

Safe Work Australia

Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics /

2020-21

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Tables and figures | 4 |
| Introduction..... | 8 |
| Section 1: Serious claims 2020–21p..... | 9 |
| 1.1 Gender..... | 10 |
| 1.2 Age group..... | 11 |
| 1.3 Industry..... | 13 |
| 1.4 Occupation | 17 |
| 1.5 Mechanism of injury or disease..... | 19 |
| 1.6 Nature of injury or disease | 20 |
| 1.7 Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 21 |
| 1.8 Mechanism of injury or disease and breakdown agency | 22 |
| 1.9 Mechanism of injury or disease and bodily location..... | 23 |
| Section 2: Trends in serious claims 2000-01 to 2020-21p..... | 24 |
| 2.1 Serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees | 25 |
| 2.2 Gender..... | 27 |
| 2.3 Age group..... | 29 |
| 2.4 Industry..... | 32 |
| 2.5 Occupation | 35 |
| 2.6 Nature of injury or disease | 37 |
| 2.7 Bodily location of injury or disease..... | 39 |
| 2.8 Mechanism of injury or disease..... | 40 |
| 2.9 Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 41 |
| Section 3: Time lost and compensation paid | 42 |
| 3.1 Serious claims, median time lost, and median compensation paid | 43 |
| 3.2 Age group..... | 45 |
| 3.3 Gender..... | 46 |
| 3.4 Industry..... | 47 |
| 3.5 Occupation | 50 |
| 3.6 Nature of injury and disease..... | 51 |
| 3.7 Mechanism of injury or disease..... | 53 |
| 3.8 Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 55 |
| Glossary | 56 |
| Explanatory notes..... | 59 |
| References | 63 |
| Further information | 63 |
| Jurisdictional contacts | 63 |

Tables and figures

Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Percentage of serious claims and hours worked by gender, 2020–21p..... | 10 |
| Table 2: Number, percentage and rates of serious claims by injury or disease and gender, 2020–21p..... | 10 |
| Table 3: Number of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2020–21p..... | 11 |
| Table 4: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2020–21p | 11 |
| Table 5: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2020–21p | 12 |
| Table 6: Workforce characteristics by industry, 2020–21p | 13 |
| Table 7a: Number and rates of all serious claims by gender and industry, 2020–21p..... | 14 |
| Table 7b: Number and rates of serious claims by nature of injury, gender and industry, 2020–21p | 15 |
| Table 7c: Number and rates of serious claims by disease, gender and industry, 2020–21p | 16 |
| Table 8: Workforce characteristics by occupation, 2020–21p | 17 |
| Table 9: Number and rates of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and occupation, 2020–21p | 18 |
| Table 10: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease and gender, 2020–21p ... | 19 |
| Table 11: Number and percentage of serious claims by nature of injury or disease and gender, 2020–21p | 20 |
| Table 12: Number and percentage of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2020–21p..... | 21 |
| Table 13: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism and breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2020–21p | 22 |
| Table 14: Number and percentage of serious claims by mechanism and bodily location of injury or disease, 2020–21p | 23 |
| Table 15: Number and rates of serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees, 2000–01 to 2020–21p | 25 |
| Table 16: Number and rates of serious claims by gender, 2000–01 to 2020–21p | 27 |
| Table 17: Number of serious claims by age group, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 29 |
| Table 18: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by age group, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 30 |
| Table 19: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by age group, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 31 |
| Table 20: Number of serious claims by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p..... | 32 |
| Table 21: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 33 |
| Table 22: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 34 |
| Table 23: Number of serious claims by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p..... | 35 |
| Table 24: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 35 |
| Table 25: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 36 |
| Table 26: Number of serious claims by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p..... | 38 |
| Table 27: Number of serious claims by bodily location of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p.. | 39 |
| Table 28: Number of serious claims by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 40 |
| Table 29: Number of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p | 41 |
| Table 30: Serious claims: median time lost (weeks) and compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2019–20..... | 43 |
| Table 31: Serious claims: median time lost and compensation paid by gender, 2000–01 to 2019–20..... | 46 |
| Table 32: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 | 47 |
| Table 33: Serious claims: median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20..... | 48 |
| Table 34: Serious claims: WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 | 49 |
| Table 35: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 ... | 50 |
| Table 36: Serious claims: median compensation paid by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20..... | 50 |
| Table 37: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 | 51 |
| Table 38: Serious claims: median compensation paid by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 | 52 |
| Table 39: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20 | 53 |
| Table 40: Serious claims: median compensation paid by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20 | 54 |
| Table 41: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20 | 55 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 42: Serious claims: median compensation paid by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20 | 55 |
|---|----|

Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Frequency rates and total hours worked, 2000–01 to 2020–21p | 26 |
| Figure 2: Frequency rates of serious claims by gender, 2000–01 to 2020–21p | 28 |
| Figure 3: Percentage of serious claims by selected age group, 2000–01 to 2020–21p | 30 |
| Figure 4: Frequency rates by age group and occupation, 2000–2001 to 2019–20 combined | 31 |
| Figure 5: Median compensation paid (original) and WPI adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2019–20 | 44 |
| Figure 6: Median time lost and inflation adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2019–20 | 44 |
| Figure 7: Serious claims: median time lost by age group, 2006–07 to 2019–20 | 45 |
| Figure 8: Serious claims: median compensation paid by age group, 2006–07 to 2019–20 | 45 |

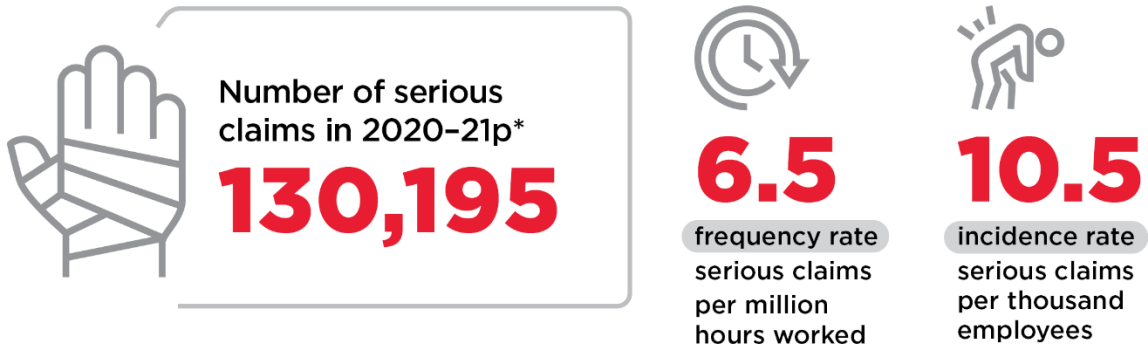
Abbreviations and symbols

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ANZSCO | Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First edition |
| ANZSIC | Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006 |
| NDS | National Data Set for Compensation–based Statistics |
| p | Preliminary data |
| % chg | Percentage change |

Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics

Report 2020-21*

Serious claims in 2020-21p*



Frequency rate of serious claims by gender 2020-21p*



Main causes of serious claims (by mechanism of incident) in 2020-21p*



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 2020-21*

Serious claims in 2020-21*

Occupations with the highest frequency rates in 2020-21*



Labourers

21.9

serious claims per million hours worked



Community and personal service workers

15.2

serious claims per million hours worked



Machinery operators and drivers

11.7

serious claims per million hours worked

Industries with the highest frequency rates of serious claims in 2020-21*



Agriculture, forestry and fishing

11.1

serious claims per million hours worked



Healthcare and social assistance

10.2

serious claims per million hours worked



Manufacturing

9.6

serious claims per million hours worked

Serious claims 2009-10 and 2019-20



Frequency rate of serious claims per million hours worked

↓ decreased by 13%

from **7.5** to **6.5** serious claims per million hours worked



Median time lost for a serious claim

↑ increased by 30%

from **5.4** to **7.0** working weeks



The total number of serious claims in Australia

↑ increased by 2%

from **127,599** to **130,195** serious claims

despite the number of workers increasing by **21%** 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.

Introduction

The statistics in this report show accepted serious workers' compensation claims from 2000–01 and 2020–21. The statistics are an indicator of Australia's work health and safety performance over the 21-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 2020–21 financial year with updates back to 2015–16. 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. In addition, this report now uses a percentage change rather than a percentage difference calculation. Percentage change columns may therefore differ from previous reports.

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 2020–21p

This section provides workers' compensation statistics for serious claims during the 2020–21 financial year. The 2020–21 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 2020-21p, male employees accounted for 61% of serious claims and 57% of hours worked. Female employees accounted for 39% of serious claims and 43% of hours worked (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Percentage of serious claims and hours worked by gender, 2020–21p

| | Percentage of serious claims (%) | Percentage of hours worked (%) |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Male | 61 | 57 |
| Female | 39 | 43 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Table 2 below shows that in 2020–21p, 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, 2020–21p

| | Number of serious claims | Percentage of serious claims (%) | Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked) | Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Male | | | | |
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 70,463 | 89 | 6.2 | 11.1 |
| Diseases | 8,620 | 11 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| Total | 79,083 | 100 | 6.9 | 12.5 |
| Female | | | | |
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 42,351 | 83 | 5.0 | 7.0 |
| Diseases | 8,578 | 17 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Total | 50,930 | 100 | 6.0 | 8.5 |
| All serious claims | | | | |
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 112,978 | 87 | 5.7 | 9.1 |
| Diseases | 17,218 | 13 | 0.9 | 1.4 |
| Total | 130,195 | 100 | 6.5 | 10.5 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 2020–21p, 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 2020–21p.

Table 3: Number of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2020–21p

| 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 | 3,176 | 1,238 | 4,421 | 85 | 75 | 160 | 3,262 | 1,313 | 4,581 |
| 20-24yrs | 7,578 | 3,526 | 11,137 | 341 | 426 | 768 | 7,919 | 3,951 | 11,905 |
| 25-29yrs | 8,199 | 4,125 | 12,339 | 620 | 733 | 1,354 | 8,819 | 4,858 | 13,693 |
| 30-34yrs | 8,086 | 3,747 | 11,852 | 836 | 874 | 1,715 | 8,922 | 4,621 | 13,567 |
| 35-39yrs | 7,444 | 3,689 | 11,149 | 954 | 932 | 1,886 | 8,398 | 4,621 | 13,035 |
| 40-44yrs | 6,624 | 3,996 | 10,641 | 977 | 1,012 | 1,990 | 7,601 | 5,008 | 12,631 |
| 45-49yrs | 7,395 | 5,227 | 12,635 | 1,255 | 1,266 | 2,526 | 8,650 | 6,493 | 15,161 |
| 50-54yrs | 7,387 | 5,864 | 13,264 | 1,312 | 1,332 | 2,645 | 8,699 | 7,196 | 15,909 |
| 55-59yrs | 7,056 | 5,552 | 12,627 | 1,119 | 1,106 | 2,229 | 8,175 | 6,658 | 14,856 |
| 60-64yrs | 5,196 | 3,883 | 9,084 | 807 | 625 | 1,431 | 6,003 | 4,507 | 10,515 |
| 65+ years | 2,321 | 1,506 | 3,829 | 315 | 198 | 513 | 2,636 | 1,704 | 4,343 |
| Total | 70,463 | 42,351 | 112,978 | 8,620 | 8,578 | 17,218 | 79,083 | 50,930 | 130,195 |

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 2020–21p, employees aged 60–64 years had the highest frequency rate of any age group (9.3 serious claims per million hours worked). By contrast, employees aged 35–39 years had the lowest frequency rate (5.2 serious claims per million hours worked).

Table 4: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by injury or disease, gender and age group, 2020–21p

| 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 | 9.7 | 4.4 | 7.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 10.0 | 4.6 | 7.5 |
| 20-24yrs | 8.1 | 4.4 | 6.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 8.5 | 5.0 | 6.9 |
| 25-29yrs | 6.0 | 3.8 | 5.0 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 5.6 |
| 30-34yrs | 5.4 | 3.6 | 4.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 6.0 | 4.4 | 5.3 |
| 35-39yrs | 5.0 | 3.7 | 4.4 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 5.6 | 4.6 | 5.2 |
| 40-44yrs | 5.0 | 4.3 | 4.7 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.6 |
| 45-49yrs | 5.8 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 6.8 | 6.4 | 6.6 |
| 50-54yrs | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 7.7 |
| 55-59yrs | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.1 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 8.1 | 8.7 | 8.4 |
| 60-64yrs | 7.9 | 8.3 | 8.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 9.1 | 9.6 | 9.3 |
| 65+ years ¹ | 5.9 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 6.7 | 7.7 | 7.1 |
| Total | 6.2 | 5.0 | 5.7 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 6.9 | 6.0 | 6.5 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 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 2020–21p, 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, 2020–21p

| 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 | 9.6 | 3.3 | 6.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 9.9 | 3.5 | 6.5 |
| 20–24 years | 12.4 | 5.7 | 9.0 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 12.9 | 6.4 | 9.7 |
| 25–29 years | 10.9 | 5.8 | 8.4 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 11.7 | 6.9 | 9.4 |
| 30–34 years | 10.3 | 5.2 | 7.9 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 11.4 | 6.5 | 9.1 |
| 35–39 years | 9.7 | 5.3 | 7.6 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 10.9 | 6.7 | 8.9 |
| 40–44 years | 9.8 | 6.5 | 8.2 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 11.2 | 8.2 | 9.8 |
| 45–49 years | 11.4 | 8.2 | 9.8 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 13.4 | 10.1 | 11.8 |
| 50–54 years | 12.6 | 9.7 | 11.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 14.8 | 11.9 | 13.4 |
| 55–59 years | 13.3 | 10.7 | 12.0 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 15.4 | 12.8 | 14.1 |
| 60–64 years | 14.0 | 11.4 | 12.7 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 16.2 | 13.2 | 14.8 |
| 65+ years ¹ | 8.5 | 7.6 | 8.1 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 9.2 |
| Total | 11.1 | 7.0 | 9.1 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 12.5 | 8.5 | 10.5 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 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 2020–21p:

- Health care and social assistance industry (20.2%)
- Construction (12.3%) and
- Manufacturing (11.3%).

