4.5	5,600	5,900
2005–06	4.0	5.0	5,600	5,900
2006–07	4.2	5.0	6,200	6,200
2007–08	4.4	5.3	6,800	6,700
2008–09	4.8	5.6	8,200	7,500
2009–10	4.8	5.6	8,700	8,300
2010–11	5.0	6.0	9,200	8,800
2011–12	5.4	6.2	9,400	8,600
2012–13	5.0	5.8	10,500	9,100
2013–14	5.2	5.9	11,400	9,400
2014–15	5.6	6.2	12,400	10,000
2015–16	5.8	6.2	13,400	11,000
2016–17	6.0	6.6	14,400	12,000
2017–18	6.4	7.0	15,000	12,600
2018–19	6.9	7.6	15,400	12,900

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

## 3.4 Industry

**Table 32** shows that median time lost increased for all 19 industries in 2018–19 compared to 2000–01. The greatest rise was in the Electricity, gas, water and waste services industry. This rose by 133%, from 3.4 working weeks in 2000–01 to 7.9 working weeks in 2018–19. The smallest rise was in the Accommodation and food services industry. It increased by 29%, from 3.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 4.8 working weeks in 2018–19.

The Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries also recorded increases over the period. They rose 81% and 23% respectively.

**Table 32: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Industry	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg
Financial and insurance services	4.8	7.0	6.8	10.4	9.0	10.1	110
Mining	5.1	8.4	8.2	9.0	9.2	9.2	79
Transport, postal and warehousing	4.0	7.0	7.3	7.4	8.0	8.2	103
<i>Road transport</i>	5.2	8.0	8.6	8.5	9.5	9.4	81
Public administration and safety	4.0	6.5	6.2	6.8	7.0	8.1	103
Construction	5.0	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.5	8.1	62
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	3.4	6.0	7.2	8.0	7.9	7.9	133
Rental, hiring and real estate services	4.4	5.6	6.5	6.9	6.7	7.6	73
Retail trade	3.4	5.0	5.2	5.6	6.0	7.5	120
Other services	4.6	6.0	6.0	6.2	7.0	7.4	61
Information media and telecommunications	4.0	5.2	6.0	4.4	7.2	7.1	78
Administrative and support services	4.4	5.9	6.1	6.2	7.0	7.0	59
Professional, scientific and technical services	4.6	6.0	5.8	6.8	6.8	7.0	52
Wholesale trade	4.1	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.7	7.0	70
Arts and recreation services	4.6	5.8	5.7	6.6	6.6	6.9	50
Health care and social assistance	4.4	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.6	6.8	55
Manufacturing	4.0	5.3	5.2	5.6	6.0	6.4	59
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4.8	6.0	5.8	6.4	6.6	6.2	29
<i>Agriculture</i>	5.0	6.0	5.8	6.4	6.4	6.2	23
Education and training	4.0	4.8	4.6	5.0	5.4	6.0	50
Accommodation and food services	3.8	4.2	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.8	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>67</b>

Note 1: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

Note 2: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

**Table 33** shows that median payments also increased in all 19 industries between 2000–01 and 2018–19. Increases in payments reflect a range of factors such as increases in wages and the costs of medical treatment.

The smallest rises were in Accommodation and food services (up by 125%) and Health care and social assistance (up by 131%).

The largest percentage increases in median payments were in:

- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (up by 308%),
- Transport, postal and warehousing (up by 255%),
- Public administration and safety (up 222%) and
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (up 216%).

Both the Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries recorded an increase in median compensation that was higher than the increase for all industries. They rose 249% and 209% respectively.

