



CAMPBELL RESEARCH & CONSULTING

**2007/08
Australia &
New Zealand
Return to Work
Monitor**

A report of a survey of 3,017 injured workers in
Australian and New Zealand
workers' compensation jurisdictions

Prepared for

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities

July 2008

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Executive Summary

The Return to Work Monitor

This report is the eleventh annual report of the Return to Work (RTW) Monitor conducted across Australian and New Zealand workers' compensation jurisdictions. It is prepared for the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities. The population surveyed is injured workers who have had ten days or more compensation paid. The survey is conducted in November and May each year¹. Injured workers employed by organisations which are self-insured are not included in this report.

2007/08 Results

RTW outcomes and differences between jurisdictions

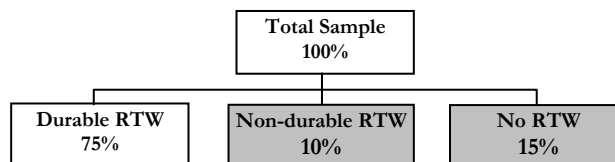
The RTW rate had showed steady improvement between 2002/03 (83%) and 2005/06 (87%) returning to pre 2000 levels. There has been no further improvement, with the 2007/08 national RTW rate similar to all previous years (85%). The durable RTW rate (75%) is lower in 2007/08 compared to 2005/06 (80%) and marks the end of the trend for improvement in RTW outcomes for Australian workers' compensation systems since 2001/02.

Where RTW was durable, injured workers had been back at work for an average of 21 weeks. However, there has been a steady decline in the length of successful RTW over the last five years by an average of 14 days.

Jurisdictional differences in RTW outcomes are similar to previous years with Comcare recording the highest RTW and durable RTW rates, while South Australia had the lowest RTW and durable RTW rates. South Australia has consistently recorded the highest proportion of injured workers still receiving workers' compensation payments and well above the Australian national average - even among those with a durable RTW.

Between 2000/01 and 2003/04, the New Zealand RTW and durable RTW rates were higher than the Australian rates. There was a significant decline in these rates in 2004/05 and since that time the RTW rate has been similar compared to Australia, while the durable RTW has only been higher for the most recent two years.

The proportion of unsuccessful (no RTW) outcomes remains considerable. One in four (25%) injured workers either had a non-durable RTW (10%) or had not returned to work at all (15%) by the time they were interviewed (that is seven to nine months after submitting a claim).



¹ The Australian financial year (July to June) is the basis for reporting in line with other Comparative Performance Measures used by the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council.

Previous claim experience

Previous claim experience measures the extent to which injured workers return to the compensation system. The proportion of injured workers who reported previous claims remains substantial and has increased since first reported in 2001/02. Four in ten injured workers who had a claim of ten days or more in duration reported having a previous claim and just over three in ten had a “lost time” claim.

Injured workers from Tasmania and New Zealand were more likely to report that they had a previous claim and previous lost time claim. Injured workers in Victoria were less likely to report previous claims.

RTW plans

RTW plans are a key element of injury management strategies. Since the commencement of the Monitor, the proportion of injured workers reporting RTW plans has steadily increased with half receiving a plan since 2002/03 and the eight in ten of these injured workers were involved in development of that plan. Injured workers involved in the development of the RTW plan were more likely to rate the plan helpful than those who had no involvement.

Wide variation between jurisdictions has been observed in the development and perceived helpfulness of RTW plans. RTW plans were most frequently reported among those in South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and injured workers covered by Comcare. RTW plans were prepared less often for injured workers in New Zealand and Queensland and those covered by Seacare.

A higher proportion of injured workers in South Australia and those covered by Comcare received a RTW plan and were involved in the development of the plan. However, fewer found the plan helpful in South Australia compared to the national average, while more injured workers covered by Comcare were given help to follow the RTW plan.

RTW experience

Perceptions of readiness to RTW and support in the RTW experience have been considered. Of those injured workers who returned to work, three in four felt ready to do so and over half returned to their previous hours. Almost all injured workers covered by Seacare who had returned to work felt ready to do so. Injured workers covered by Seacare and in New Zealand were more likely to return to their previous hours, particularly when compared to workers covered by Comcare and in South Australia. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of Australian injured workers reporting suitable duties at RTW from seven in ten to eight in ten injured workers. However, those covered by Seacare and in New Zealand less likely than the national average to report their duties at RTW were suitable.