Together, these industries accounted for 44% of all serious claims, while making up only around 29% of the workforce (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Workforce characteristics by industry, 2020–21p

| Industry | Employed persons (million) ¹ | Percentage of workforce (%) ¹ | Percentage entitled to compensation (%) ^{1,2} | Jobs (million) ³ | Hours worked (billion) | Number of Serious claims ⁴ | Percentage of serious claims (%) | Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked) | Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees) |
|---|---|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Health care and social assistance | 1.802 | 14.6 | 93.6 | 1.802 | 2.579 | 26,239 | 20.2 | 10.2 | 14.6 |
| Construction | 0.954 | 7.7 | 78.0 | 0.954 | 1.828 | 16,088 | 12.3 | 8.8 | 16.8 |
| Manufacturing | 0.834 | 6.7 | 93.0 | 0.834 | 1.530 | 14,663 | 11.3 | 9.6 | 17.6 |
| Public administration and safety | 0.886 | 7.2 | 99.2 | 0.886 | 1.479 | 10,481 | 8.1 | 7.1 | 11.8 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 0.579 | 4.7 | 84.3 | 0.579 | 1.041 | 9,122 | 7.0 | 8.8 | 15.8 |
| Retail trade | 1.287 | 10.4 | 95.2 | 1.287 | 1.756 | 8,986 | 6.9 | 5.1 | 7.0 |
| Education and training | 1.151 | 9.3 | 94.8 | 1.151 | 1.730 | 8,212 | 6.3 | 4.7 | 7.1 |
| Accommodation and food services | 0.843 | 6.8 | 95.8 | 0.843 | 0.984 | 6,890 | 5.3 | 7.0 | 8.2 |
| Administrative and support services | 0.444 | 3.6 | 92.9 | 0.444 | 0.681 | 5,364 | 4.1 | 7.9 | 12.1 |
| Wholesale trade | 0.363 | 2.9 | 76.5 | 0.363 | 0.666 | 5,352 | 4.1 | 8.0 | 14.7 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 0.205 | 1.7 | 59.0 | 0.205 | 0.376 | 4,159 | 3.2 | 11.1 | 20.3 |
| Other services | 0.409 | 3.3 | 78.8 | 0.409 | 0.659 | 3,648 | 2.8 | 5.5 | 8.9 |
| Mining | 0.250 | 2.0 | 99.2 | 0.250 | 0.544 | 2,806 | 2.2 | 5.2 | 11.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 1.103 | 8.9 | 83.6 | 1.103 | 1.975 | 2,290 | 1.8 | 1.2 | 2.1 |
| Arts and recreation services | 0.227 | 1.8 | 84.3 | 0.227 | 0.288 | 2,195 | 1.7 | 7.6 | 9.7 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 0.150 | 1.2 | 81.9 | 0.150 | 0.291 | 1,313 | 1.0 | 4.5 | 8.8 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 0.197 | 1.6 | 96.9 | 0.197 | 0.355 | 1,128 | 0.9 | 3.2 | 5.7 |
| Financial and insurance services | 0.482 | 3.9 | 94.4 | 0.482 | 0.882 | 614 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 1.3 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 0.186 | 1.5 | 88.4 | 0.186 | 0.327 | 574 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 3.1 |
| Total | 12.354 | 100 | 89.3 | 12.354 | 19.970 | 130,195 | 100 | 6.5 | 10.5 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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.

¹ From the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*.

² 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.

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

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

Tables 7a, 7b and 7c show that in 2020–21p, Agriculture, forestry and fishing had the highest frequency rate of any industry (11.1 serious claims per million hours worked). There were also high frequency rates in Health care and social assistance (10.2) Manufacturing (9.6), Transport, postal and warehousing and Construction (both 8.8).

Within the broader Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, the Agriculture industry sub-division accounted for 74% of serious claims in 2020–21p, with 9.7 serious claims per million hours worked and 18.0 serious claims per 1,000 employees. Within the broader Transport, postal and warehousing industry, the Road transport industry sub-division accounted for more than half (53%) of all serious claims with 9.9 serious claims per million hours worked and 19.2 claims per 1,000 employees.

The industries with the lowest frequency rates were Financial and insurance services (0.7 serious claims per million hours worked), Professional, scientific and technical services (1.2), and Information media and telecommunications (1.8).

The Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry recorded the highest frequency rate for injury and musculoskeletal disorders (10.4 serious claims per million hours worked), which is much higher than the average for all industries (5.7).

The Public administration and safety industry recorded the highest frequency rate for diseases (2.2), more than twice the all industry average (0.9). Most disease claims (89%) in this industry related to mental health conditions.

Table 7a: Number and rates of all serious claims by gender and industry, 2020–21p

| 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 |
| All serious claims | | | | | | | | | |
| Health care and social assistance | 5,207 | 20,990 | 26,240 | 8.1 | 10.8 | 10.2 | 12.9 | 15.0 | 14.6 |
| Construction | 15,491 | 539 | 16,039 | 9.6 | 2.5 | 8.8 | 19.2 | 3.6 | 16.9 |
| Manufacturing | 12,439 | 2,193 | 14,663 | 10.9 | 5.6 | 9.6 | 21.2 | 8.9 | 17.6 |
| Public administration and safety | 7,185 | 3,296 | 10,483 | 9.3 | 4.7 | 7.1 | 16.4 | 7.4 | 11.8 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 7,768 | 1,344 | 9,121 | 9.3 | 6.4 | 8.8 | 17.5 | 10.0 | 15.8 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 4,094 | 323 | 4,420 | 10.7 | 5.0 | 9.9 | 21.6 | 7.9 | 19.2 |
| Retail trade | 4,690 | 4,332 | 9,036 | 5.2 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 8.0 | 6.2 | 7.0 |
| Education and training | 2,139 | 6,072 | 8,212 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 4.7 | 6.6 | 7.3 | 7.1 |
| Accommodation and food services | 3,263 | 3,602 | 6,890 | 6.7 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 8.8 | 7.7 | 8.2 |
| Administrative and support services | 3,496 | 1,860 | 5,368 | 9.0 | 6.4 | 7.9 | 14.9 | 8.8 | 12.1 |
| Wholesale trade | 4,307 | 1,033 | 5,353 | 9.4 | 4.9 | 8.0 | 18.1 | 8.2 | 14.7 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 3,122 | 1,026 | 4,160 | 11.0 | 11.2 | 11.1 | 21.8 | 16.6 | 20.3 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 2,192 | 871 | 3,069 | 9.2 | 11.0 | 9.7 | 18.6 | 16.5 | 18.0 |
| Other services | 2,572 | 1,065 | 3,639 | 6.0 | 4.6 | 5.5 | 11.0 | 6.1 | 8.9 |
| Mining | 2,489 | 311 | 2,804 | 5.5 | 3.4 | 5.2 | 12.1 | 6.9 | 11.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 1,111 | 1,175 | 2,286 | 0.9 | 1.6 | 1.2 | 1.8 | 2.5 | 2.1 |
| Arts and recreation services | 1,217 | 979 | 2,197 | 7.5 | 7.8 | 7.6 | 10.7 | 8.6 | 9.7 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 1,183 | 132 | 1,315 | 5.2 | 2.1 | 4.5 | 10.3 | 3.7 | 8.8 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 766 | 363 | 1,130 | 3.9 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 7.5 | 3.8 | 5.7 |
| Financial and insurance services | 197 | 417 | 614 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 1.3 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 387 | 184 | 574 | 1.9 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 3.5 | 2.4 | 3.1 |
| Total | 79,083 | 50,929 | 130,195 | 6.9 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 12.5 | 8.5 | 10.5 |

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 and modelled 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, 2020–21p

| 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 | |
| Injuries and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | | | | | |
| Health care and social assistance | 4,252 | 17,754 | 22,043 | 6.6 | 9.2 | 8.5 | 10.6 | 12.7 | 12.2 | |
| Construction | 14,679 | 452 | 15,140 | 9.1 | 2.1 | 8.3 | 18.2 | 3.0 | 15.8 | |
| Manufacturing | 11,422 | 1,897 | 13,346 | 10.0 | 4.9 | 8.7 | 19.4 | 7.7 | 16.0 | |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 7,041 | 1,144 | 8,193 | 8.5 | 5.5 | 7.9 | 15.9 | 8.5 | 14.1 | |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 3,749 | 265 | 4,017 | 9.8 | 4.1 | 9.0 | 19.8 | 6.5 | 17.4 | |
| Retail trade | 4,225 | 3,887 | 8,124 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 7.3 | 5.5 | 6.3 | |
| Public administration and safety | 5,160 | 2,093 | 7,255 | 6.6 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 11.7 | 4.7 | 8.2 | |
| Accommodation and food services | 3,060 | 3,300 | 6,383 | 6.3 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 8.2 | 7.0 | 7.6 | |
| Education and training | 1,622 | 4,641 | 6,264 | 3.1 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 5.4 | |
| Administrative and support services | 3,279 | 1,636 | 4,926 | 8.4 | 5.6 | 7.2 | 14.0 | 7.8 | 11.1 | |
| Wholesale trade | 3,888 | 873 | 4,772 | 8.5 | 4.2 | 7.2 | 16.4 | 6.9 | 13.1 | |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 2,933 | 967 | 3,910 | 10.3 | 10.6 | 10.4 | 20.5 | 15.6 | 19.0 | |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 2,085 | 822 | 2,913 | 8.8 | 10.4 | 9.2 | 17.7 | 15.5 | 17.1 | |
| Other services | 2,302 | 854 | 3,158 | 5.4 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 9.8 | 4.8 | 7.7 | |
| Mining | 2,293 | 269 | 2,566 | 5.1 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 11.2 | 5.9 | 10.2 | |
| Arts and recreation services | 1,136 | 902 | 2,039 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.1 | 10.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 921 | 911 | 1,832 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 1.7 | |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 1,065 | 105 | 1,170 | 4.7 | 1.6 | 4.0 | 9.3 | 3.0 | 7.8 | |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 681 | 276 | 958 | 3.5 | 1.8 | 2.7 | 6.7 | 2.9 | 4.9 | |
| Information media and telecommunications | 339 | 144 | 485 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 1.9 | 2.6 | |
| Financial and insurance services | 116 | 236 | 353 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 | |
| Total | 70,463 | 42,351 | 112,978 | 6.2 | 5.0 | 5.7 | 11.1 | 7.0 | 9.1 | |

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 and modelled 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, 2020–21p

| 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 |
| Diseases | | | | | | | | | |
| Health care and social assistance | 955 | 3,236 | 4,196 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| Public administration and safety | 2,025 | 1,203 | 3,228 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 4.6 | 2.7 | 3.6 |
| Education and training | 517 | 1,431 | 1,948 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Manufacturing | 1,017 | 297 | 1,318 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.6 |
| Construction | 858 | 90 | 948 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 1.0 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 728 | 200 | 929 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.6 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 346 | 59 | 405 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.8 |
| Retail trade | 418 | 443 | 862 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| Wholesale trade | 417 | 161 | 580 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 1.6 |
| Accommodation and food services | 203 | 302 | 506 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Other services | 278 | 212 | 490 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 193 | 264 | 457 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.4 |
| Administrative and support services | 213 | 224 | 438 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Financial and insurance services | 81 | 181 | 262 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.5 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 189 | 58 | 249 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 1.2 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 107 | 49 | 156 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Mining | 198 | 42 | 240 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.0 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 83 | 86 | 169 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Arts and recreation services | 79 | 77 | 156 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 116 | 27 | 143 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 48 | 40 | 89 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Total | 8,621 | 8,578 | 17,218 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |

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 and modelled 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 more than a quarter (26%) of serious claims in 2020–21p. There were also relatively high numbers of serious claims from Community and personal service workers and Technicians and trades workers, accounting for 20% and 17% of serious claims respectively. Together, employees working in these occupations accounted for 63% of all serious claims, while representing just 33% of the workforce.

Table 8: Workforce characteristics by occupation, 2020–21p

| Occupation | Employed persons (million) ¹ | Percentage of workforce (%) ¹ | Percentage entitled to compensation (%) ^{1,2} | Jobs (million) ³ | Hours worked (billion) | Number of Serious claims ⁴ | Percentage of serious claims (%) | Frequency rate (claims per million hours worked) | Incidence rate (claims per 1,000 employees) |
|--|---|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Labourers | 1.183 | 9.2 | 88.0 | 1.093 | 1.519 | 33,309 | 25.6 | 21.9 | 30.5 |
| Community and Personal Service Workers | 1.353 | 10.5 | 93.1 | 1.368 | 1.731 | 26,245 | 20.2 | 15.2 | 19.2 |
| Technicians and Trades Workers | 1.761 | 13.6 | 83.2 | 1.537 | 2.820 | 22,255 | 17.1 | 7.9 | 14.5 |
| Machinery Operators and Drivers | 0.806 | 6.2 | 88.8 | 0.753 | 1.409 | 16,443 | 12.6 | 11.7 | 21.8 |
| Professionals | 3.337 | 25.8 | 89.5 | 3.266 | 5.528 | 14,126 | 10.9 | 2.6 | 4.3 |
| Managers | 1.681 | 13.0 | 84.7 | 1.501 | 2.936 | 5,925 | 4.6 | 2.0 | 3.9 |
| Sales Workers | 1.069 | 8.3 | 95.2 | 1.093 | 1.358 | 4,825 | 3.7 | 1.8 | 2.8 |
| Clerical and Administrative Workers | 1.732 | 13.4 | 93.9 | 1.742 | 2.668 | 5,536 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 5.1 |
| Total | 12.922 | 100 | 89.3 | 12.354 | 19.970 | 130,195 | 100 | 6.5 | 10.5 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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.

¹ From the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*.

² 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.

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

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

Table 9 shows that Labourers had the highest serious claims frequency rate of 21.9 serious claims per million hours worked in 2020–21p. The national average was 6.5 serious claims per million hours worked. Other occupations with rates higher than the national average were Community and personal service workers (15.2), Machinery operators and drivers (11.7) and Technicians and trades workers (7.9).

Labourers also had the highest frequency rate for the injury and musculoskeletal disorders subset of serious claims (20.1 serious claims per million hours worked). This was more than three times the rate for all occupations (5.7).

Community and personal service workers recorded the highest frequency rate of diseases (2.7 serious claims per million hours worked), followed by Labourers (1.8). Both were higher than the national rate of 0.9.

Table 9: Number and rates of serious claims by injury or disease, gender and occupation, 2020–21p

| 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 |
| All serious claims | | | | | | | | | |
| Labourers | 23,522 | 9,721 | 33,309 | 22.1 | 21.4 | 21.9 | 33.6 | 24.8 | 30.5 |
| Community and personal service workers | 9,478 | 16,737 | 26,245 | 15.8 | 14.8 | 15.2 | 22.4 | 17.7 | 19.2 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 19,583 | 2,650 | 22,255 | 8.0 | 7.4 | 7.9 | 15.2 | 10.8 | 14.5 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 14,275 | 2,152 | 16,443 | 11.1 | 16.7 | 11.7 | 21.3 | 26.0 | 21.8 |
| Professionals | 3,835 | 10,274 | 14,126 | 1.4 | 3.6 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 5.6 | 4.3 |
| Managers | 3,532 | 2,382 | 5,925 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 3.9 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 2,106 | 3,425 | 5,536 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 2.1 | 4.6 | 2.7 | 3.2 |
| Sales workers | 1,810 | 3,009 | 4,825 | 2.9 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 4.4 |
| Total: all serious claims | 79,083 | 50,930 | 130,195 | 6.9 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 12.5 | 8.5 | 10.5 |
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | | | | |
| Labourers | 21,810 | 8,670 | 30,538 | 20.5 | 19.1 | 20.1 | 31.1 | 22.1 | 27.9 |
| Community and personal service workers | 7,280 | 14,288 | 21,598 | 12.1 | 12.6 | 12.5 | 17.2 | 15.1 | 15.8 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 18,289 | 2,380 | 20,688 | 7.4 | 6.6 | 7.3 | 14.2 | 9.7 | 13.5 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 13,111 | 1,960 | 15,087 | 10.2 | 15.2 | 10.7 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 20.0 |
| Professionals | 2,907 | 7,882 | 10,802 | 1.1 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 4.3 | 3.3 |
| Managers | 2,882 | 1,652 | 4,542 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 3.0 |
| Sales workers | 1,576 | 2,663 | 4,245 | 2.5 | 3.7 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 3.9 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 1,749 | 2,342 | 4,095 | 2.2 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 3.8 | 1.8 | 2.4 |
| Total: Injury and MSDs | 70,463 | 42,351 | 112,978 | 6.2 | 5.0 | 5.7 | 11.1 | 7.0 | 9.1 |
| Diseases | | | | | | | | | |
| Community and personal service workers | 2,198 | 2,449 | 4,647 | 3.7 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 5.2 | 2.6 | 3.4 |
| Professionals | 928 | 2,392 | 3,325 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.0 |
| Labourers | 1,712 | 1,050 | 2,771 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.5 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 1,295 | 270 | 1,567 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 357 | 1,083 | 1,441 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Managers | 650 | 730 | 1,383 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 1,164 | 192 | 1,356 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 1.8 |
| Sales workers | 234 | 346 | 580 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Total: Diseases | 8,620 | 8,578 | 17,218 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 2020–21p, 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%). 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 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, 2020–21p

| Mechanism of injury or disease | Number of serious claims | | | Percentage of serious claims (%) | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Body stressing | 29,710 | 18,574 | 48,358 | 38 | 36 | 37 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 16,935 | 13,071 | 30,039 | 21 | 26 | 23 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 13,623 | 6,699 | 20,339 | 17 | 13 | 16 |
| Mental stress | 4,682 | 6,418 | 11,109 | 6 | 13 | 9 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 7,260 | 2,250 | 9,535 | 9 | 4 | 7 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 4,786 | 2,319 | 7,124 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 999 | 717 | 1,721 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 678 | 408 | 1,086 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Biological factors | 278 | 434 | 713 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Sound and pressure | 131 | 40 | 171 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 79,083 | 50,929 | 130,195 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 or 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 2020-2021p. Among this category, Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injuries were the most common. These two categories accounted for 65% of injury and musculoskeletal disorders claims, and 56% of serious claims overall. Diseases were responsible for 13% of serious claims. Mental health conditions were the most common type of disease, accounting for 71% of disease claims and 9% of claims overall (**Table 11**).