**Table 33: Serious claims: median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Industry	2000–01 (\$)	2014–15 (\$)	2015–16 (\$)	2016–17 (\$)	2017–18 (\$)	2018–19 (\$)	% chg
Mining	11,900	28,500	30,500	31,100	30,300	31,000	161
Financial and insurance services	7,400	17,800	19,600	26,200	20,600	23,300	214
Public administration and safety	6,400	13,900	15,100	17,700	18,200	20,500	222
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	5,000	14,200	17,400	19,000	18,200	20,300	308
Transport, postal and warehousing	5,100	14,600	16,400	16,800	18,000	18,200	255
Road transport	5,600	15,300	17,400	17,500	19,600	19,500	249
Professional, scientific and technical services	6,600	14,500	16,200	18,100	18,700	18,100	174
Construction	6,200	15,400	16,200	16,300	17,000	17,600	184
Information media and telecommunications	6,200	13,600	17,600	14,500	19,400	16,600	168
Rental, hiring and real estate services	5,600	12,600	12,900	16,000	14,600	16,100	186
Other services	5,300	11,600	14,000	14,100	15,000	15,800	200
Wholesale trade	5,500	12,300	13,500	14,000	15,300	14,900	170
Education and training	5,900	11,200	11,400	12,700	14,000	14,800	152
Manufacturing	5,400	12,400	13,300	14,200	14,400	14,300	164
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4,000	10,200	11,300	12,300	13,300	12,700	216
Agriculture	4,000	9,800	11,200	12,000	12,900	12,400	209
Retail trade	4,100	10,100	10,900	12,000	12,000	12,400	204
Arts and recreation services	4,600	9,300	10,900	12,100	10,800	12,000	162
Health care and social assistance	4,800	8,500	9,200	10,100	10,900	11,100	131
Administrative and support services	4,100	9,000	10,400	10,600	11,100	11,100	168
Accommodation and food services	3,400	5,600	6,300	7,100	7,500	7,600	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>180</b>

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

Note 4: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

**Table 34** shows the WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry over time. The smallest percentage increases were in Health care and social assistance (up by 26%) and Education and training (up by 34%).

The largest percentage increases were in Electricity, gas, water and waste services (up by 111%) and Transport, postal and warehousing (up by 105%).

The Mining industry had the highest level of WPI adjusted median compensation paid each year. It paid \$16,500 in 2018–19. Workers in Mining have relatively high earnings. Average weekly earnings of people working in Mining is consistently the highest of any industry<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 34: Serious claims: WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Industry	2000–01 (\$)	2014–15 (\$)	2015–16 (\$)	2016–17 (\$)	2017–18 (\$)	2018–19 (\$)	% chg
Mining	11,900	16,100	17,000	17,100	16,500	16,500	39
Financial and insurance services	7,400	10,800	11,600	15,200	11,700	12,900	74
Public administration and safety	6,400	8,400	8,900	10,200	10,200	11,200	77
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	5,000	8,100	9,700	10,300	9,700	10,500	111
Transport, postal and warehousing	5,100	9,200	10,100	10,100	10,600	10,500	105
Professional, scientific and technical services	6,600	8,800	9,700	10,700	10,900	10,300	55
Information media and telecommunications	6,200	8,700	11,100	9,000	11,800	9,900	59
Construction	6,200	9,100	9,300	9,300	9,500	9,600	56
Rental, hiring and real estate services	5,600	7,900	7,900	9,700	8,700	9,400	68
Other services	5,300	7,500	8,800	8,700	9,100	9,300	77
Wholesale trade	5,500	7,800	8,300	8,500	9,100	8,700	58
Manufacturing	5,400	7,700	8,000	8,400	8,400	8,100	50
Education and training	5,900	6,600	6,500	7,100	7,600	7,900	34
Retail trade	4,100	6,600	7,000	7,600	7,400	7,500	84
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4,000	6,300	6,800	7,300	7,700	7,200	79
Arts and recreation services	4,600	5,900	6,700	7,300	6,300	6,900	50
Administrative and support services	4,100	5,800	6,500	6,600	6,800	6,600	61
Health care and social assistance	4,800	5,100	5,400	5,800	6,100	6,100	26
Accommodation and food services	3,400	3,800	4,200	4,600	4,700	4,700	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>59</b>

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

Note 4: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*, Original Series: Persons – Total Earnings

### 3.5 Occupation

**Table 35** shows that median time lost for serious workers' compensation claims rose in all 8 major occupation groups between 2000–01 and 2018–19.

