



Australian Work Health and
Safety (WHS) Strategy
2023-2033

Two-year performance update

May 2026

Disclaimer

Safe Work Australia is an Australian Government statutory agency established in 2009. Safe Work Australia includes Members from the Commonwealth, and each state and territory, Members representing the interests of workers and Members representing the interests of employers.

Safe Work Australia works with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to improve work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements. Safe Work Australia is a national policy body, not a regulator of work health and safety. The Commonwealth, states and territories have responsibility for regulating and enforcing work health and safety laws in their jurisdiction.

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Introduction

The data used in this report represents the latest information available in 2025.

The Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2033 (the Strategy) sets an ambitious national vision of *safe and healthy work for all*.

Achieving sustained reductions in worker fatalities, injuries and illnesses requires long term effort across priority action areas, including information and awareness, national coordination, data and intelligence, health and safety leadership, and compliance and enforcement.

Launched in 2023, the Strategy is agreed by Safe Work Australia Members and ministers with responsibility for work health and safety (WHS). This collective agreement reflects a commitment to working cooperatively to drive continual improvements in Australia's WHS performance.

The Strategy commits to periodic progress reporting. These reports are intended to track progress against agreed targets, assess whether Australia remains on track to achieve the Strategy's vision and identify emerging issues or areas requiring renewed focus.



Interpreting this update

Some rates of change may be slow for quantitative measures presented because three-year averages are being used to smooth the inherent volatility in the data. For more information on methods and data sources, please refer to the technical report [About the data](#).

Green indicates improvement in measure

Yellow indicates limited change in measure

Red indicates worsening in measure

Grey indicates no notable change in measure or insufficient data

Data sources:

1. Safe Work Australia, Traumatic injury fatalities, 2024
2. Safe Work Australia, National dataset for compensation-based statistics, 2023-24p
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Work-related injuries survey, 2021-22
4. Department of Health and Aged Care, National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry, May 2024 to December 2025 (custom data request)

Summary

Two years on from the Strategy’s baseline, progress across the quantitative measures is mixed.

There have been modest improvements in some areas, including small reductions in the worker fatality rate and the frequency rate of work-related respiratory disease. However, the frequency rate of serious claims has increased from the baseline, as has the frequency rate of permanent impairment claims.

Given the use of multi year averages and the inherent volatility of some indicators, further data is needed to assess longer term trends with confidence.

This update on progress against the quantitative targets should be read in conjunction with the case studies and summary available on our website covering actions being taken by Safe Work Australia Members to progress in achieving the goal of reduced worker fatalities, injuries and illnesses.

Targets for performance monitoring*

	Baseline (2023)	One year	Two year (Current)	End target (2033)
Quantitative targets				
↓ A reduction in the number of worker fatalities ¹ caused by traumatic injuries of at least 30%	1.43 fatalities per 100,000 workers	1.39 fatalities per 100,000 workers	1.39 fatalities per 100,000 workers	1.00 fatalities per 100,000 workers
↓ A reduction in the frequency rate of serious claims ² resulting in one or more weeks off work of at least 20%	6.34 serious claims per million hours worked	6.60 serious claims per million hours worked	6.84 serious claims per million hours worked	5.07 serious claims per million hours worked
↓ A reduction in the frequency rate of permanent impairment ² by 15%*	0.78 permanent impairment claims per million hours worked	Update not published due to impact of yearly revisions on permanent impairment claims data [^]	0.86 permanent impairment claims per million hours worked	0.66 permanent impairment claims per million hours worked
↓ A reduction of the overall incidence of work-related injury or illness ³ among workers to below 3.5%	3.5%** incidence of work-related injury or illness in working population	No new data	No new data	Below 3.5%
✗ No new cases of accelerated silicosis ⁴ by 2033	Not available	<5 new cases reported	<5	0
↓ A reduction in the frequency rate of work-related respiratory disease ² by 20%	0.040 claims per million hours worked	0.031 claims per million hours worked	0.034 claims per million hours worked	0.032 claims per million hours worked

* For more information about the data sources and methodology used to monitor performance of the Strategy, please see the technical report About the data, available at <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/australian-whs-strategy-2023-2033-baseline-report-about-data>

* The frequency rate of permanent impairment claims should be interpreted with caution as the data are subject to significant upward revision over time. Whilst an update for this target was not published one year on from the baseline, the data will be assessed closely in future reporting.

** The target of reducing the overall incidence of work-related injury or illness amongst workers to below 3.5% was set in the Strategy prior to the release of the latest data, which then showed this figure for the 2021-22 period was 3.5%. The data will continue to be monitored closely over the course of the Strategy to understand where further improvements may be made.