Serious claims for Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage were much more common among males than females (accounting for 18% of male employees' serious claims, compared with 10% for females).

Mental health conditions accounted for 14% of female employees' serious claims compared to 7% of males'.

Table 11: Number and percentage of serious claims by nature of injury or disease and gender, 2020–21p

| Nature of injury or disease | Number of serious claims | | | Percentage of serious claims (%) | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | |
| Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury | 31,311 | 20,926 | 52,316 | 40 | 41 | 40 |
| Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases | 11,901 | 9,035 | 20,966 | 15 | 18 | 16 |
| Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage | 14,349 | 5,112 | 19,486 | 18 | 10 | 15 |
| Fractures | 8,925 | 4,792 | 13,732 | 11 | 9 | 11 |
| Other injuries ¹ | 1,882 | 1,070 | 2,952 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Burn | 1,147 | 697 | 1,850 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Intracranial injuries | 618 | 577 | 1,199 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Other claims ² | 186 | 86 | 273 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Injury to nerves and spinal cord | 145 | 57 | 205 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 70,463 | 42,351 | 112,978 | 89 | 83 | 87 |
| Diseases | | | | | | |
| Mental health conditions | 5,244 | 6,899 | 12,155 | 7 | 14 | 9 |
| Digestive system diseases | 1,874 | 111 | 1,989 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Nervous system and sense organ diseases | 755 | 717 | 1,474 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases | 190 | 418 | 608 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases | 279 | 179 | 460 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 113 | 151 | 264 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other diseases | 54 | 60 | 114 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Circulatory system diseases | 65 | 38 | 103 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Neoplasms (cancer) | 46 | 6 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total: diseases | 8,620 | 8,578 | 17,218 | 11 | 17 | 13 |
| Total: all serious claims | 79,083 | 50,929 | 130,195 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 'Other injuries' and 'Other diseases' are miscellaneous categories used to classify injuries and diseases not classified elsewhere.

² '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 2020–21p, 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 (23%) (Table 12).

Table 12: Number and percentage of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2020–21p

| Breakdown agency of injury or disease | Number of serious claims | Percentage of serious claims (%) |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment (e.g. edged tools, fastening equipment, furniture, ladders and scaffolding) | 29,531 | 23 |
| Environmental agencies (e.g. weather and water, surface features, building features, vegetation, underground environmental hazards) | 21,768 | 17 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies (e.g. live animals, other people, personal fatigue) | 20,763 | 16 |
| Materials and substances (e.g. hazardous materials, cement, rocks, glass, fire and smoke, sewerage) | 18,580 | 14 |
| Other and unspecified agencies (e.g. non-physical agencies, such as trauma or work pressures; other agencies not elsewhere classified) | 15,078 | 12 |
| Mobile plant and transport (e.g. vehicles, pneumatic tools, drilling rigs) | 12,039 | 9 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant (e.g. cutting, slicing, sawing or crushing, pressing, rolling machinery, furnaces, conveyors and lifting plant, electrical installation) | 5,839 | 4 |
| Powered equipment, tools and appliances (e.g. electric tools (including battery-operated tools), kitchen appliances, IT equipment) | 5,627 | 4 |
| Chemicals and chemical products (e.g. nominated chemicals, basic chemicals, detergents, paints) | 971 | 1 |
| Total | 130,195 | 100 |

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

Note 2: This table shows rounded and 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 2020–21p. Falls, trips and slips led to a further 23% of serious claims. Almost one-third of Body stressing claims involved Non-powered hand tools, appliances and equipment (32%). Environmental agencies (e.g. steps, uneven ground, traffic etc.) caused most (55%) 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, 2020–21p

| Mechanism of injury or disease Breakdown agency of injury or disease | Number of serious claims | Percentage of serious claims (%) |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Body stressing | 48,358 | 37 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 15,369 | 32 |
| Materials and substances | 8,638 | 18 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 7,402 | 15 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 30,039 | 23 |
| Environmental agencies | 16,461 | 55 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 5,339 | 18 |
| Mobile plant and transport | 2,703 | 9 |
| Materials and substances | 2,376 | 8 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 20,339 | 16 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 6,358 | 31 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 4,247 | 21 |
| Materials and substances | 3,881 | 19 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 1,961 | 10 |
| Mental stress | 11,109 | 9 |
| Other and unspecified agencies | 5,763 | 52 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 5,068 | 46 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 9,535 | 7 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 3,986 | 42 |
| Materials and substances | 2,331 | 24 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 886 | 9 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 7,124 | 5 |
| Other and unspecified agencies | 3,040 | 43 |
| Mobile plant and transport | 2,379 | 33 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 658 | 9 |
| Environmental agencies | 334 | 5 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 1,721 | 1 |
| Materials and substances | 774 | 45 |
| Powered equipment, tools and appliances | 246 | 14 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 226 | 13 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 1,086 | 1 |
| Chemicals and chemical products | 541 | 50 |
| Materials and substances | 242 | 22 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 155 | 14 |
| Biological factors | 713 | 1 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 548 | 77 |
| Sound and pressure | 171 | 0 |
| Total | 130,195 | 100 |

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 and modelled 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 2020–21p, 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, 2020–21p

| Mechanism of injury or disease Bodily location of injury or disease | Number of serious claims | Percentage of serious claims (%) |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Body stressing | 48,358 | 37 |
| Back - upper or lower | 17,700 | 37 |
| Shoulder | 9,479 | 20 |
| Knee | 4,252 | 9 |
| Wrist | 2,966 | 6 |
| Abdomen and pelvic region | 2,111 | 4 |
| Elbow | 1,770 | 4 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 1,732 | 4 |
| Neck | 1,312 | 3 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 30,039 | 23 |
| Knee | 6,010 | 20 |
| Ankle | 5,451 | 18 |
| Back - upper or lower | 3,348 | 11 |
| Shoulder | 2,473 | 8 |
| Wrist | 1,748 | 6 |
| Foot and toes | 1,572 | 5 |
| Lower leg | 1,036 | 3 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 1,022 | 3 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 20,339 | 16 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 7,303 | 36 |
| Foot and toes | 1,694 | 8 |
| Shoulder | 1,113 | 5 |
| Back - upper or lower | 957 | 5 |
| Knee | 912 | 4 |
| Mental stress | 11,109 | 9 |
| Psychological system | 10,943 | 99 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 9,535 | 7 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 5,376 | 56 |
| Knee | 572 | 6 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 7,124 | 5 |
| Back - upper or lower | 1,069 | 15 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 714 | 10 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 1,721 | 1 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 518 | 30 |
| Forearm | 206 | 12 |
| Foot and toes | 164 | 10 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 1,086 | 1 |
| Eye | 222 | 20 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 156 | 14 |
| Biological factors | 713 | 1 |
| Sound and pressure | 171 | 0 |
| Total | 130,195 | 100 |

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 and modelled 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 2020–21p

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 2020–21 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 7% from 131,839 claims in 2000–01 to 122,801 claims in 2019–20. Over the same period, the frequency rate (number of serious claims per million hours worked) fell by 33%, while the incidence rate (number of serious claims per 1,000 employees) fell by 40%.

Table 15: Number and rates of serious claims, number of hours worked and number of employees, 2000–01 to 2020–21p

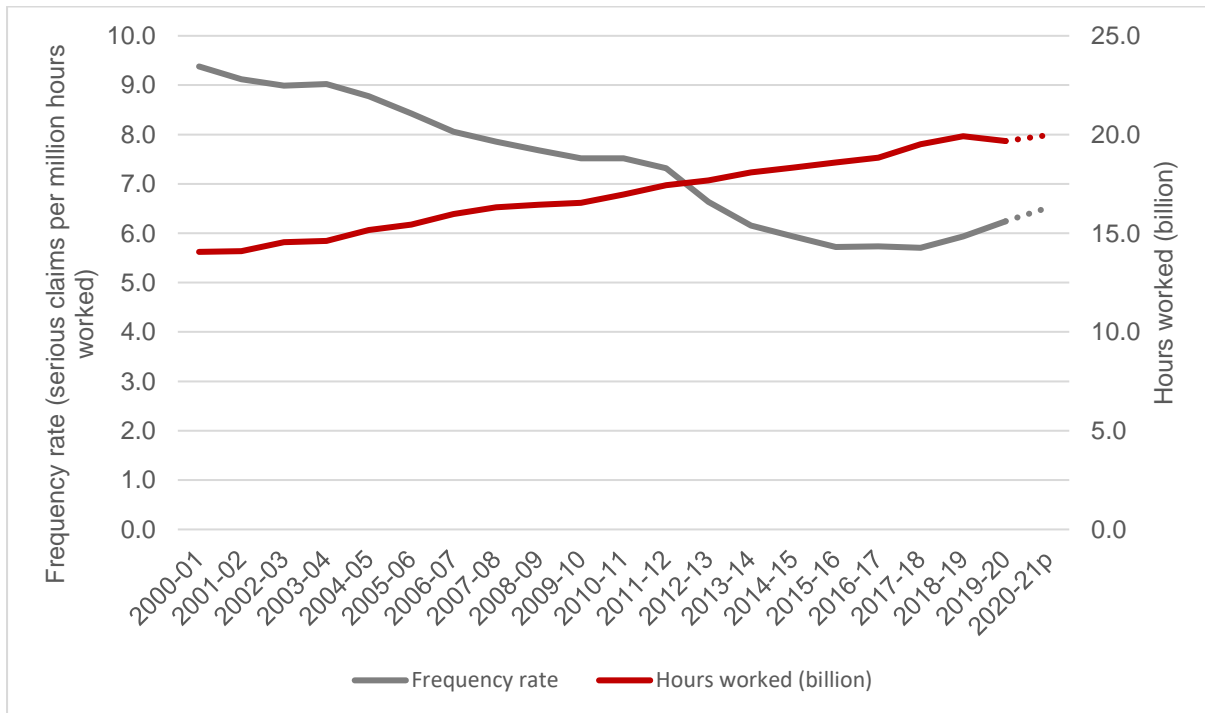
| Year of lodgement | Number of serious claims | Frequency rate (serious claims per million hours worked) | Incidence rate (serious claims per 1,000 employees) | Total hours worked (billion) | Number of employees (million) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2000–01 | 131,839 | 9.4 | 16.1 | 14.1 | 8.2 |
| 2001–02 | 128,463 | 9.1 | 15.6 | 14.1 | 8.3 |
| 2002–03 | 130,696 | 9.0 | 15.4 | 14.5 | 8.5 |
| 2003–04 | 131,836 | 9.0 | 15.2 | 14.6 | 8.7 |
| 2004–05 | 133,144 | 8.8 | 15.0 | 15.2 | 8.9 |
| 2005–06 | 130,159 | 8.4 | 14.2 | 15.4 | 9.2 |
| 2006–07 | 128,654 | 8.1 | 13.6 | 16.0 | 9.5 |
| 2007–08 | 128,162 | 7.9 | 13.2 | 16.3 | 9.7 |
| 2008–09 | 126,300 | 7.7 | 12.8 | 16.4 | 9.9 |
| 2009–10 | 124,387 | 7.5 | 12.5 | 16.5 | 10.0 |
| 2010–11 | 127,599 | 7.5 | 12.5 | 17.0 | 10.2 |
| 2011–12 | 127,622 | 7.3 | 12.3 | 17.4 | 10.4 |
| 2012–13 | 117,235 | 6.6 | 11.1 | 17.7 | 10.6 |
| 2013–14 | 111,330 | 6.2 | 10.3 | 18.1 | 10.8 |
| 2014–15 | 108,794 | 5.9 | 9.9 | 18.3 | 11.0 |
| 2015–16 | 106,313 | 5.7 | 9.5 | 18.6 | 11.2 |
| 2016–17 | 108,024 | 5.7 | 9.4 | 18.8 | 11.4 |
| 2017–18 | 111,336 | 5.7 | 9.4 | 19.5 | 11.8 |
| 2018–19 | 118,265 | 5.9 | 9.7 | 19.9 | 12.2 |
| 2019–20 | 122,801 | 6.2 | 10.1 | 19.7 | 12.2 |
| % chg 2000–01 to 2019–20 | -7 | -33 | -37 | 40 | 48 |
| 2020–21p | 130,195 | 6.5 | 10.5 | 20.0 | 12.4 |

Note 1: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2015–16 onwards 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) trended downwards until 2018-19, where they began to increase. The total number of hours worked (in billions) has continued to increase.