Sales workers had the largest increase in median time lost from work (up by 167%) from 2000–01 to 2018–19. They also had the longest median time lost (9.1 working weeks) in 2018–19.

Professionals had the smallest increase in median time lost from work (up by 50%). Technicians and trades workers had the shortest median time lost (6.3 working weeks) in 2018–19.

**Table 35: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Occupation	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg
Sales workers	3.4	6.2	6.3	6.8	7.2	9.1	167
Clerical and administrative workers	4.8	6.9	6.9	7.4	7.8	8.4	75
Managers	5.0	6.6	7.0	7.6	8.0	8.1	62
Machinery operators and drivers	4.4	6.6	6.7	7.0	7.6	8.0	82
Community and personal service workers	4.0	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.3	7.0	75
Labourers	4.2	5.6	5.6	6.0	6.4	7.0	67
Professionals	4.6	5.6	5.5	6.0	6.3	6.9	50
Technicians and trades workers	4.0	5.2	5.4	5.7	6.1	6.3	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>67</b>

Note 1: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

Note 2: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

**Table 36** shows that median compensation payments have increased in all major occupation groups from 2000–01 to 2018–19. Over this period, Machinery operators, Sales workers and Labourers had the largest percentage increases. Professionals had the smallest rise. However, growth slowed in 2018–19. Most industries recorded only modest increases between 2017–18 and 2018–19.

Managers had the highest level of median compensation paid of all occupations in every year shown in the table (\$20,700 in 2018–19).

**Table 36: Serious claims: median compensation paid by occupation, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Occupation	2000–01 (\$)	2014–15 (\$)	2015–16 (\$)	2016–17 (\$)	2017–18 (\$)	2018–19 (\$)	% chg
Managers	7,400	16,500	17,500	19,900	20,600	20,700	177
Clerical and administrative workers	7,100	15,500	16,200	18,100	18,600	18,700	162
Machinery operators and drivers	5,800	14,500	15,800	16,300	17,200	17,900	206
Professionals	6,800	12,700	13,500	14,900	15,700	16,400	141
Technicians and trades workers	5,000	11,900	12,900	13,600	14,000	14,200	182
Labourers	4,400	10,300	11,400	12,300	12,800	13,100	197
Community and personal service workers	4,600	8,500	9,500	10,500	11,500	12,300	168
Sales workers	4,100	10,700	11,100	12,100	12,200	12,300	201
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>180</b>

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred. It differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 2: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

Note 3: The Totals include serious claims where information on these categories was unknown.

## 3.6 Nature of injury and disease

**Table 37** shows that the median time lost for injury and musculoskeletal disorder claims was 6.4 working weeks in 2018–19. This is a 61% rise from 4.0 working weeks in 2000–01. Median time lost for claims involving diseases increased by 131% from 6.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 15.7 working weeks in 2018–19.

Among injury claims, Injuries to nerves and spinal cord involved the longest median time lost from work in 2000–01 (26.2 weeks). This fell by 68% to 8.4 working weeks in 2018–19. This occurred despite a rise in serious claims for these injuries, from 85 to 165. The median time lost increased for all other injury types over the period.

Among disease claims, Circulatory system diseases were the only diseases with a fall in median time lost (down by 22%).

Respiratory system diseases had the largest rise in median time lost. They rose 411% from 4.6 working weeks in 2000–01 to 23.4 in 2018–19. Mental health conditions rose 138% from 11.2 working weeks in 2000–01 to 26.6 weeks in 2018–19.

The increase in the median time lost for respiratory diseases reflects the large increase in the number of claims for this disease following the establishment of dust disease compensation schemes in some jurisdictions in recent years.