Workplace culture

Workplace culture has been slower to have an important influence on RTW. Over the course of the Monitor, there has been a steady improvement in the belief that *generally management will do what they can to get the injured worker back to work; the employer is prepared to spend the time and money to make the workplace safe; and the employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work.* Even so, roughly one in four injured workers disagreed with these statements.

Injured workers from South Australia were less likely to agree with each of these three statements associated with returning to work and workplace safety. Close to three in ten injured workers disagreed with these statements and importantly the perception of workplace support has declined over time which is in contrast to the national trend.

One in four injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder for them to return to work and this incidence has been consistently lower among injured workers in New Zealand. The person most often identified as making it harder to return to work was the injured worker's main supervisor or their employer. One in five injured workers in South Australia indicated that their employer made it harder for them to RTW compared to one in six injured workers nationally. However, the workplace rehabilitation co-ordinator was viewed as more helpful. Injured workers from Queensland and New Zealand were more likely to rate their insurer as helping the RTW process.

There has been a consistent pattern that shows those who rated at least one person who made it harder to RTW were less likely to have a durable RTW compared to those who either rated those in the RTW process as helpful or having no effect on their RTW. This provides evidence of the importance of an injury management program for successful RTW.

Customer service

The RTW Monitor provides a basis for comparing customer service between jurisdictions. The national average rating of customer service provided by the insurer (based on eight measures of service) has steadily improved over eleven years. The Accident Compensation Corporation in New Zealand and WorkCover in Queensland were rated higher than all other jurisdictions across the range of customer service measures. On average, insurers in Victoria were rated below the Australian national average for all eight measures of customer service.

The greatest gains to injured worker satisfaction with the claim handling process will be achieved by improved performance in terms of the attitude of the insurer to the claim and to a lesser extent their helpfulness.

How to Read the Report

The report identifies outcome measures (Section 1):

- return to work (RTW) rates;
- durability of RTW;
- compensation status;
- current sources of income reported; and
- continuity of employer and work duties.

Process measures (Section 2) include:

- the influence of workplace culture;
- claim experience;
- reasons given by injured workers for RTW;
- development of RTW plans;
- perception of the timeliness of RTW;
- suitable duties at RTW;
- partial RTW;
- perceptions of who were the most or least help in returning to work;
- communication with the insurer; and
- rating of insurer service by injured workers.

The report also identifies (Section 3):

- demographics of the injured workers;
- number of days compensation paid and claim cost;
- rehabilitation participation and cost; and
- employer's enterprise size.

Statistical significance

The results of the aggregate survey are reported in the following pages. These results are analysed as the reported experience of injured workers across all participating jurisdictions. Only statistically significant results are discussed in the text of the report².

Time series comparisons

Comparisons have been made between participating jurisdictions as well as over time.

Direct time series comparisons are shown for each jurisdiction participating in the last eleven financial years from 1997/98 through to 2007/08. The report also provides indicative national estimates based on an aggregation across jurisdictions appropriately weighted in accordance with the reported claim population for each participating jurisdiction.

² Statistically significant results are reported at the 95% confidence level.

Jurisdictions

This report summarises findings from the aggregate of the November 2007 and May 2008 waves of the National RTW Monitor. The sample consists of 3,017 injured workers who had made a workers' compensation claim in all of the following Australian jurisdictions:

Abbreviation	Jurisdiction	Sample size
NSW	New South Wales	600
VIC	Victoria	600
QLD	Queensland	600
SA	South Australia	400
TAS	Tasmania	400
NT	Northern Territory	120
COM	Comcare ³	240
SEA	Seacare	57
AUS	Total Australian National	3017
NZ	New Zealand	600

Reading graphs and tables

Reading the graphs

- Graphs have been used to:
 - demonstrate differences between each jurisdiction and the Australian average; and
 - demonstrate trends over time.
- The relevant survey questions are identified in the graph header.
- Angle brackets <> around a word or phrase in the survey question indicate where an expression specific to a jurisdiction is used.
- The Australian national average is shown as a horizontal line on bar charts.
- The base for the graphs refers to the total number of responses upon which the percentages have been calculated. This is identified under the left-hand corner of the graph.
- Each column is a percentage of the base.

³ Comcare is the body responsible for managing workers' compensation claims for all Commonwealth government agencies and Australian Capital Territory government agencies.