Figure 1: Frequency rates and total hours worked, 2000–01 to 2020–21p



2.2 Gender

Over the period from 2000–01 to 2019–20, the number of serious claims has decreased by 15% for male employees and increased 10% for female employees (**Table 16**). Frequency rates have fallen over the same period for both genders—by 36% for male employees and 27% 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 2020–21p

| 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 | 90,085 | 10.6 | 20.7 | 41,754 | 7.6 | 10.9 |
| 2001–02 | 87,066 | 10.2 | 19.9 | 41,397 | 7.5 | 10.6 |
| 2002–03 | 88,349 | 10.1 | 19.8 | 42,347 | 7.3 | 10.5 |
| 2003–04 | 88,436 | 10.0 | 19.3 | 43,400 | 7.5 | 10.6 |
| 2004–05 | 88,943 | 9.7 | 18.9 | 44,201 | 7.3 | 10.5 |
| 2005–06 | 86,916 | 9.4 | 18.1 | 43,242 | 7.0 | 9.9 |
| 2006–07 | 85,936 | 9.0 | 17.2 | 42,719 | 6.7 | 9.5 |
| 2007–08 | 84,877 | 8.7 | 16.7 | 43,285 | 6.6 | 9.4 |
| 2008–09 | 82,301 | 8.4 | 15.9 | 43,999 | 6.6 | 9.3 |
| 2009–10 | 79,693 | 8.1 | 15.3 | 44,694 | 6.6 | 9.4 |
| 2010–11 | 81,434 | 8.0 | 15.2 | 46,164 | 6.7 | 9.5 |
| 2011–12 | 81,080 | 7.8 | 14.9 | 46,542 | 6.6 | 9.4 |
| 2012–13 | 74,630 | 7.1 | 13.5 | 42,605 | 6.0 | 8.5 |
| 2013–14 | 71,163 | 6.6 | 12.5 | 40,164 | 5.5 | 7.8 |
| 2014–15 | 69,699 | 6.4 | 12.1 | 39,091 | 5.3 | 7.4 |
| 2015–16 | 68,447 | 6.3 | 11.7 | 37,866 | 5.0 | 7.0 |
| 2016–17 | 69,016 | 6.2 | 11.6 | 39,006 | 5.0 | 7.1 |
| 2017–18 | 70,530 | 6.2 | 11.6 | 40,807 | 5.0 | 7.2 |
| 2018–19 | 73,763 | 6.4 | 11.8 | 44,492 | 5.3 | 7.6 |
| 2019–20 | 76,674 | 6.8 | 12.2 | 46,000 | 5.5 | 7.8 |
| % chg 2000–01 to 2019–20 | -15 | -36 | -41 | 10 | -27 | -28 |
| 2020–21p | 79,083 | 6.9 | 12.5 | 50,930 | 6.0 | 8.5 |

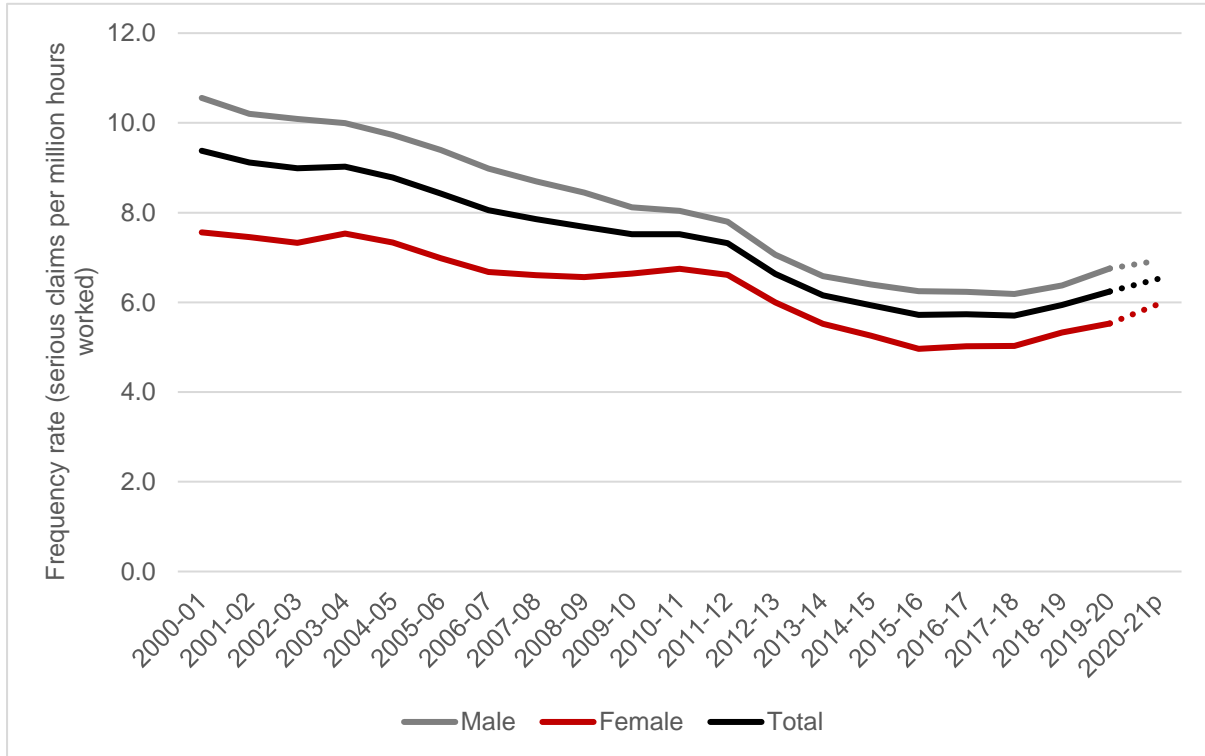
Note 1: The totals do not include serious claims where information on gender was unknown.

Note 2: This table differs from previously published tables, which rounded serious claims to the nearest 5. This rounding no longer occurs. Data from 2015–16 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 2020-21 the rate for males was 1.2 times the rate for females.

Figure 2: Frequency rates of serious claims by gender, 2000–01 to 2020–21p



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 2020–21p. Table 17 shows that the number of serious claims fell over this period for employees aged under 50. 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 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Age group | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 15–19 years | 6,573 | 3,528 | 3,569 | 3,822 | 3,845 | 4,009 | -39 | 4,581 |
| 20–24 years | 13,401 | 9,499 | 9,926 | 9,883 | 10,478 | 11,236 | -16 | 11,905 |
| 25–29 years | 15,629 | 10,470 | 10,770 | 11,348 | 12,220 | 13,087 | -16 | 13,693 |
| 30–34 years | 16,350 | 10,483 | 10,502 | 10,779 | 11,756 | 12,431 | -24 | 13,567 |
| 35–39 years | 17,726 | 10,361 | 10,247 | 10,801 | 11,558 | 12,148 | -31 | 13,035 |
| 40–44 years | 18,255 | 12,389 | 11,849 | 11,902 | 12,445 | 12,166 | -33 | 12,631 |
| 45–49 years | 16,486 | 13,414 | 13,896 | 14,133 | 14,780 | 14,776 | -10 | 15,161 |
| 50–54 years | 14,925 | 14,123 | 14,170 | 14,121 | 14,642 | 14,939 | 0 | 15,909 |
| 55–59 years | 8,233 | 12,026 | 12,391 | 13,057 | 13,943 | 14,545 | 77 | 14,856 |
| 60–64 years | 3,544 | 7,417 | 7,805 | 8,252 | 9,056 | 9,578 | 170 | 10,515 |
| 65+ years | 707 | 2,600 | 2,899 | 3,237 | 3,542 | 3,884 | 449 | 4,343 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

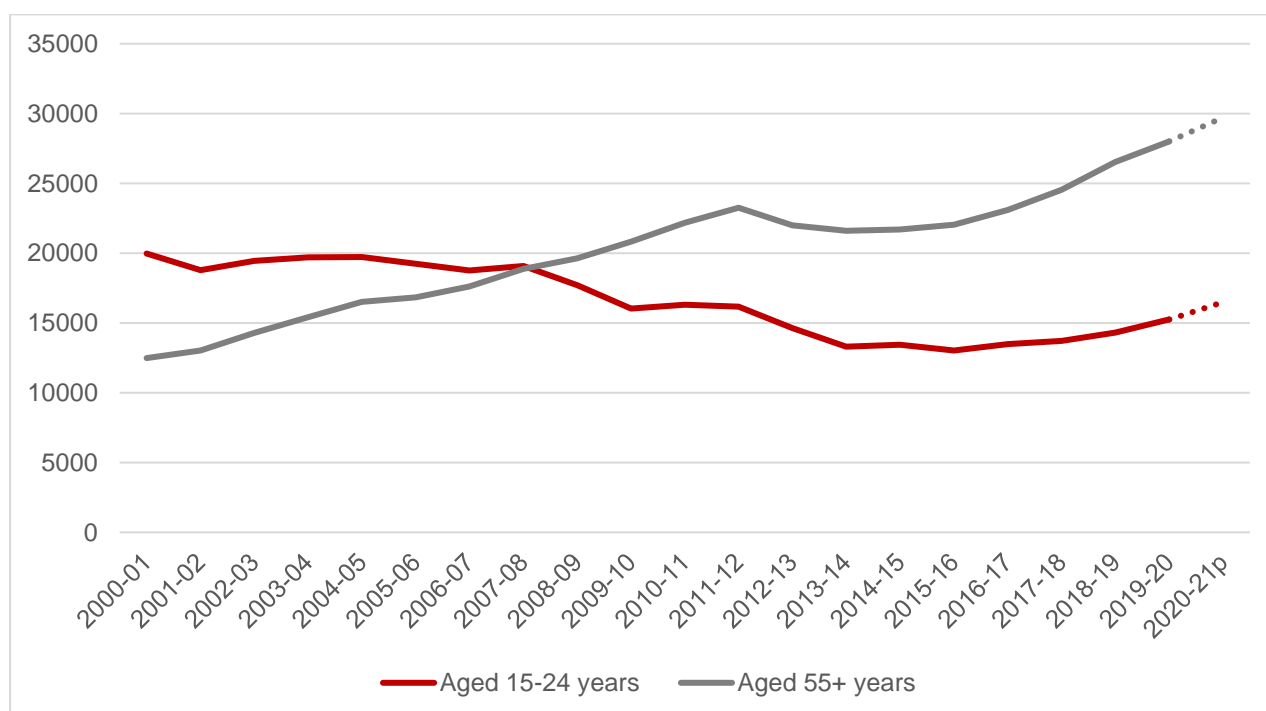
Note 1: Totals include serious claims where age is not stated.

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 2015–16 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 2019–20. 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 2020–21p



Tables 18 and 19 show that frequency and incidence rates declined for all age groups from 2000–01 to 2019–20. The largest fall occurred in employees aged 35–39 years, with the frequency rate down by 49% and incidence rate down by 52%. 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 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Age group | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 15–19 years | 9.3 | 5.9 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 7.0 | -25 | 7.5 |
| 20–24 years | 8.0 | 5.2 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 6.3 | -22 | 6.9 |
| 25–29 years | 7.9 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 5.2 | -34 | 5.6 |
| 30–34 years | 9.1 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.9 | -46 | 5.3 |
| 35–39 years | 10.0 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 5.1 | -49 | 5.2 |
| 40–44 years | 9.9 | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.5 | -44 | 5.6 |
| 45–49 years | 9.8 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 6.4 | 6.4 | -35 | 6.6 |
| 50–54 years | 10.5 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.3 | 7.4 | -30 | 7.7 |
| 55–59 years | 10.1 | 7.5 | 7.4 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 8.5 | -16 | 8.4 |
| 60–64 years | 11.7 | 7.8 | 7.9 | 8.0 | 8.5 | 8.8 | -24 | 9.3 |
| 65+ years ¹ | 7.2 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 6.2 | 6.7 | -7 | 7.1 |
| Total | 9.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.2 | -33 | 6.5 |

¹ 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.

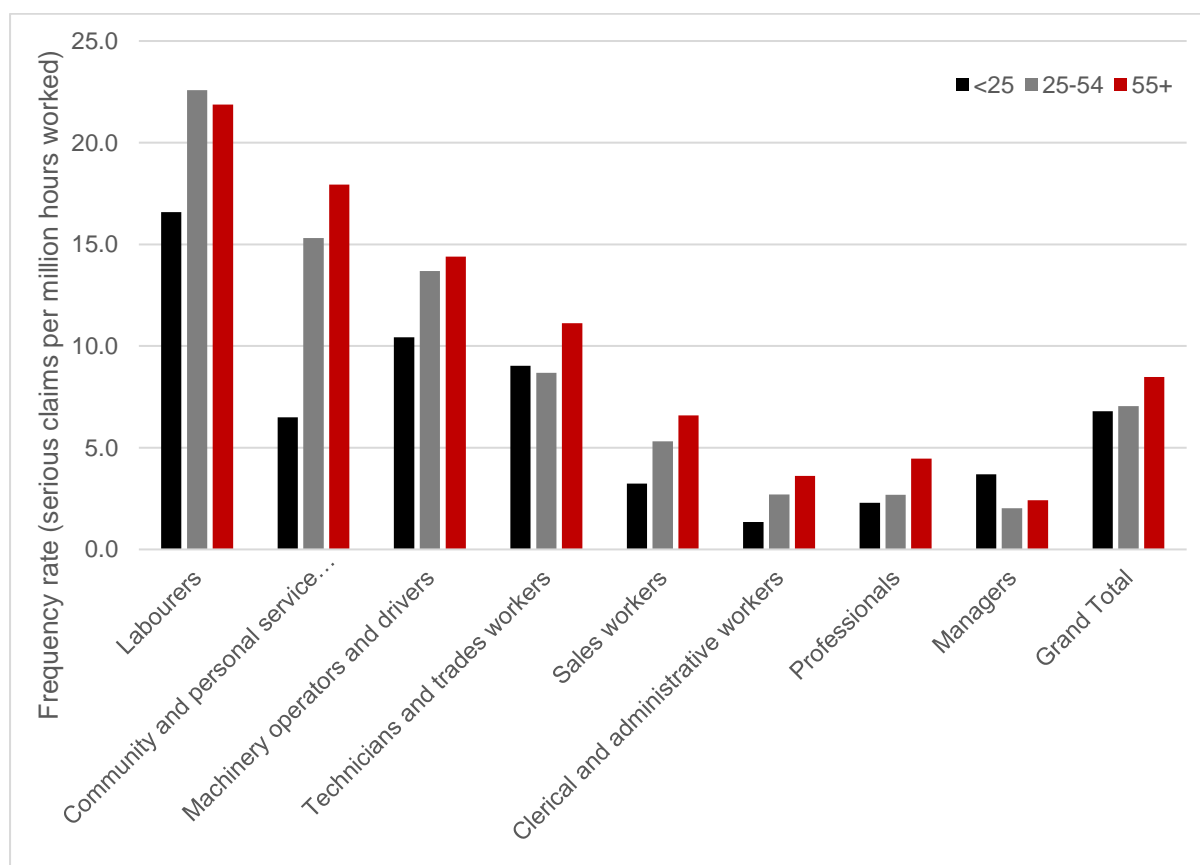
Table 19: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by age group, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Age group | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 15–19 years | 9.6 | 5.2 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 6.1 | -37 | 6.5 |
| 20–24 years | 13.2 | 7.7 | 8.1 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 9.0 | -32 | 9.7 |
| 25–29 years | 14.5 | 7.6 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 8.2 | 8.8 | -39 | 9.4 |
| 30–34 years | 16.6 | 7.8 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 8.3 | -50 | 9.1 |
| 35–39 years | 18.0 | 8.7 | 8.3 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.7 | -52 | 8.9 |
| 40–44 years | 17.9 | 10.1 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 9.9 | 9.8 | -46 | 9.8 |
| 45–49 years | 18.0 | 11.2 | 11.4 | 11.1 | 11.5 | 11.4 | -37 | 11.8 |
| 50–54 years | 19.1 | 12.5 | 12.6 | 12.6 | 12.9 | 12.9 | -32 | 13.4 |
| 55–59 years | 17.9 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 13.1 | 13.7 | 14.2 | -20 | 14.1 |
| 60–64 years | 19.1 | 12.3 | 12.5 | 12.8 | 13.2 | 13.8 | -28 | 14.8 |
| 65+ years ¹ | 9.9 | 7.7 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.2 | 8.6 | -14 | 9.2 |
| Total | 16.1 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 9.7 | 10.1 | -37 | 10.5 |

¹ 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 2020-21 combined



2.4 Industry

Table 20 shows that from 2000–01 to 2019–20, the number of serious claims fell in 12 of Australia's 19 industry divisions. The largest falls were in Information, media and telecommunications (down 59%), Manufacturing (down 46%), and Financial and insurance services (down 44%).