**Table 37: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Nature of injury/disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>							
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	8.4	9.6	10.0	9.8	11.0	11.6	37
Fractures	6.8	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.8	9.2	35
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	26.2	15.3	11.4	12.1	23.0	8.4	-68
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	4.1	5.2	5.4	5.6	6.0	6.4	57
Other injuries <sup>1</sup>	2.4	4.0	4.0	4.4	5.1	5.1	111
Intracranial injuries	2.6	3.8	4.6	3.5	4.0	4.6	77
Other claims <sup>2</sup>	3.8	3.7	4.8	6.8	4.4	4.3	12
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	2.4	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2	34
Burns	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	12
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Diseases</b>							
Circulatory system diseases	15.0	6.2	8.4	9.6	15.2	11.7	-22
Digestive system diseases	5.8	5.8	5.6	6.0	6.1	6.4	10
Infectious and parasitic diseases	2.0	2.3	2.8	3.2	2.5	2.2	10
Mental health conditions	11.2	17.4	18.8	20.8	23.9	26.6	138
Neoplasms (cancer)	3.9	4.7	6.9	4.3	8.6	6.2	61
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	8.1	9.0	9.5	9.9	10.2	10.8	33
Other diseases <sup>1</sup>	5.7	3.8	5.1	11.0	11.0	5.8	1
Respiratory system diseases	4.6	5.8	5.0	6.8	4.6	23.4	411
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	2.3	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.7	3.2	42
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>131</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> 'Other claims' refers to injury types that recorded small numbers and are combined in a single category for this table.

Note: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

**Table 38** shows that the highest median compensation paid was for Injury to nerves and spinal cord in 2000–01. Median compensation has decreased by 63% since 2000–01 but remains the costliest injury type (at \$22,200).

Costs for all other injury and disease types increased from 2000–01 to 2018–19. The largest increases were for:

- Respiratory system diseases (up 473%)
- Mental health conditions (up 222%)
- Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage (up 221%), and
- Intracranial injuries (up 194%).

**Table 38: Serious claims: median compensation paid by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Nature of injury/disease	2000–01 (\$)	2014–15 (\$)	2015–16 (\$)	2016–17 (\$)	2017–18 (\$)	2018–19 (\$)	% chg
<b>Injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>							
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	60,100	37,300	24,500	24,000	55,900	22,200	-63
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	11,200	16,300	17,800	18,300	19,500	19,200	71
Fractures	6,400	14,500	15,800	16,500	16,900	17,700	177
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	5,300	10,600	11,600	12,500	12,700	12,900	142
Other injuries <sup>1</sup>	3,000	8,400	9,300	9,400	12,200	10,700	264
Intracranial injuries	3,100	7,700	9,300	9,700	10,300	9,000	194
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	2,700	6,900	7,500	8,500	8,700	8,600	221
Other claims <sup>2</sup>	4,700	5,800	8,700	11,200	11,800	8,300	75
Burns	1,400	2,700	3,300	3,300	3,400	3,300	142
<b>Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>10,700</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>12,900</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Diseases</b>							
Mental health conditions	14,300	30,100	33,200	36,500	41,200	45,900	222
Respiratory system diseases	7,100	12,700	12,200	15,100	13,400	40,700	473
Circulatory system diseases	15,300	12,300	21,200	14,800	35,400	25,700	68
Neoplasms (cancer)	8,700	20,100	22,300	15,000	30,300	23,800	175
Nervous system and sense organ diseases	8,700	16,900	19,100	20,400	20,100	21,700	150
Digestive system diseases	6,800	13,100	13,900	14,800	14,800	15,200	122
Other diseases <sup>1</sup>	6,000	8,000	10,600	22,500	19,200	9,400	55
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	2,300	4,800	7,000	6,000	6,100	6,400	174
Infectious and parasitic diseases	1,500	4,400	6,200	7,200	5,500	3,900	151
<b>Total: diseases</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>18,100</b>	<b>20,200</b>	<b>22,600</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>29,300</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Total: serious claims</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>180</b>

<sup>1</sup> 'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> 'Other claims' refers to injury types that recorded small numbers and are combined in a single category for this table.

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

### 3.7 Mechanism of injury or disease

**Table 39** shows that between 2000–01 and 2018–19, median time lost increased for all mechanism categories. The largest rise was for Mental stress. This increased by almost 16 working weeks, from 11.4 working weeks in 2000–01 to 27.0 working weeks in 2018–19.

Mental stress claims involved the longest median time lost for all years in the series. By 2018–19 median time lost for these claims had risen to more than three times the median time lost for all claims (27.0 working weeks, compared to 7.0 for all claims).