Reading the tables

- The relevant survey questions are identified in the table header.
- Angle brackets <> around a word or phrase in the survey question indicate where an expression specific to a jurisdiction is used.
- The base for each table is identified under the left-hand corner of the table.
- The base for each column is identified in parentheses under the column header.
- A superscript capital letter in a column means that the survey estimate noted in that column is significantly different (at the 95% confidence level) to estimates shown in the column(s) noted. The corresponding capital letters for comparison may be found in the column header.
- “n/a” means that the particular cell is not applicable and no result can be reported.
- “-” means that there were no responses for the cell.
- “0” means that the percentage response was less than 0.5%.
- Subtotals are bold and right justified.
- Proportions are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Disclaimer

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Background on workers' compensation arrangements in Australia

Origins

Workers compensation was introduced around the time of the Industrial Revolution as a means of ensuring a level of financial security for workers and their families in the event of work related injury.

Previously, under common law, workers took their injury claims to court, but costs could be prohibitive for the average worker and proving negligence against an individual employer was difficult and resource intensive. Also, slow legal processes and the possibility of lump sum payments were argued to work against the incentive to return to work.

“No fault” compensation for injured workers was first introduced in Germany under the *Accident Compensation Law 1884* and this was followed closely in the UK by the English *Workmen's Compensation Act 1897*.

Australasian developments

Australia followed suit but, unlike the European and New Zealand models (but like the USA and Canada), its legislation and enforcement were state based. South Australia established its first laws in 1900 and by 1926 all workers in Australia were covered by workers compensation.

Public monopoly or private underwriting?

Each state and territory government is responsible for policy and enforcement of its laws. However, despite the common origins and goals, the role of government and private insurers in implementation of the respective schemes varies. In particular, while some jurisdictions operate a public monopoly (central fund), others operate a private model underwritten by private insurers, and some have a mix of both systems. Some schemes have abolished common law while others have maintained it in tandem with their no fault legislated scheme.

The role of premium

Workers compensation is paid out of premiums collected from employers. Premiums are actuarially determined mainly in proportion to payroll (a proxy for the size of the workforce and the income to be compensated), but usually with various adjustments for prior injury experience of the employer (and their size) and the industry in which they are classified. In central or managed funds, premiums are collected either by the government monopoly, or by private insurers acting as agents of government.

Premiums were once seen solely as the funding source for compensation paid out, with much attention being given to setting a premium rate that is actuarially viable to fund the long term liabilities incurred, which are notoriously difficult to estimate. More recently, premium policy has been explored as an incentive to ensure OHS in the workplace and return to work outcomes as well as to reduce the impost on small businesses.

RTW roles and responsibilities

The aim of most claims management is to return the injured worker to work. Return to work (RTW) provisions are implemented by the responsible government body, the employer, the injured worker, the insurer and health and rehabilitation providers. Each has duties which are prescribed by legislation or policies delegating those responsibilities.

The government body in each jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring that the overall workers compensation legislation is implemented and enforced and that the roles of each of the stakeholders is clear.

Some government bodies also manage claims although in most schemes insurers manage the individual claims for compensation.

Insurers are required to follow the mandated rules, reduce delays in claims management especially claims decisions and reduce disputes between the worker and their employer or other party. They are usually required to ensure that referral to rehabilitation is timely and that where an employer ceases, the injured worker has access to RTW with another employer.

The key employer RTW responsibilities relate to ensuring that rehabilitation is provided, sometimes with process requirements like ensuring that a RTW plan is developed and implemented, ensuring that there are suitable RTW duties and that the worker's position is left open for a period of time. Specific requirements and responsibilities differ between jurisdictions.

Health and rehabilitation providers are mostly drawn from the private market, although in some jurisdictions, specialist medical examiners and RTW experts may be engaged directly by government. Medical treatment to promote RTW is largely ignored in the legislation, whereas rehabilitation for RTW is more regulated, reflecting the history whereby the rehabilitation industry largely emerged in response to workers compensation transport accident legislation. For example, while the NSW, Victorian and South Australian Acts of Parliament all mention the reasonable costs of medical and like services (and further detail is in lower order policies or agreements), they all spell out (either in the Act itself or a Regulation under the Act) specific detail about rehabilitation.

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities meeting on 22 June 2007 established a reference group to oversee the development of a nationally consistent accreditation framework for rehabilitation providers, including high quality workplace based rehabilitation and objective measurement of provider performance.

The worker is required to cooperate with all of these groups as specified in the legislation.