The number of serious claims also fell for both the Road transport (down 16%) and Agriculture (down 28%) industry sub-divisions over the same period.

The largest rises were for Mining (up 39%), Health care and social assistance (up 44%) and Construction (up 29%).

Table 20: Number of serious claims by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Industry | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Health care and social assistance | 15,254 | 16,984 | 17,795 | 18,430 | 20,420 | 22,029 | 44 | 26,239 |
| Construction | 12,184 | 13,125 | 13,342 | 14,209 | 14,642 | 15,763 | 29 | 16,088 |
| Manufacturing | 26,507 | 13,136 | 13,147 | 13,371 | 13,851 | 14,338 | -46 | 14,663 |
| Public administration and safety | 8,041 | 8,286 | 8,274 | 8,481 | 9,299 | 9,889 | 23 | 10,481 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 11,495 | 8,525 | 8,699 | 8,964 | 9,233 | 9,400 | -18 | 9,122 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 5,242 | 4,168 | 4,275 | 4,349 | 4,396 | 4,427 | -16 | 4,420 |
| Retail trade | 11,798 | 8,589 | 8,198 | 8,246 | 8,593 | 8,781 | -26 | 8,986 |
| Education and training | 6,075 | 6,738 | 7,029 | 7,156 | 7,816 | 7,681 | 26 | 8,212 |
| Accommodation and food services | 7,411 | 6,180 | 6,131 | 6,062 | 6,351 | 6,373 | -14 | 6,890 |
| Wholesale trade | 6,148 | 4,245 | 4,714 | 4,971 | 5,329 | 5,148 | -16 | 5,364 |
| Administrative and support services | 5,831 | 4,612 | 4,485 | 4,835 | 5,146 | 5,252 | -10 | 5,352 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 5,434 | 3,631 | 3,711 | 3,638 | 3,669 | 3,919 | -28 | 4,159 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 4,138 | 2,834 | 2,855 | 2,811 | 2,749 | 2,965 | -28 | 3,069 |
| Other services | 4,292 | 2,883 | 2,983 | 3,042 | 3,093 | 3,413 | -20 | 3,648 |
| Mining | 1,895 | 2,184 | 2,168 | 2,340 | 2,647 | 2,637 | 39 | 2,806 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 2,111 | 1,716 | 1,805 | 1,974 | 2,241 | 2,332 | 10 | 2,290 |
| Arts and recreation services | 2,304 | 2,107 | 2,156 | 2,164 | 2,332 | 2,218 | -4 | 2,195 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 1,410 | 1,142 | 1,194 | 1,161 | 1,212 | 1,133 | -20 | 1,313 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 1,029 | 990 | 1,002 | 1,071 | 1,113 | 1,161 | 13 | 1,128 |
| Financial and insurance services | 1,283 | 627 | 584 | 696 | 707 | 721 | -44 | 614 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 1,207 | 548 | 568 | 495 | 483 | 490 | -59 | 574 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 2015–16 onwards 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 59%),
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (down 58%)
- Information media and telecommunications (down 52%) and
- Mining (down 51%).

The smallest improvements occurred in Wholesale trade (down 7%), Education and training and Public administration and safety (both down 19%).

Frequency rates also fell in the Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries, by 32% and 37% respectively.

Table 21: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Industry | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 14.3 | 9.3 | 9.6 | 8.8 | 9.5 | 9.6 | -33 | 11.1 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 13.5 | 8.6 | 9.5 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 8.5 | -37 | 9.7 |
| Health care and social assistance | 12.1 | 7.7 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 8.5 | 8.7 | -28 | 10.2 |
| Manufacturing | 13.7 | 8.6 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.7 | 9.3 | -32 | 9.6 |
| Construction | 13.4 | 8.3 | 8.1 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 8.6 | -36 | 8.8 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 14.8 | 8.0 | 8.4 | 8.1 | 8.5 | 9.1 | -38 | 8.8 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 16.1 | 9.8 | 10.3 | 9.2 | 9.6 | 10.9 | -32 | 9.9 |
| Wholesale trade | 8.1 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 7.5 | -7 | 8.0 |
| Administrative and support services | 11.4 | 5.8 | 6.3 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 6.8 | -40 | 7.9 |
| Arts and recreation services | 13.6 | 7.0 | 7.9 | 7.0 | 7.6 | 8.1 | -40 | 7.6 |
| Public administration and safety | 8.8 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 6.5 | 7.1 | -19 | 7.1 |
| Accommodation and food services | 8.9 | 5.9 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 6.4 | -29 | 7.0 |
| Other services | 7.9 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 5.3 | -33 | 5.5 |
| Mining | 10.8 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 5.2 | -51 | 5.2 |
| Retail trade | 8.7 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.9 | 5.3 | -40 | 5.1 |
| Education and training | 5.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.5 | -19 | 4.7 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 9.2 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 3.9 | -58 | 4.5 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 4.6 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.3 | -29 | 3.2 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 3.0 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.5 | -52 | 1.8 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 2.0 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.3 | -37 | 1.2 |
| Financial and insurance services | 2.1 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | -59 | 0.7 |
| Total | 9.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.2 | -33 | 6.5 |

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 2020–21 (**Table 22**). The largest falls occurred in:

- Finance and insurance services (down 60%),
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (down 59%),
- Information media and telecommunications and Mining (down 54% and 55% respectively), and
- Arts and recreation services (down 45%).

Table 22: Incidence rates (serious claims per 1,000 employees) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Industry | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 27.7 | 18.4 | 18.8 | 17.1 | 17.7 | 18.7 | -32 | 20.2 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 26.0 | 17.1 | 18.8 | 16.5 | 16.2 | 17.1 | -34 | 18 |
| Manufacturing | 26.7 | 16.0 | 15.5 | 15.8 | 16.2 | 17.0 | -36 | 17.6 |
| Construction | 27.4 | 16.5 | 16.0 | 15.3 | 15.6 | 16.5 | -40 | 16.9 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 29.1 | 15.1 | 15.6 | 15.5 | 15.7 | 16.6 | -43 | 15.8 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 34.5 | 19.9 | 21 | 18.7 | 18.9 | 21 | -39 | 19.2 |
| Wholesale trade | 15.9 | 12.8 | 12.8 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.8 | -13 | 14.7 |
| Health care and social assistance | 17.8 | 11.2 | 11.5 | 11.1 | 12.1 | 12.5 | -29 | 14.6 |
| Administrative and support services | 18.8 | 9.2 | 10.0 | 11.0 | 11.2 | 10.5 | -44 | 12.1 |
| Public administration and safety | 15.3 | 11.0 | 10.4 | 11.3 | 10.8 | 11.7 | -24 | 11.8 |
| Mining | 25.1 | 9.9 | 10.0 | 10.5 | 10.9 | 11.2 | -55 | 11.2 |
| Arts and recreation services | 18.5 | 9.6 | 10.0 | 8.9 | 9.7 | 10.2 | -45 | 9.7 |
| Other services | 13.8 | 7.7 | 7.3 | 7.5 | 7.4 | 8.6 | -38 | 8.9 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 17.7 | 8.1 | 8.7 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.3 | -59 | 8.8 |
| Accommodation and food services | 11.9 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 7.0 | 7.4 | -38 | 8.2 |
| Education and training | 9.0 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.3 | 6.9 | -24 | 7.1 |
| Retail trade | 12.1 | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 7.2 | -41 | 7.0 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 8.8 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 5.7 | -35 | 5.7 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 5.3 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.4 | -54 | 3.1 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 3.8 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 | -42 | 2.1 |
| Financial and insurance services | 3.9 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | -60 | 1.3 |
| Total | 16.1 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 9.7 | 10.1 | -37 | 10.5 |

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 6 of the 8 major occupation groups. The largest percentage falls from 2000–01 to 2019–20 occurred among Clerical and administrative workers (down by 36%), Labourers (down 35%) and Technicians and trades workers (down by 24%).

In contrast, the number of serious claims made by Community and personal service workers increased by 61% over the period. This is largely due to the growth in employment for 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 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Occupation | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Labourers | 38,208 | 23,061 | 22,642 | 23,085 | 23,393 | 24,930 | -35 | 29,099 |
| Community and personal service workers | 14,906 | 17,885 | 18,536 | 19,410 | 22,331 | 23,998 | 61 | 25,699 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 26,882 | 17,421 | 18,222 | 18,033 | 18,863 | 20,477 | -24 | 20,440 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 20,056 | 15,955 | 15,985 | 15,776 | 16,998 | 16,981 | -15 | 17,049 |
| Professionals | 10,353 | 10,253 | 11,412 | 11,476 | 12,378 | 12,615 | 22 | 14,436 |
| Sales workers | 7,320 | 6,777 | 7,021 | 6,548 | 6,492 | 6,660 | -9 | 6,799 |
| Managers | 5,163 | 4,266 | 4,451 | 4,635 | 5,245 | 5,549 | 7 | 5,479 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 7,898 | 4,563 | 4,384 | 4,721 | 5,053 | 5,033 | -36 | 4,901 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 2015–16 are revised data.

All occupations have recorded a fall both in frequency and incidence rates over the period (**Tables 24 and 25**). Clerical and administrative workers experienced the largest fall in the frequency rate. The incidence rates Clerical and administrative workers, Managers and Technicians and trades workers all decreased by 46%.

The smallest fall in frequency and incidence rates was for Community and personal service workers. For this occupation, rates fell 5% and 12% respectively.

Table 24: Frequency rates (serious claims per million hours worked) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Occupation | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Labourers | 26.3 | 15.5 | 14.2 | 14.3 | 14.2 | 15.9 | -40 | 19.2 |
| Community and personal service workers | 14.9 | 11.1 | 11.3 | 11.4 | 12.6 | 14.2 | -5 | 14.8 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 17.9 | 11.9 | 11.5 | 10.7 | 11.1 | 11.8 | -34 | 12.1 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 12.5 | 6.3 | 6.6 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 7.2 | -42 | 7.2 |
| Sales workers | 5.8 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.9 | -16 | 5.0 |
| Professionals | 3.4 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.4 | -30 | 2.6 |
| Managers | 3.2 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.0 | -38 | 1.9 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 3.3 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.9 | -43 | 1.8 |
| Total | 9.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.2 | -33 | 6.5 |

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 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Occupation | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Labourers | 38.9 | 22.2 | 20.4 | 20.5 | 20.5 | 21.9 | -44 | 26.6 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 34.9 | 23.1 | 22.5 | 20.9 | 21.3 | 22.0 | -37 | 22.6 |
| Community and personal service workers | 20.2 | 14.3 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 16.1 | 17.8 | -12 | 18.8 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 24.6 | 12.0 | 12.6 | 11.8 | 12.1 | 13.3 | -46 | 13.3 |
| Sales workers | 7.7 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 6.1 | -20 | 6.2 |
| Professionals | 6.4 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.1 | -36 | 4.4 |
| Managers | 7.3 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.0 | -46 | 3.7 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 5.3 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.9 | -46 | 2.8 |
| Total | 16.1 | 9.5 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 9.7 | 10.1 | -37 | 10.5 |

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 118,542 claims in 2000–01 to 106,493 claims in 2019–20. Within this group, the largest percentage decrease was for Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases (37% 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 23% over the same period. This was overwhelmingly due to an increase in the number of serious claims for Mental health conditions. These grew by 73% over the same period and represented 28% of all disease claims in 2019-20.

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 2019–20. This was due to increased screening for dust diseases in a number of jurisdictions over the last few years that has resulted in additional claims for workers' compensation. Please note that this is an underestimate as not all dust disease compensation schemes provide data to Safe Work Australia.

Table 26: Number of serious claims by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Nature of injury or disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | | | |
| Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases | 74,492 | 45,455 | 45,342 | 45,486 | 46,790 | 46,702 | -37 | 52,316 |
| Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage | 22,466 | 16,361 | 16,374 | 17,035 | 18,152 | 18,789 | -16 | 19,486 |
| Fractures | 11,242 | 10,597 | 11,588 | 12,008 | 12,238 | 13,021 | 16 | 13,732 |
| Burns | 2,072 | 1,592 | 1,598 | 1,693 | 1,77 | 1,818 | -12 | 1,850 |
| Intracranial injuries | 410 | 633 | 813 | 849 | 1,009 | 1,088 | 166 | 1,199 |
| Injury to nerves and spinal cord | 84 | 153 | 143 | 124 | 168 | 220 | 161 | 205 |
| Total: Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 118,542 | 94,862 | 95,621 | 98,263 | 102,639 | 106,493 | -10 | 112,978 |
| Diseases | | | | | | | | |
| Mental health conditions | 6,607 | 6,931 | 7,813 | 8,641 | 10,729 | 11,410 | 73 | 12,155 |
| Digestive system diseases | 3,233 | 2,305 | 2,234 | 2,132 | 2,223 | 2,141 | -34 | 1,989 |
| Nervous system and sense organ diseases | 1,595 | 1,115 | 1,170 | 1,193 | 1,234 | 1,379 | -14 | 1,474 |
| Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases | 853 | 440 | 461 | 425 | 464 | 467 | -45 | 460 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 281 | 206 | 244 | 240 | 454 | 338 | 20 | 264 |
| Neoplasms (cancer) | 61 | 37 | 64 | 46 | 75 | 79 | 30 | 52 |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases | 298 | 221 | 216 | 174 | 223 | 284 | -5 | 608 |
| Circulatory system diseases | 190 | 112 | 118 | 111 | 140 | 130 | -32 | 103 |
| Total: diseases | 13,297 | 11,451 | 12,403 | 13,073 | 15,626 | 16,308 | 23 | 17,218 |
| Total: serious claims | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 2015–16 are revised data.

Note 3: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 2020-21p. Within this group, serious claims for the Shoulder have risen by 27% (from 10,574 claims in 2000-01 to 13,416 claims in 2019-20).

The Trunk accounted for nearly one quarter (22%) of all serious claims in 2020-21p. This group of claims fell 35%, from 42,170 claims in 2000-01 to 27,225 claims in 2019-20. The largest contributor to this fall was Back — upper or lower claims. This fell from 34,886 claims in 2000-01 to 22,064 claims in 2019-20.