**Table 39: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Mechanism of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>70</b>
Falls from a height	5.6	7.6	7.8	8.4	8.7	9.4	68
Falls on the same level	4.2	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.8	7.1	70
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>67</b>
Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying	4.6	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.6	8.0	75
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	4.3	6.0	6.0	6.3	7.0	7.3	70
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	4.0	5.3	5.5	5.6	6.0	5.9	49
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>37</b>
Vehicle accident	6.0	7.2	7.6	8.0	8.3	7.7	28
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>54</b>
Being assaulted by a person or persons	4.2	4.8	5.4	6.2	6.0	6.4	52
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	4.4	5.2	4.6	5.0	5.4	6.0	37
Being hit by an animal	4.6	5.0	5.0	6.2	6.6	5.6	20
Being hit by falling objects	3.2	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.8	5.0	57
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>33</b>
Hitting stationary objects	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	40
Hitting moving objects	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	25
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>67</b>

Note 1: The table only includes median time lost for the most common mechanism subcategories.

Note 2: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

**Table 40** shows that Mental stress claims also had the highest median compensation paid for all years in the series. In 2018–19, the median cost of a mental stress claim was \$46,400. This was more than three times the median compensation amount for all serious claims (\$14,500).

The largest rise in median compensation payments from 2000–01 to 2018–19 was for Hitting moving objects. This increased by 278% from \$2,300 in 2000–01 to \$8,500 in 2018–19.

**Table 40: Serious claims: median compensation paid by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

<b>Mechanism of injury or disease</b>	<b>2000–01 (\$)</b>	<b>2014–15 (\$)</b>	<b>2015–16 (\$)</b>	<b>2016–17 (\$)</b>	<b>2017–18 (\$)</b>	<b>2018–19 (\$)</b>	<b>% chg</b>
<b>Mental stress</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>31,100</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>37,400</b>	<b>41,700</b>	<b>46,400</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Vehicle incidents and other</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>12,200</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>14,800</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>15,600</b>	<b>172</b>
Vehicle accident	7,200	13,900	15,400	15,500	18,500	16,100	122
<b>Body stressing</b>	<b>5,900</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>14,900</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>155</b>
Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying	5,600	12,400	13,300	14,500	15,200	15,300	171
Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects	5,400	11,800	12,800	13,500	13,900	14,000	157
Muscular stress with no objects being handled	6,000	11,300	12,700	12,800	13,200	12,900	117
<b>Falls, trips and slips of a person</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>14,200</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,900</b>	<b>172</b>
Falls from a height	6,800	14,900	16,900	17,900	18,600	18,800	178
Falls on the same level	4,900	11,700	12,700	13,000	13,400	13,900	185
<b>Sound and pressure</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>12,700</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>26,700</b>	<b>11,400</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Being hit by moving objects</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,700</b>	<b>10,800</b>	<b>10,700</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>177</b>
Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment	6,300	14,000	13,900	1,4800	14,300	14,800	137
Being assaulted by a person or persons	6,000	9200	10,900	12,800	12,200	12,400	107
Being hit by an animal	3,900	8100	9,400	11,200	11,900	11,200	185
Being hit by moving objects	3,300	8700	9,400	10,200	10,200	11,100	241
<b>Hitting objects with a part of the body</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>8,400</b>	<b>8,600</b>	<b>8,400</b>	<b>224</b>
Hitting moving objects	2,300	5,900	7,300	8,300	8,800	8,500	278
Hitting stationary objects	3,000	7,000	7,600	8,700	8,300	8,200	177
<b>Chemicals and other substances</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Biological factors</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Heat, electricity and other environmental factors</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,600</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>180</b>

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: This table only includes median time lost for the most common mechanism subcategories.

Note 4: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

### 3.8 Breakdown agency of injury or disease

**Table 41** shows that the median time lost rose for all breakdown agencies between 2000–01 and 2018–19. Chemicals and chemical products involved the shortest median time lost in each year of the series. Powered equipment, tools and appliances recorded the lowest increase over the period (up 33%).