The extent and role of self insurance

All schemes permit some large employers to self insure, that is, to be exempt from premium payments and in turn, administer all claims themselves, including long term claims. This can be attractive especially to national employers who operate across state boundaries, where rules differ. The criteria for an employer to be exempted are mainly prudential requirements to ensure that they can cover long terms claims costs. Other criteria may include a minimum size of the workforce and evidence of the capacity to deliver the various service responsibilities required under the legislation.

Self insurance has generally been increasing over time and coverage of workforce varies markedly between jurisdictions. The number of self insurers varies from as few as 6 self insurers in one Australian state to 177 in New Zealand (as at the time of the last published HWCA comparison in 2005).

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities meeting on 22 June 2007 resolved to establish a national self-insurance harmonisation project, including sharing of information between jurisdictions.

Factors influencing RTW rates

Each jurisdiction faces varying challenges in their endeavours to improve RTW rates. Some drivers of RTW are defined by legislation and can be influenced by the nature of the scheme design (whether it is short or long tail in nature). For example, Common Law arrangements can influence RTW, as can the benefit structure, the associated step down provisions, and legislative differences regarding early claims reporting, and employer obligations.

The RTW Monitor

The RTW Monitor has been designed as a vehicle to provide comparative measures of outcomes and processes for workers compensation schemes. It achieves these measures irrespective of the specific detail in which they are implemented between jurisdictions. This report presents the results for the eleventh national RTW Monitor providing comparative measure for RTW outcomes and processes for Australian and New Zealand workers compensation jurisdictions.

The Monitor is conducted for self insurers under the Comcare and Victorian schemes. Results from self insurers are not included in this report.

Background to the RTW Monitor

Return to work (RTW) is a key outcome used to measure the performance of workers' compensation systems both in Australia and overseas. RTW reflects the successful outcome and resolution of claims from the point of view of all key stakeholders - the injured worker, the employer, the insurer and the Authority responsible for overseeing the workers' compensation scheme.

RTW is measured in some form or other by all workers' compensation systems. However, most measures are internal in that they rely upon the information available to the insurer or Authority from claims. They do not provide information after the claim is closed and seldom provide reliable information about the durability of RTW.

In order to develop a more comprehensive measure of RTW, the Victorian WorkCover Authority (now WorkSafe Victoria) commissioned a survey of injured workers to measure RTW in a consistent and reliable format. The survey provides, from the perspective of the injured worker, a measure of a number of aspects of RTW that would not otherwise be available. These include:

- Durability of RTW;
- Reasons for returning to work;
- The extent to which injured workers report suitable duties being provided to assist their RTW;
- The reasons for unsuccessful RTW;
- The extent to which key stakeholders (doctors, employers, insurers, etc.) are perceived to help or hinder RTW; and
- A rating of the services provided by insurers (or Schemes).

The survey has been conducted by the Victorian WorkCover Authority every six months since November 1993. In May and November 1996 comparative surveys were conducted for the South Australian WorkCover Corporation.

In May 1997, the Report of the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities *"Promoting Excellence: National Consistency in Australian Workers' Compensation"* recommended a nationally consistent approach to workers' compensation. The RTW Monitor was identified by the Ministers of Workplace Relations Advisors Committee Comparative Performance Monitoring project as the key measure for RTW outcomes.

To establish a nationally consistent framework for monitoring RTW outcomes, the first RTW Monitor report was published in May 1998. Surveys were conducted for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. Since that time, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania have been involved in every wave of the Monitor. The Australian Capital Territory joined the National RTW Monitor in November 1998 and suspended participation in May 2003. Comcare joined the National RTW Monitor in November 1998, Seacare in May 2000 and New Zealand in November 2000, and have participated ever since. The Northern Territory participated in the first and third waves of the National RTW Monitor, and recommenced participation in November 2003 (Table 2).

This report presents the Australian and New Zealand results for the 2007/08 financial year (i.e. the aggregate of the November 2007 and May 2008 waves) and represents the eleventh annual report of the Return to Work Monitor. Injured workers employed by organisations which are self-insured are not included in this report.

Year	National (ex NZ)	NSW	ACT	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	NT	Com	Sea	NZ
1997/98	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
1998/99	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
1999/00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2000/01	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2001/02	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2002/03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2003/04	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2004/05	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2005/06	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2006/07	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2007/08	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Monitor's objectives are to:

1. Maintain an Australian benchmark for measuring RTW outcomes and processes used to achieve those outcomes across workers' compensation jurisdictions; and
2. Monitor RTW outcomes and processes used to achieve those outcomes over time and across workers' compensation jurisdictions.