However, serious claims for Non-physical locations increased by 73%. 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 2015-16 to 2020-21p

| Bodily location of injury or disease | 2000-01 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | % chg | 2020-21p |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Upper limbs | 42,662 | 36,985 | 38,140 | 38,934 | 41,633 | 43,524 | 2 | 45,993 |
| Elbow | 3,088 | 2,528 | 2,698 | 2,747 | 2,987 | 2,992 | -3 | 3,238 |
| Forearm | 2,141 | 1,598 | 1,520 | 1,638 | 1,753 | 1,990 | -7 | 2,107 |
| Hand, fingers and thumb | 17,434 | 13,962 | 14,493 | 14,723 | 15,399 | 16,060 | -8 | 16,909 |
| Shoulder | 10,574 | 11,327 | 11,705 | 11,779 | 12,912 | 13,416 | 27 | 14,040 |
| Wrist | 6,074 | 4,910 | 5,042 | 5,288 | 5,773 | 5,931 | -2 | 6,305 |
| Lower limbs | 26,089 | 24,207 | 25,264 | 25,860 | 27,267 | 28,150 | 8 | 30,082 |
| Ankle | 5,833 | 5,379 | 5,744 | 5,964 | 6,238 | 6,366 | 9 | 7,088 |
| Foot and toes | 4,494 | 3,693 | 3,872 | 4,009 | 4,235 | 4,305 | -4 | 4,436 |
| Hip | 771 | 856 | 900 | 932 | 1,024 | 1,032 | 34 | 1,104 |
| Knee | 10,387 | 10,240 | 10,427 | 10,626 | 11,247 | 11,728 | 13 | 12,342 |
| Lower leg | 2,223 | 2,199 | 2,340 | 2,401 | 2,597 | 2,870 | 29 | 2,989 |
| Upper leg | 999 | 927 | 920 | 982 | 1,133 | 1,135 | 14 | 1,331 |
| Trunk | 42,170 | 25,884 | 25,276 | 25,356 | 26,369 | 27,225 | -35 | 28,560 |
| Abdomen and pelvic region | 4,738 | 3,022 | 3,004 | 2,856 | 2,984 | 2,989 | -37 | 2,794 |
| Back - upper or lower | 34,886 | 20,996 | 20,268 | 20,444 | 21,132 | 22,064 | -37 | 23,313 |
| Chest (thorax) | 2,317 | 1,658 | 1,830 | 1,862 | 2,089 | 2,054 | -11 | 2,291 |
| Non-physical locations | 6,597 | 6,927 | 7,814 | 8,638 | 10,719 | 11,398 | 73 | 12,134 |
| Head | 3,695 | 3,337 | 3,470 | 3,631 | 4,101 | 4,571 | 24 | 4,783 |
| Cranium | 823 | 918 | 1,126 | 1,131 | 1,326 | 1,439 | 75 | 1,566 |
| Ear | 167 | 106 | 112 | 157 | 130 | 169 | 1 | 137 |
| Eye | 1,121 | 820 | 772 | 888 | 897 | 1,082 | -4 | 1,092 |
| Face, not elsewhere | 630 | 612 | 574 | 578 | 635 | 663 | 5 | 696 |
| Mouth | 135 | 161 | 175 | 158 | 210 | 238 | 77 | 253 |
| Nose | 228 | 207 | 222 | 200 | 235 | 238 | 4 | 280 |
| Multiple locations | 6,162 | 4,605 | 4,754 | 4,578 | 4,590 | 4,098 | -33 | 4,467 |
| Neck | 3,660 | 2,078 | 2,197 | 2,213 | 2,492 | 2,615 | -29 | 2,652 |
| Systemic locations | 647 | 399 | 398 | 395 | 456 | 675 | 4 | 938 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 2015-16 are revised data.

Note 3: This table shows rounded and modelled 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 2020–21p. However, claims for Body stressing injuries declined by 21% between 2000–01 and 2019–20. 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 increased substantially since 2000–01 (up by 177%). 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 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Mechanism of injury or disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Body stressing | 57,637 | 41,650 | 41,162 | 40,755 | 43,135 | 45,529 | -21 | 48,358 |
| Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying | 18,680 | 17,377 | 16,540 | 17,597 | 19,063 | 20,070 | 7 | 22,182 |
| Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects | 28,339 | 15,856 | 16,027 | 14,992 | 15,310 | 15,734 | -44 | 16,614 |
| Muscular stress with no objects being handled | 6,253 | 5,258 | 5,627 | 5,357 | 5,498 | 6,006 | -4 | 5,904 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 25,918 | 23,884 | 25,193 | 25,561 | 26,686 | 28,258 | 9 | 30,039 |
| Falls from a height | 8,778 | 6,549 | 6,861 | 6,697 | 6,904 | 6,957 | -21 | 6,647 |
| Falls on the same level | 15,447 | 15,152 | 16,022 | 16,752 | 17,528 | 19,080 | 24 | 20,860 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 17,953 | 15,863 | 16,556 | 17,468 | 18,737 | 19,617 | 9 | 20,339 |
| Being assaulted by a person or persons | 1,086 | 2,102 | 2,387 | 2,338 | 2,603 | 3003 | 177 | 3,682 |
| Being hit by a person accidentally | 1,317 | 850 | 963 | 1,091 | 1,271 | 1,277 | -3 | 1,091 |
| Being hit by falling objects | 4,149 | 3,437 | 3,592 | 3,646 | 3,704 | 3,920 | -6 | 3,838 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 5,839 | 5,431 | 5,308 | 6,005 | 6,273 | 6,505 | 11 | 6,858 |
| Being trapped between stationary and moving objects | 2,439 | 2,063 | 2,138 | 2,341 | 2,650 | 2,419 | -1 | 2,371 |
| Mental stress | 6,288 | 6,477 | 7,266 | 8,220 | 10,139 | 10,573 | 68 | 11,109 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 10,469 | 7,601 | 8,021 | 7,622 | 7,828 | 8,762 | -16 | 9,535 |
| Hitting moving objects | 5,270 | 4,060 | 4,278 | 4,043 | 3,930 | 4,572 | -13 | 5,053 |
| Hitting stationary objects | 5,053 | 3,500 | 3,693 | 3,525 | 3,846 | 4,134 | -18 | 4,418 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 9,400 | 8,041 | 7,099 | 8,905 | 8,490 | 6,609 | -30 | 7,124 |
| Vehicle accident | 2,725 | 2,556 | 2,653 | 2,669 | 2,752 | 2,667 | -2 | 2,730 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 1,928 | 1,488 | 1,446 | 1,492 | 1,589 | 1,702 | -12 | 1,721 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 1,519 | 855 | 816 | 838 | 1,060 | 1,115 | -27 | 1,086 |
| Biological factors | 582 | 320 | 348 | 327 | 428 | 483 | -17 | 713 |
| Sound and pressure | 147 | 133 | 118 | 148 | 173 | 152 | 4 | 171 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 18% between 2000–01 and 2019–20. Despite this fall, they consistently had the highest number of serious claims over the period.

From 2000–01 to 2019–20, the largest declines in the number of serious claims were in Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant and Other and unspecified agencies (both down by 37%) and Chemicals and chemical products (down by 31%).

Over the same period, the largest increase in the number of serious claims was in Animal, human and biological agencies (up by 41%) and Materials and substances (up by 18%).

Table 29: Number of serious claims by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2020–21p

| Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg | 2020–21p |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 35,272 | 25,617 | 25,561 | 25,303 | 27,472 | 28,760 | -18 | 29,531 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 13,846 | 14,584 | 15,410 | 16,133 | 18,082 | 19,544 | 41 | 21,768 |
| Environmental agencies | 17,907 | 17,050 | 18,123 | 17,426 | 18,464 | 19,590 | 9 | 20,763 |
| Materials and substances | 14,674 | 14,965 | 14,992 | 16,015 | 16,120 | 17,258 | 18 | 18,580 |
| Other and unspecified agencies | 21,921 | 13,606 | 13,079 | 14,834 | 15,882 | 13,865 | -37 | 15,078 |
| Mobile plant and transport | 11,372 | 10,142 | 10,377 | 10,835 | 11,254 | 11,677 | 3 | 12,039 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 9,165 | 5,020 | 5,175 | 5,249 | 5,283 | 5,765 | -37 | 5,839 |
| Powered equipment, tools and appliances | 6,320 | 4,593 | 4,603 | 4,733 | 4,859 | 5,401 | -15 | 5,627 |
| Chemicals and chemical products | 1,364 | 738 | 703 | 809 | 849 | 941 | -31 | 971 |
| Total | 131,839 | 106,313 | 108,024 | 111,336 | 118,265 | 122,801 | -7 | 130,195 |

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 paid

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 (2020–21). 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 2019–20. The percentage change rather than percentage difference is used in this report. This is a change in reporting compared to previous editions of the AWCS.

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.

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

Between 2000–01 and 2019–20, 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 190% from \$5,200 to \$15,100 (**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 Index¹ (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 62% between 2000–01 and 2019–20.

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 2019–20

| Financial year | Number of serious claims | Median time lost (working weeks) | Median compensation paid (\$) | Median compensation (WPI adjusted) (\$) |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 2000–01 | 131,839 | 4.2 | 5,200 | 5,200 |
| 2001–02 | 128,463 | 4.4 | 5,500 | 5,300 |
| 2002–03 | 130,696 | 4.4 | 5,500 | 5,100 |
| 2003–04 | 131,836 | 4.2 | 5,100 | 4,600 |
| 2004–05 | 133,144 | 4.2 | 5,700 | 5,000 |
| 2005–06 | 130,159 | 4.4 | 5,700 | 4,800 |
| 2006–07 | 128,654 | 4.4 | 6,200 | 5,000 |
| 2007–08 | 128,162 | 4.8 | 6,800 | 5,200 |
| 2008–09 | 126,300 | 5.0 | 8,000 | 5,900 |
| 2009–10 | 124,387 | 5.0 | 8,600 | 6,200 |
| 2010–11 | 127,599 | 5.4 | 9,100 | 6,300 |
| 2011–12 | 127,622 | 5.6 | 9,100 | 6,100 |
| 2012–13 | 117,235 | 5.2 | 9,900 | 6,400 |
| 2013–14 | 111,330 | 5.4 | 10,700 | 6,800 |
| 2014–15 | 108,794 | 5.8 | 11,600 | 7,100 |
| 2015–16 | 106,313 | 6.0 | 13,000 | 7,800 |
| 2016–17 | 108,024 | 6.2 | 14,000 | 8,300 |
| 2017–18 | 111,336 | 6.6 | 14,600 | 8,500 |
| 2018–19 | 118,265 | 6.9 | 15,000 | 8,500 |
| 2019–20 | 122,801 | 7.0 | 15,100 | 8,400 |

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 2015–16 are revised data.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Wage Price Index, Australia*.

Figure 5: Median compensation paid (original) and WPI adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2019–20

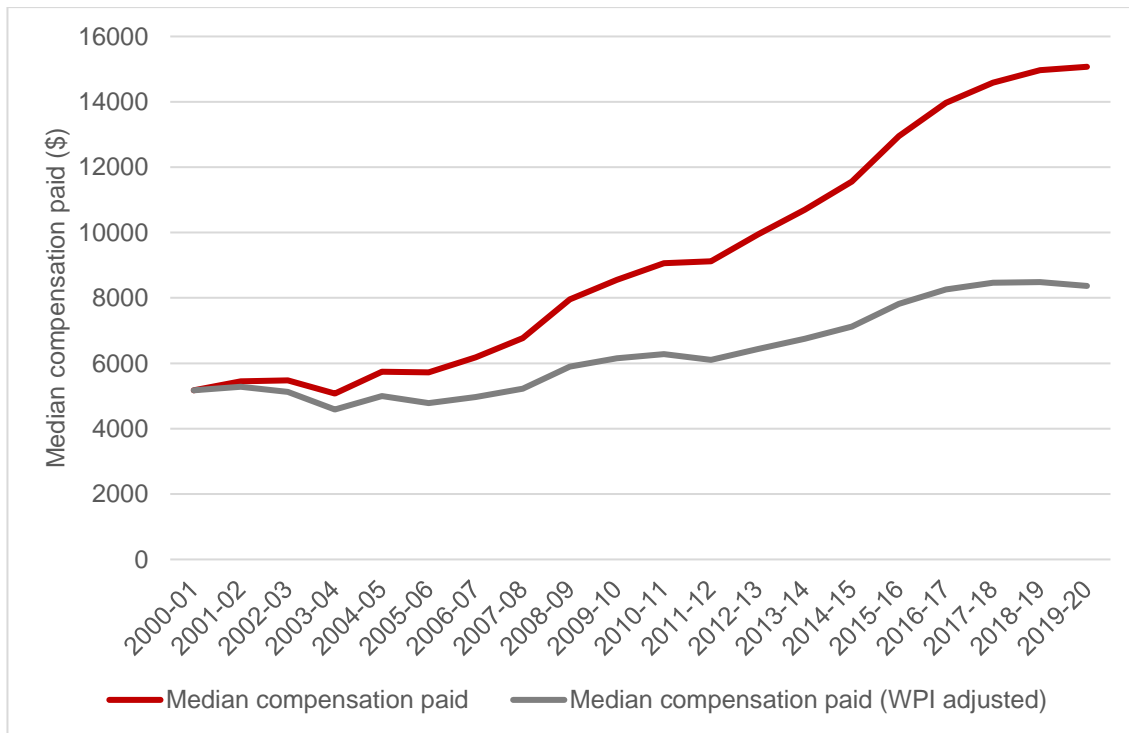
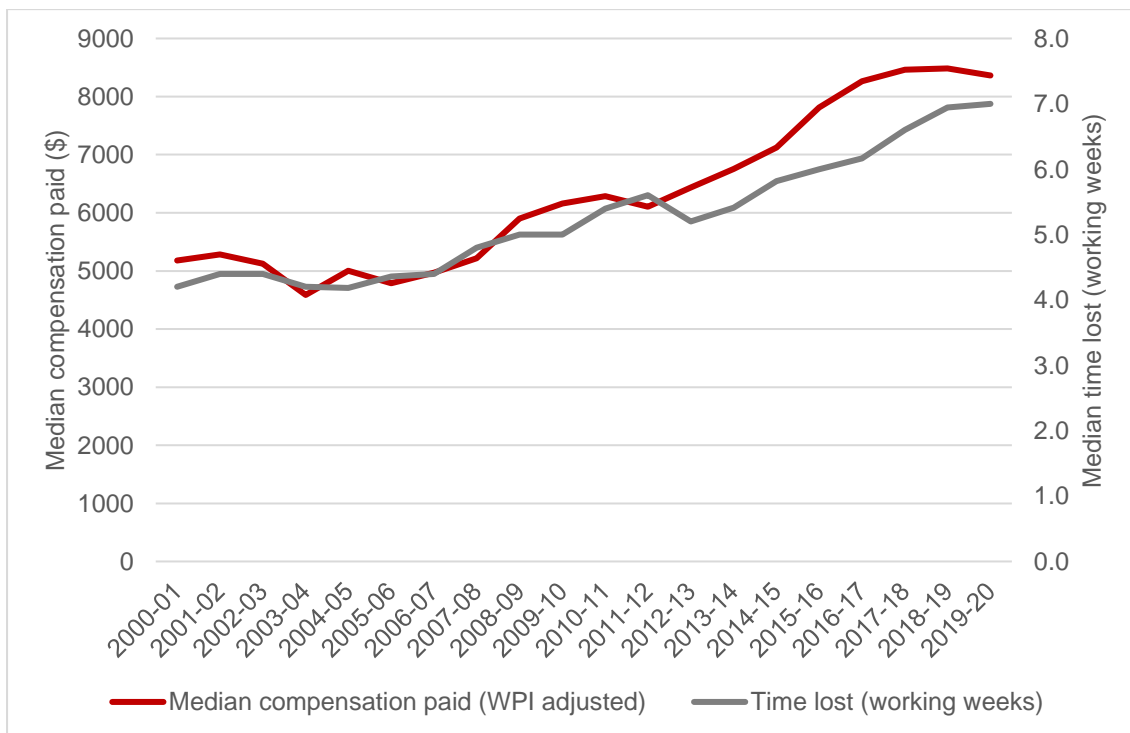


Figure 6 shows a comparison between median time lost and the WPI adjusted median compensation paid between 2000–01 and 2019–20. It shows that median compensation paid has broadly moved in line with median time lost in real terms.