Where the specific breakdown agency was known, Animal, human and biological agencies had the longest median time lost in 4 of the 6 years of the series. Along with Environmental agencies, this also had the largest rise over the period (both up 75%).

**Table 41: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000–01	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	% chg
Other and unspecified agencies	5.8	7.8	8.0	8.6	9.2	11.0	90
Animal, human and biological agencies	4.6	6.4	6.6	7.0	7.6	8.0	75
Mobile plant and transport	4.5	6.7	6.6	7.1	7.2	7.8	72
Environmental agencies	4.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.9	7.0	75
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.8	5.8	6.2	55
Materials and substances	3.8	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.8	6.0	60
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	3.6	5.0	5.0	5.2	5.7	6.0	66
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	4.2	5.0	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.6	33
Chemicals and chemical products	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.8	3.1	4.0	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>67</b>

Note: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

**Table 42** shows that between 2000–01 and 2018–19 all major breakdown agencies recorded an increase in median compensation paid.

**Table 42: Serious claims: median compensation paid by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2018–19**

Breakdown agency of injury or disease	2000–01 (\$)	2014–15 (\$)	2015–16 (\$)	2016–17 (\$)	2017–18 (\$)	2018–19 (\$)	% chg
Other and unspecified agencies	7,100	15,200	17,000	18,700	20,400	22,400	217
Mobile plant and transport	5,800	13,300	14,500	15,900	16,100	17,200	199
Animal, human and biological agencies	5,100	10,800	11,800	13,400	14,400	14,700	186
Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant	5,200	12,500	13,100	14,800	14,600	14,400	176
Environmental agencies	5,000	12,100	13,000	13,800	13,900	14,000	182
Powered equipment, tools and appliances	5,800	11,300	12,100	12,800	12,600	13,100	127
Materials and substances	4,400	10,500	11,200	12,000	12,500	12,600	187
Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment	4,400	10,200	10,900	11,700	12,200	12,300	178
Chemicals and chemical products	3,100	5,100	6,700	7,900	7,700	8,100	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>14,100</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>180</b>

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which included payments of \$0. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 3: This table presents rounded data. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded data.

## **Glossary**

### **Age**

The age of the employee at the time they first reported their injury or disease to their employer or lodged their claim.

### **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 things started to go wrong and that 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. Non-compensation 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. A serious claim may have zero compensation payments because payments are for other expenses (non-compensation payments).

As data changes as a case progresses, zero-dollar claims may also reflect missing data. As it is not possible to differentiate between legitimate cases and missing data, the median compensation in this report excludes all records where compensation payment claims are zero.

### **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 Australian Bureau of Statistics (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).

Safe Work Australia uses an estimate of the number of jobs worked by employees to calculate incidence rates. Employees with more than one job (multiple jobholders) face exposures to distinct risks of injury and disease in each separate job. The ABS supplies Safe Work Australia with derived estimates of employee jobs. These are the denominators to calculate incidence rates (see explanatory note 12). The employee count estimates the number of jobs 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

Safe Work Australia calculates the number of serious claims per million hours worked using the following formula: number of serious claims / number of hours worked annually by employees multiplied by 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. This does not include paid leave such as annual leave or sick leave. Work-related risk exposure occurs when employees are working.

## Incidence rate

Safe Work Australia calculates the number of serious claims per 1,000 employees using the following formula: number of serious claims / number of employees multiplied by 1,000.

## Industry

The industry of the claimant's employer. Industries are 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

When observations are ranked from lowest to highest, the value that is in the middle. 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. Occupations are 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. This includes claims in receipt of common-law payments. It excludes claims arising from a journey to or from work or during a recess period as they are not compensable in all jurisdictions.

Serious claims exclude compensated fatalities.

## **Time lost from work**

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

## **Working week**

Safe Work Australia calculates the number of working weeks lost by dividing the amount of time lost by the hours usually worked by an employee per week. Serious claims are those that resulted in one working week or more of time off.