The population surveyed is injured workers who have had ten days or more compensation paid and the interviews are conducted just over six months (seven to nine months) after a claim has been lodged. The survey provides information about three key stages in the injured workers' claim experience:

- The time when the claim was lodged;
- The time of RTW (if RTW occurs); and
- The time of interview.

The survey instrument and sampling procedures have been designed to provide a rigorous measure of RTW outcomes and processes that are independent of claim status. That is, although workers' compensation jurisdictions are able to measure payments to, and (in some instances) the RTW status of, injured workers with active claims, measurement of outcomes for inactive or closed claims is seldom possible.

The RTW Monitor uses consistent sampling, consent, interviewing, coding and analysis procedures across each participating jurisdiction. Minor adjustments are made to account for the different structures of compensation or terminology used. The consistency of procedures from wave to wave provides a robust measure, which is sensitive to change over time.

1. Return to Work Outcome Measures

1.1 RTW rate

In 2007/08, just under nine in ten (85%)⁴ injured workers had returned to work, for some period, within the first six months⁵ of their claim (Figure 1).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (90%) and from Tasmania (89%) had a higher RTW rate than the Australian national average, while South Australia (75%) was lower than the national average.

The RTW rate had showed steady improvement between 2002/03 (83%) and 2005/06 (87%) returning to pre 2000 levels. There has been no further improvement, with the 2007/08 national RTW rate similar to all previous years (Figure 2).

Figure 1: RTW rate (Comparative)

Q3. Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?

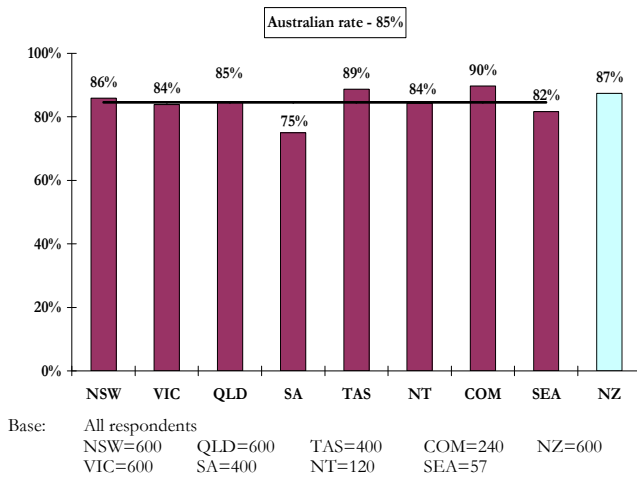
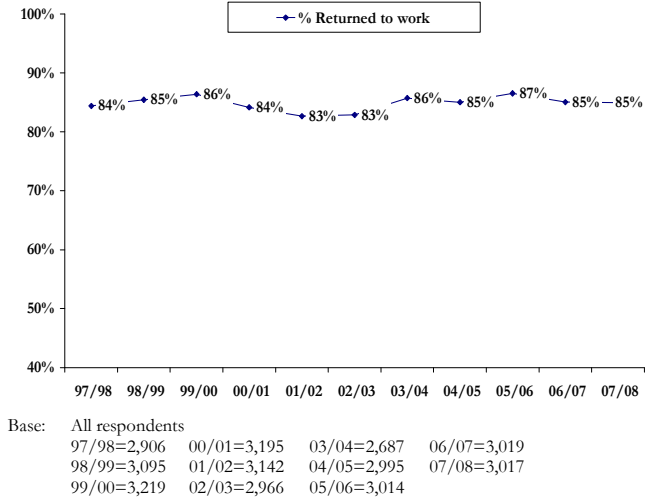


Figure 2: RTW rate (Trend)

Q3. Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?



In 2007/08, just under nine in ten injured workers had returned to work. This rate is comparable with all previous years of the Monitor.

⁴ All differences reported are significant at the 95% confidence interval unless otherwise stated.

⁵ The sample is drawn from all injured workers with ten days or more compensation paid seven to eight months after submitting a claim. For the smaller states, the sample is drawn seven to nine months.



1.2 Durable RTW

The durable RTW rate is the proportion of injured workers who have returned to work and were still working at the time of interview.

The durable RTW rate follows a similar pattern to the RTW rate and has been approximately ten percentage points lower than the RTW rate. In 2007/08, the durable RTW rate was ten percentage points lower.