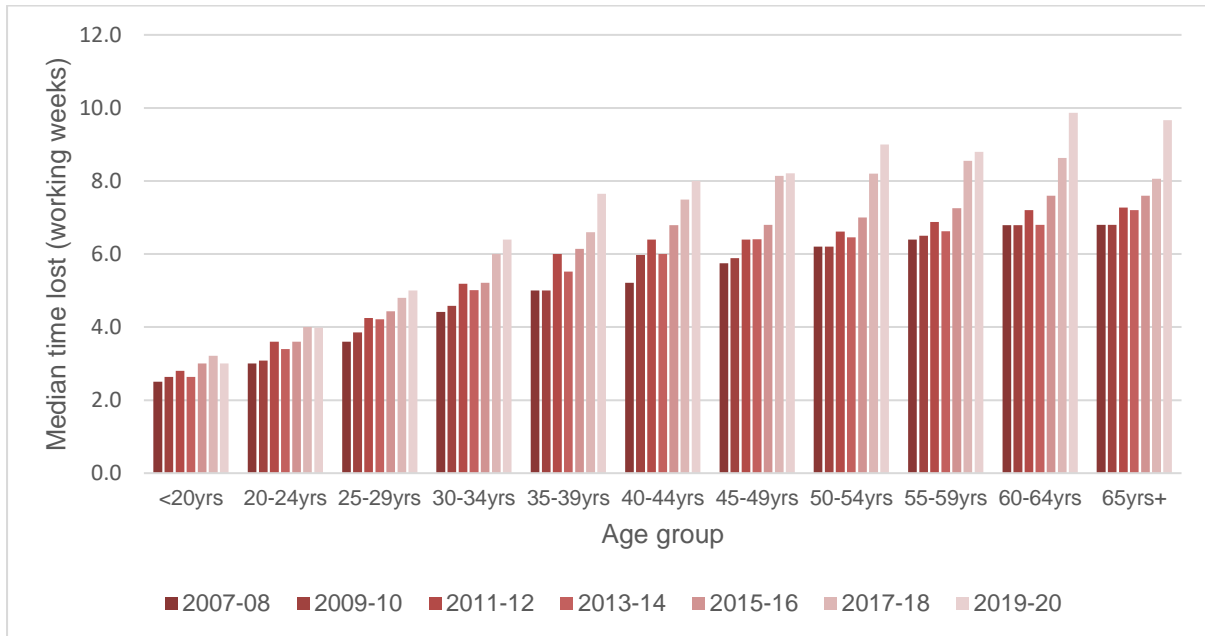
Figure 6: Median time lost and inflation adjusted median compensation paid, 2000–01 to 2019–20



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 2007-08 and 2019-20. There were rises in most age groups in 2019-20, except for workers aged 24 and under.

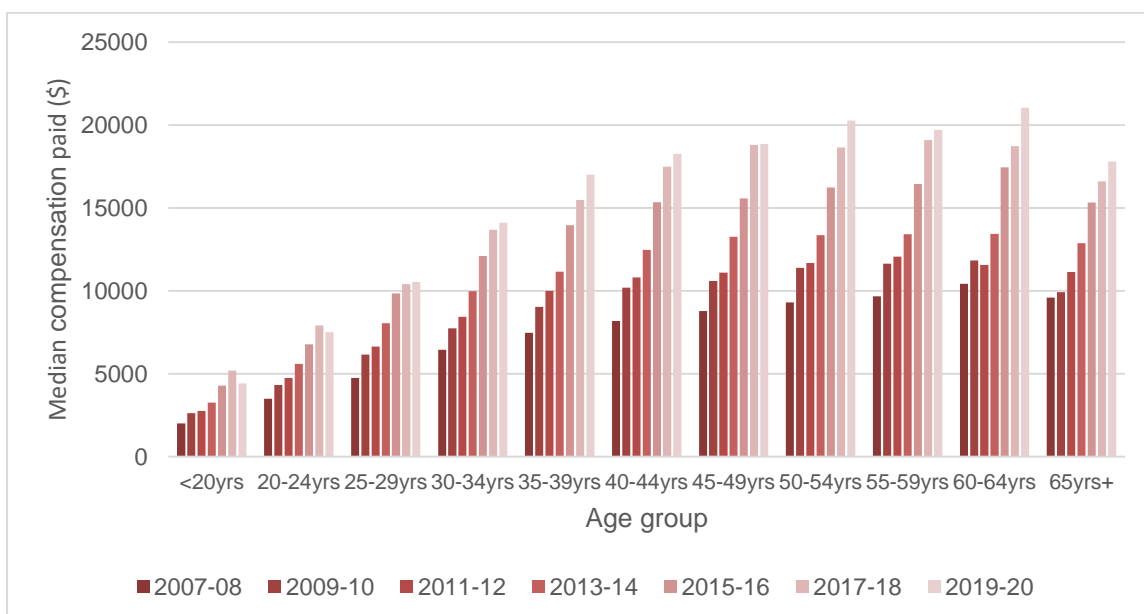
Figure 7: Serious claims: median time lost by age group, 2007-08 to 2019-20



Note: This figure only shows every second year's data since 2007-08, 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 2007-08 and 2019-20.

Figure 8: Serious claims: median compensation paid by age group, 2007-08 to 2019-20



Note: This figure only shows every second year's data since 2007-08, thus covering a greater span of time.

3.3 Gender

In 2019–20, the median time lost for a serious claim was 6.8 working weeks for male employees and 7.4 working weeks for female employees. The median compensation paid for a serious claim was \$16,000 for male employees and \$13,600 for female employees.

Table 31 shows that the median compensation amount paid to males has increased by 220% from \$5,000 in 2000–01 to \$16,000 in 2019–20. The median compensation amount paid to females increased by 143% from \$5,600 in 2000–01 to \$13,600 in 2019–20. 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 2019–20

| Financial year | Median time lost (working weeks) | | Median compensation paid (\$) | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 2000–01 | 4.0 | 4.8 | 5,000 | 5,600 |
| 2001–02 | 4.2 | 5.0 | 5,200 | 6,100 |
| 2002–03 | 4.2 | 5.1 | 5,300 | 6,000 |
| 2003–04 | 4.0 | 4.8 | 4,900 | 5,400 |
| 2004–05 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 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 | 5.6 | 6,800 | 6,700 |
| 2008–09 | 4.7 | 5.6 | 8,100 | 7,500 |
| 2009–10 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 8,700 | 8,300 |
| 2010–11 | 5.0 | 6.1 | 9,200 | 8,800 |
| 2011–12 | 5.3 | 6.2 | 9,400 | 8,600 |
| 2012–13 | 5.0 | 5.9 | 10,400 | 9,000 |
| 2013–14 | 5.2 | 6.0 | 11,400 | 9,400 |
| 2014–15 | 5.6 | 6.2 | 12,400 | 10,000 |
| 2015–16 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 13,800 | 11,400 |
| 2016–17 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 14,800 | 12,400 |
| 2017–18 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 15,400 | 13,100 |
| 2018–19 | 6.6 | 7.2 | 15,900 | 13,500 |
| 2019–20 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 16,000 | 13,600 |

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

3.4 Industry

Table 32 shows that median time lost increased for all 19 industries in 2019–20 compared to 2000–01. The greatest rise was in the Financial and insurance services industry, up by 136% from 5.2 working weeks in 2000–01 to 12.2 working weeks in 2019–20. The smallest rise was in the Accommodation and food services industry, up by 22% from 3.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 4.6 working weeks in 2019–20.

The Road transport and Agriculture sub-industries also recorded increases over the period. They rose 85% and 20% respectively.

Table 32: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Industry | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Financial and insurance services | 5.2 | 7.4 | 9.8 | 9.2 | 9.4 | 12.2 | 136 |
| Mining | 5.2 | 8.2 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 9.6 | 10.4 | 101 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 4.2 | 7.3 | 7.4 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.8 | 112 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | 5.2 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 9.6 | 9.1 | 9.6 | 85 |
| Public administration and safety | 4.0 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 104 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 3.4 | 7.2 | 8.1 | 8.0 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 129 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 4.4 | 6.4 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 7.7 | 7.6 | 74 |
| Construction | 5.1 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 7.6 | 48 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 4.0 | 6.0 | 5.2 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 86 |
| Other services | 4.6 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 7.0 | 7.3 | 7.4 | 62 |
| Retail trade | 3.5 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 104 |
| Arts and recreation services | 4.7 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 7.2 | 54 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 4.6 | 6.0 | 6.8 | 7.3 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 57 |
| Administrative and support services | 4.6 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.9 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 56 |
| Health care and social assistance | 4.4 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 6.3 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 51 |
| Wholesale trade | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 53 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 4.8 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 6.6 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 25 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | 5.0 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 6.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 20 |
| Manufacturing | 4.0 | 5.2 | 5.7 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 48 |
| Education and training | 4.0 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 45 |
| Accommodation and food services | 3.8 | 4.5 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 22 |
| Total | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 67 |

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 2019–20. 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 128%) and Health care and social assistance (up by 137%).

The largest percentage increases in median payments were in:

- Electricity, gas, water and waste services (up by 330%),
- Transport, postal and warehousing (up by 293%),
- Financial and insurance services (up 273%) and
- Public administration and safety (up 243%).

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 295% and 200% respectively.

Table 33: Serious claims: median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Industry | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | % chg |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Mining | 11,900 | 30,700 | 31,600 | 31,000 | 31,800 | 35,100 | 195 |
| Financial and insurance services | 7,400 | 20,800 | 27,200 | 22,800 | 24,800 | 27,700 | 273 |
| Road transport | 5,600 | 17,900 | 18,200 | 20,100 | 20,200 | 22,100 | 295 |
| Public administration and safety | 6,400 | 15,900 | 18,600 | 19,300 | 22,000 | 21,800 | 243 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 5,000 | 18,300 | 19,500 | 18,900 | 21,000 | 21,400 | 330 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 6,200 | 17,700 | 15,500 | 21,000 | 17,600 | 20,500 | 230 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 5,100 | 16,900 | 17,400 | 18,500 | 19,000 | 20,100 | 293 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | <i>5,600</i> | <i>17,900</i> | <i>18,200</i> | <i>20,100</i> | <i>20,200</i> | <i>22,100</i> | <i>295</i> |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 6,600 | 16,800 | 18,800 | 19,700 | 19,100 | 18,500 | 179 |
| Construction | 6,200 | 16,600 | 16,600 | 17,500 | 17,900 | 17,700 | 185 |
| Other services | 5,200 | 14,700 | 14,500 | 15,700 | 16,100 | 16,000 | 204 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 5,600 | 13,200 | 16,600 | 15,500 | 17,000 | 16,000 | 185 |
| Wholesale trade | 5,500 | 14,000 | 14,700 | 16,000 | 15,400 | 15,800 | 187 |
| Manufacturing | 5,400 | 13,800 | 14,700 | 14,900 | 14,900 | 15,100 | 179 |
| Education and training | 5,900 | 11,700 | 13,000 | 14,500 | 15,500 | 14,900 | 154 |
| Arts and recreation services | 4,600 | 11,400 | 12,600 | 11,200 | 12,800 | 14,200 | 210 |
| Retail trade | 4,100 | 11,100 | 12,300 | 12,200 | 12,700 | 13,000 | 220 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 4,000 | 11,400 | 12,600 | 13,500 | 12,900 | 12,500 | 210 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | <i>4,000</i> | <i>11,300</i> | <i>12,300</i> | <i>13,100</i> | <i>12,800</i> | <i>12,100</i> | <i>200</i> |
| Administrative and support services | 4,200 | 10,700 | 10,800 | 11,500 | 11,300 | 12,200 | 191 |
| Health care and social assistance | 4,800 | 9,600 | 10,400 | 11,200 | 11,400 | 11,400 | 137 |
| Accommodation and food services | 3,400 | 6,500 | 7,200 | 7,700 | 7,700 | 7,700 | 128 |
| Total | 5,200 | 13,000 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,100 | 191 |

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

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.

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 25%) and Education and training (up by 32%).

The largest percentage increases were in Transport, postal and warehousing (up by 122%) and Electricity, gas, water and waste services (up by 117%).

The Mining industry had the highest level of WPI adjusted median compensation paid each year. It paid \$18,335 in 2019-20. Workers in Mining have relatively high earnings. Average weekly earnings of people working in Mining is consistently the highest of any industry².

Table 34: Serious claims: WPI adjusted median compensation paid by industry, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Industry | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | %chg |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Mining | 11,900 | 17,100 | 17,400 | 16,900 | 17,000 | 18,300 | 54 |
| Financial and insurance services | 7,400 | 12,300 | 15,800 | 13,000 | 13,800 | 15,100 | 103 |
| Information media and telecommunications | 6,200 | 11,200 | 9,600 | 12,700 | 10,500 | 12,000 | 93 |
| Public administration and safety | 6,400 | 9,400 | 10,700 | 10,900 | 12,100 | 11,800 | 85 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 5,100 | 10,400 | 10,500 | 10,900 | 11,000 | 11,400 | 122 |
| <i>Road transport</i> | <i>5,600</i> | <i>11,000</i> | <i>11,000</i> | <i>11,900</i> | <i>11,700</i> | <i>12,500</i> | <i>123</i> |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 5,000 | 10,100 | 10,600 | 10,000 | 10,900 | 10,800 | 117 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services | 6,600 | 10,100 | 11,100 | 11,400 | 10,800 | 10,300 | 55 |
| Construction | 6,200 | 9,600 | 9,500 | 9,700 | 9,800 | 9,500 | 54 |
| Other services | 5,200 | 9,300 | 8,900 | 9,500 | 9,500 | 9,300 | 76 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services | 5,600 | 8,100 | 10,100 | 9,300 | 10,000 | 9,200 | 64 |
| Wholesale trade | 5,500 | 8,700 | 8,900 | 9,500 | 9,000 | 9,100 | 65 |
| Manufacturing | 5,400 | 8,400 | 8,700 | 8,700 | 8,500 | 8,400 | 56 |
| Arts and recreation services | 4,600 | 7,000 | 7,600 | 6,600 | 7,300 | 7,900 | 73 |
| Retail trade | 4,100 | 7,100 | 7,700 | 7,600 | 7,700 | 7,800 | 91 |
| Education and training | 5,900 | 6,700 | 7,200 | 7,900 | 8,200 | 7,700 | 32 |
| Administrative and support services | 4,200 | 6,800 | 6,800 | 7,000 | 6,800 | 7,200 | 71 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 4,000 | 6,900 | 7,500 | 7,900 | 7,300 | 6,900 | 72 |
| <i>Agriculture</i> | <i>4,000</i> | <i>6,800</i> | <i>7,300</i> | <i>7,600</i> | <i>7,300</i> | <i>6,700</i> | <i>67</i> |
| Health care and social assistance | 4,800 | 5,700 | 6,000 | 6,300 | 6,200 | 6,000 | 25 |
| Accommodation and food services | 3,400 | 4,300 | 4,700 | 4,900 | 4,800 | 4,600 | 38 |
| Total | 5,200 | 7,800 | 8,300 | 8,500 | 8,500 | 8,400 | 62 |

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

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

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

² 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 2019–20.