## Explanatory notes

### 1. Scope and coverage

The NDS is comprised of accepted workers' compensation claims. The statistics report serious claims 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:

- State, territory, and Commonwealth Government workers' compensation legislation provides coverage for most employees. However, separate legislation covers some specific groups of workers. The NDS does not include claims lodged by police in Western Australia and military personnel of the Australian Defence Forces.
- In some instances an eligible worker may elect not to make a workers' compensation claim.
- 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. Compensation for many mesothelioma cases, which are commonly linked to work-related exposure to asbestos, occurs 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 NDS derives the age of an employee from their date of birth and the date their employer was notified, or the date they lodged their claim. Please interpret data for the 65+ years age group 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

The NDS reports time lost from work in working weeks. It excludes estimates of future absences. Time lost from work comprises the total 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. When calculating the time lost, the total number of hours for which compensation has been paid is included.

The NDS uses the median 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 NDS exclude data from the preliminary year when reporting time lost from work because claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open. Claimants may accrue more time off work in subsequent years.

### 4. Compensation paid

The NDS use the median 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 payments excludes claims which only involve payments for goods and services, such as medical treatment. The NDS rounds compensation paid to the nearest \$100.

The NDS exclude data from the preliminary year when reporting compensation paid because claims from the preliminary year are likely to be open. Claimants may accrue more compensation payments in subsequent years.

## 5. Industry classification

The NDS codes information about the industry of the claimant's employer using the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006*.

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

## 6. Occupation classification

The NDS codes information about the occupation of the claimant using the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition*.

## 7. Details of injuries and diseases

The NDS codes information about injuries and diseases of claimants 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 do not have all details available at the time of the claim. The NDS reports these in residual categories like 'other and unspecified' or 'not elsewhere classified'. Totals include these claims. The NDS revises previous years data to reflect updated information as the claim progresses.

## 9. Time-series analyses

Please use caution 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.

Legislative changes may influence trends in workers' compensation data. Information on workers' compensation arrangements is available in Safe Work Australia's *Comparison of Workers' Compensation Arrangements in Australia and New Zealand*.

## 10. Frequency and incidence rates

The NDS expresses frequency rates as the number of serious claims per million hours worked; incidence rates are 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 of different groups of employees and employees at different points in time.

## 11. Denominators used to calculate rates

The ABS provide estimates of the number of employees and hours worked for each Australian workers' compensation jurisdiction each year. These are primarily derived from the Labour Force Survey, with adjustments to account for differences in scope between the Labour Force Survey and workers' compensation coverage.

The ABS provide two sets of estimates for each jurisdiction. One provides gender, age, and industry and the other provides 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 using 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. Previously the ABS combined the second job into the industry of the first job. The ABS now provide 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. There were rises in Arts and recreation services, and Accommodation and food services as these were the industries where employees were most commonly working a second job.

While the ABS adjusts the employee estimates to account for the industries where employees work a second job, it is unable to adjust the hours worked in a similar manner. The industry of the main job includes all hours worked.

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

- A separate scheme covers police in Western Australia. This does not report data to Safe Work Australia. Denominators exclude police in Western Australia.
- Under previous Queensland legislation, owner-managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIEs), who were included in the standard definition of 'employee', had the option of purchasing workers' compensation insurance. ABS 2006 census data showed 10% of employed people in Queensland were OMIEs. Workers' compensation covered an unknown number. Prior to the legislation change (1 July 2013), denominator and claims data excluded this population. Data from 1 July 2013 onwards includes OMIEs in both denominator and numerator data.

## 12. 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 is 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, a one-week cut-off ensures Safe Work Australia can compile comparable data from all jurisdictions to produce an accurate national estimate.

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 \$721 of medical services (for the year 2019/20—indexed annually), unless the employer elects an 'excess buy-out' option. Since the workers' compensation authority does not always receive information on claims paid solely by employers, the national count of serious claims is affected.

To correct for this under-counting, Safe Work Australia increases Victorian claims of one to two weeks' duration 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% (from 20,286 to 22,897) in 2018–19 and the Australian count by less than 3%.

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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/law-and-regulation/whs-regulators-and-workers-compensation-authorities-contact-information>