Sales workers had the largest increase in median time lost from work (up by 155%) from 2000–01 to 2019–20. They also had the longest median time lost (9.0 working weeks) in 2019–20.

Professionals had the smallest increase in median time lost from work (up by 52%). Technicians and trades workers had the shortest median time lost (6.2 working weeks) in 2019–20.

Table 35: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Occupation | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Sales workers | 3.5 | 6.4 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 8.6 | 9.0 | 155 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 4.8 | 7.0 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 8.6 | 8.7 | 81 |
| Managers | 5.0 | 7.0 | 7.8 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 8.4 | 68 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 4.4 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.2 | 86 |
| Professionals | 4.6 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 52 |
| Community and personal service workers | 4.2 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 6.8 | 6.7 | 60 |
| Labourers | 4.2 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 53 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 4.0 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 55 |
| Total | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 67 |

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 2019–20. Over this period, Machinery operators and drivers, Sales workers and Labourers had the largest percentage increases. Managers had the highest level of median compensation paid of all occupations in every year shown in the table (\$21,300 in 2019–20).

Table 36: Serious claims: median compensation paid by occupation, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Occupation | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | % chg |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Managers | 7,500 | 18,500 | 20,900 | 21,900 | 22,000 | 21,300 | 185 |
| Clerical and administrative workers | 7,100 | 16,600 | 18,900 | 19,400 | 19,800 | 20,800 | 191 |
| Machinery operators and drivers | 5,800 | 16,400 | 17,000 | 17,800 | 18,600 | 19,200 | 229 |
| Professionals | 6,800 | 14,100 | 15,500 | 16,400 | 17,100 | 17,400 | 156 |
| Technicians and trades workers | 5,100 | 13,300 | 13,800 | 14,300 | 14,500 | 14,800 | 192 |
| Labourers | 4,400 | 11,700 | 12,700 | 13,300 | 13,500 | 13,400 | 203 |
| Sales workers | 4,100 | 11,300 | 12,100 | 12,400 | 12,600 | 13,100 | 222 |
| Community and personal service workers | 4,600 | 9,900 | 11,000 | 12,100 | 12,800 | 12,500 | 171 |
| Total | 5,200 | 13,000 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,100 | 191 |

Note 1: This table presents median compensation payments rounded to the nearest hundred. Please see the beginning of this chapter for more information.

Note 2: This table presents rounded and modelled 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 6.0 working weeks in 2019–20. This is a 51% rise from 4.0 working weeks in 2000–01. Median time lost for claims involving diseases increased by 161% from 6.8 working weeks in 2000–01 to 17.8 working weeks in 2019–20.

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 47% to 14.0 working weeks in 2019–20. This occurred despite a rise in serious claims for these injuries, from 81 to 219. 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 29%) over the period.

Neoplasms (cancer) had the largest rise in median time lost over the period, increasing 346% from 3.9 working weeks in 2000–01 to 17.2 in 2019–20. Mental health conditions rose 175%, from 11.2 working weeks in 2000–01 to 30.8 weeks in 2019–20.

Table 37: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Nature of injury/disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | | |
| Injury to nerves and spinal cord | 26.2 | 11.6 | 12.0 | 23.9 | 9.2 | 14.0 | -47 |
| Other claims | 4.0 | 5.2 | 7.1 | 4.5 | 5.0 | 10.5 | 163 |
| Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases | 8.5 | 10.0 | 9.6 | 11.2 | 10.5 | 9.4 | 10 |
| Fractures | 6.8 | 8.1 | 8.3 | 8.8 | 9.0 | 9.2 | 35 |
| Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury | 4.2 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 59 |
| Intracranial injuries | 2.8 | 4.6 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 41 |
| Other injuries | 2.6 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 3.6 | 40 |
| Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage | 2.4 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 17 |
| Burn | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1 |
| Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 4.0 | 5.4 | 5.7 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 51 |
| Diseases | | | | | | | |
| Mental health conditions | 11.2 | 19.0 | 21.0 | 24.8 | 28.0 | 30.8 | 175 |
| Neoplasms (cancer) | 3.9 | 6.3 | 4.6 | 9.5 | 8.0 | 17.2 | 346 |
| Nervous system and sense organ diseases | 8.1 | 9.6 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 10.8 | 12.2 | 51 |
| Circulatory system diseases | 15.0 | 8.5 | 9.6 | 15.4 | 11.8 | 10.6 | -29 |
| Digestive system diseases | 5.8 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 21 |
| Other diseases | 5.0 | 5.4 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 5.6 | 6.6 | 32 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 4.6 | 4.8 | 7.2 | 4.4 | 16.0 | 6.4 | 39 |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases | 2.0 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 4.0 | 100 |
| Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases | 2.3 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 34 |
| Total: diseases | 6.8 | 10.6 | 11.6 | 13.6 | 16.0 | 17.8 | 161 |
| Total: serious claims | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 67 |

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

² '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 52% since 2000–01, but remains the costliest injury type (at \$29,200).

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

- Neoplasms (up 563%)
- Other claims (up 401%)
- Infections and parasitic diseases (up 297%)
- Mental health conditions (up 288%), and
- Intracranial injuries (up 220%).

Table 38: Serious claims: median compensation paid by nature of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Nature of injury/disease | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | % chg |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Injury and musculoskeletal disorders | | | | | | | |
| Injury to nerves and spinal cord | 60,100 | 29,800 | 24,000 | 63,200 | 25,900 | 29,100 | -52 |
| Other claims | 4,700 | 9,100 | 11,200 | 12,100 | 11,000 | 23,800 | 401 |
| Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases | 11,200 | 19,800 | 20,100 | 21,800 | 20,600 | 18,500 | 66 |
| Fractures | 6,400 | 16,000 | 16,700 | 17,200 | 18,200 | 18,200 | 184 |
| Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury | 5,300 | 11,800 | 12,700 | 13,000 | 13,400 | 14,100 | 163 |
| Intracranial injuries | 3,100 | 9,900 | 9,700 | 11,200 | 9,200 | 9,800 | 220 |
| Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage | 2,700 | 7,700 | 8,700 | 8,800 | 8,600 | 7,500 | 181 |
| Other injuries | 3,000 | 9,600 | 9,300 | 12,000 | 10,500 | 7,500 | 153 |
| Burn | 1,400 | 3,300 | 3,400 | 3,500 | 3,400 | 3,400 | 148 |
| Total: injury and musculoskeletal disorders | 4,700 | 11,900 | 12,800 | 13,200 | 13,200 | 13,200 | 177 |
| Diseases | | | | | | | |
| Neoplasms (cancer) | 8,700 | 24,400 | 19,100 | 30,300 | 27,600 | 57,500 | 563 |
| Mental health conditions | 14,300 | 37,100 | 41,400 | 46,300 | 52,600 | 55,300 | 288 |
| Nervous system and sense organ diseases | 8,700 | 20,400 | 21,100 | 21,500 | 22,800 | 24,700 | 185 |
| Circulatory system diseases | 15,300 | 25,500 | 18,500 | 37,800 | 32,300 | 20,400 | 33 |
| Other diseases | 6,000 | 11,200 | 25,300 | 23,100 | 9,700 | 17,300 | 187 |
| Digestive system diseases | 6,800 | 13,900 | 14,800 | 14,900 | 15,400 | 16,700 | 144 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 7,100 | 12,900 | 16,100 | 11,600 | 45,000 | 14,000 | 97 |
| Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases | 2,300 | 7,000 | 6,100 | 6,300 | 6,600 | 7,500 | 218 |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases | 1,500 | 6,200 | 7,200 | 5,900 | 4,200 | 6,100 | 297 |
| Total: diseases | 8,200 | 21,500 | 24,200 | 27,800 | 32,500 | 35,000 | 329 |
| Total: serious claims | 5,200 | 13,000 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,100 | 191 |

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

² '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 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 2019–20, median time lost increased for all mechanism categories. The largest rise was for Mental stress. This increased by almost 18 working weeks, from 11.4 working weeks in 2000–01 to 29.3 working weeks in 2019–20.

Mental stress claims involved the longest median time lost for all years in the series. By 2019–20, median time lost for these claims had risen to more than three times the median time lost for all claims (29.3 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 2015–16 to 2019–20

| Mechanism of injury or disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Mental stress | 11.4 | 19.7 | 21.2 | 24.8 | 27.9 | 29.3 | 157 |
| Body stressing | 4.7 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 69 |
| Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying | 4.6 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 77 |
| Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects | 4.4 | 6.1 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 7.1 | 7.4 | 68 |
| Muscular stress with no objects being handled | 4.2 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 48 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 4.6 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 7.6 | 65 |
| Falls from a height | 5.6 | 7.8 | 8.4 | 8.8 | 9.0 | 9.5 | 69 |
| Falls on the same level | 4.2 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 67 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 5.3 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 35 |
| Vehicle accident | 6.0 | 7.6 | 7.9 | 8.3 | 7.5 | 8.4 | 40 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 3.4 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.4 | 30 |
| Being assaulted by a person or persons | 4.4 | 5.4 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 33 |
| Being trapped by moving machinery or equipment | 4.4 | 4.6 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 5.4 | 23 |
| Being hit by an animal | 4.7 | 5.0 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 12 |
| Being hit by falling objects | 3.2 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 59 |
| Sound and pressure | 4.2 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 7.4 | 4.4 | 4.0 | -4 |
| Biological factors | 2.0 | 3.5 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 77 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 2.5 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 36 |
| Hitting stationary objects | 2.6 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 22 |
| Hitting moving objects | 2.4 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 23 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 14 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 6 |
| Total | 4.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 67 |

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 2019–20, the median cost of a mental stress claim was \$53,900. This was more than three times the median compensation amount for all serious claims (\$15,100).

The largest rise in median compensation payments from 2000–01 to 2019–20 was for Mental stress. This increased by 273% from \$14,500 in 2000–01 to \$53,900 in 2019–20.

Table 40: Serious claims: median compensation paid by mechanism of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20

| Mechanism of injury or disease | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | % chg |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Mental stress | 14,500 | 38,300 | 42,300 | 47,000 | 52,500 | 53,900 | 273 |
| Vehicle incidents and other | 5,700 | 13,300 | 14,900 | 16,000 | 15,900 | 16,800 | 192 |
| Vehicle accident | 7,200 | 15,600 | 16,000 | 18,900 | 16,400 | 18,500 | 157 |
| Body stressing | 5,900 | 14,100 | 15,000 | 15,500 | 15,700 | 16,200 | 175 |
| Muscular stress while handling objects other than lifting, carrying | 5,600 | 13,900 | 15,200 | 15,800 | 16,000 | 16,500 | 195 |
| Muscular stress while lifting, carrying, or putting down objects | 5,400 | 13,200 | 14,000 | 14,500 | 14,400 | 14,800 | 174 |
| Muscular stress with no objects being handled | 6,000 | 13,100 | 13,000 | 13,500 | 13,200 | 13,800 | 130 |
| Falls, trips and slips of a person | 5,500 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,400 | 15,600 | 183 |
| Falls from a height | 6,800 | 17,300 | 18,300 | 19,300 | 19,500 | 20,200 | 197 |
| Falls on the same level | 4,900 | 13,100 | 13,300 | 13,700 | 14,300 | 14,300 | 192 |
| Sound and pressure | 5,300 | 14,300 | 13,400 | 26,400 | 12,700 | 12,900 | 141 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 4,000 | 9,900 | 10,900 | 10,900 | 11,200 | 10,700 | 169 |
| Being trapped between stationary and moving objects | 3,700 | 10,000 | 10,700 | 11,200 | 10,700 | 11,200 | 203 |
| Being assaulted by a person or persons | 6,000 | 11,200 | 13,300 | 12,800 | 13,000 | 11,500 | 92 |
| Being hit by an animal | 3,900 | 9,500 | 11,300 | 12,100 | 11,300 | 10,300 | 164 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 3,300 | 9,600 | 10,200 | 10,400 | 11,200 | 10,300 | 212 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 2,600 | 7,500 | 8,500 | 8,600 | 8,400 | 8,200 | 215 |
| Hitting moving objects | 2,300 | 7,300 | 8,400 | 8,800 | 8,700 | 8,200 | 257 |
| Hitting stationary objects | 3,000 | 7,700 | 8,700 | 8,400 | 8,200 | 8,200 | 173 |
| Biological factors | 2,000 | 6,300 | 6,900 | 4,900 | 4,900 | 6,800 | 236 |
| Chemicals and other substances | 2,300 | 4,300 | 5,500 | 6,500 | 8,400 | 6,600 | 193 |
| Heat, electricity and other environmental factors | 1,500 | 3,500 | 3,500 | 3,600 | 3,600 | 3,500 | 142 |
| Total | 5,200 | 13,000 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,100 | 191 |

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

Note 2: This table only includes median time lost for the most common mechanism subcategories.

Note 3: 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 2019–20. Chemicals and chemical products involved the shortest median time lost in each year of the series, and also recorded the lowest increase over the period (up 23%).

Table 41: Serious claims: median time lost (working weeks) by breakdown agency of injury or disease, 2000–01 and 2014–15 to 2019–20

| Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 2000–01 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | % chg |
|---|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Other and unspecified agencies | 5.8 | 7.8 | 8.6 | 9.1 | 11.1 | 11.8 | 103 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 4.6 | 6.6 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 8.1 | 76 |
| Mobile plant and transport | 4.6 | 6.7 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 69 |
| Environmental agencies | 4.2 | 6.2 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 68 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 3.8 | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.8 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 59 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 4.0 | 5.1 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 5.9 | 46 |
| Powered equipment, tools and appliances | 4.3 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.8 | 35 |
| Materials and substances | 3.8 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 5.8 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 50 |
| Chemicals and chemical products | 2.6 | 3.0 | 3.8 | 3.1 | 4.0 | 3.2 | 23 |
| Total | 4.2 | 6 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7 | 67 |

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

Table 42 shows that between 2000–01 and 2019–20 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 2019–20

| Breakdown agency of injury or disease | 2000–01 (\$) | 2015–16 (\$) | 2016–17 (\$) | 2017–18 (\$) | 2018–19 (\$) | 2019–20 (\$) | % chg |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Other and unspecified agencies | 7,100 | 17,300 | 19,100 | 20,700 | 23,600 | 26,300 | 273 |
| Mobile plant and transport | 5,800 | 15,000 | 16,400 | 16,600 | 17,800 | 17,400 | 202 |
| Animal, human and biological agencies | 5,100 | 12,400 | 14,100 | 15,300 | 15,400 | 15,400 | 201 |
| Environmental agencies | 5,000 | 13,300 | 14,100 | 14,500 | 14,500 | 14,800 | 197 |
| Machinery and (mainly) fixed plant | 5,200 | 13,500 | 15,100 | 15,000 | 14,600 | 14,500 | 178 |
| Powered equipment, tools and appliances | 5,800 | 12,500 | 13,100 | 13,000 | 13,400 | 13,800 | 139 |
| Materials and substances | 4,400 | 11,700 | 12,500 | 12,900 | 12,900 | 13,000 | 197 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances and equipment | 4,400 | 11,200 | 12,000 | 12,500 | 12,600 | 12,500 | 184 |
| Chemicals and chemical products | 3,100 | 6,900 | 8,000 | 7,900 | 8,300 | 8,400 | 173 |
| Total | 5,200 | 13,000 | 14,000 | 14,600 | 15,000 | 15,100 | 191 |

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

Note 2: 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 2022).

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.

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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>