In 2007/08, three in four (75%) Australian injured workers were still working at the time of interview (Figure 3).

The durable RTW rate was higher than the Australian national average among injured workers covered by Comcare (84%) and in New Zealand (80%).

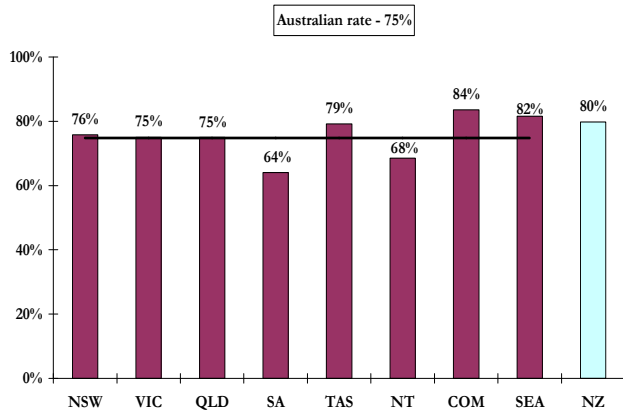
South Australia (64%) had a lower durable RTW rate than the Australian national average.

Injured workers covered by Comcare had higher RTW and durable RTW rates, while South Australia had lower RTW and durable RTW rates than the Australian national average.

The 2007/08 national Australian durable RTW rate is similar to the previous year, although lower than the peak of 80% in 2005/06 (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Durable RTW rate (Comparative)

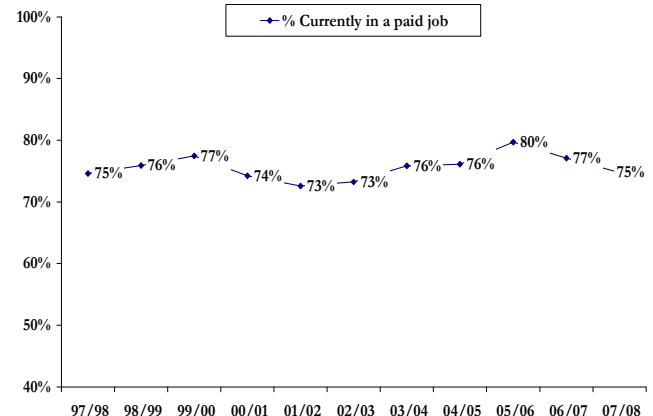
Q8. Are you currently working in a paid job?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600 QLD=600 SA=400 TAS=400 NT=120 COM=240 SEA=57 NZ=600

Figure 4: Durable RTW rate (Trend)

Q8. Are you currently working in a paid job?



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 98/99=3,095 99/00=3,219 00/01=3,195 01/02=3,142 02/03=2,966 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995 05/06=3,014 06/07=3,019 07/08=3,017

One in four injured workers in Australia was not working at the time of interview.

1.3 Non-durable RTW

One in four (25%) Australian injured workers were not working at the time of interview (Figure 5). This comprised:

- 15% who had not returned to work; and
- 10% who had a non-durable RTW.

One in five (20%) injured workers in New Zealand were not working at the time of interview (Figure 6):

- 13% who had not returned to work; and
- 8% who had a non-durable RTW.

Figure 5: RTW status at interview for Australia

Q3. *Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?*
Q8. *Are you currently working in a paid job?*

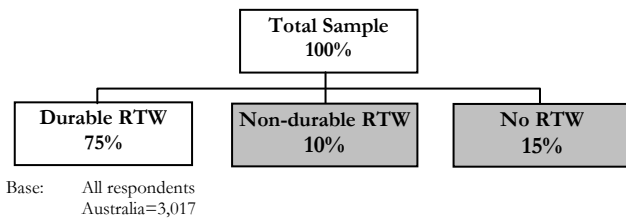
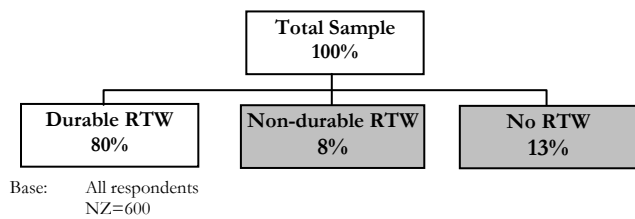


Figure 6: RTW status at interview for NZ

Q3. *Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?*
Q8. *Are you currently working in a paid job?*



The Australian and New Zealand RTW rates were similar, however, the durable RTW rate was higher in New Zealand compared to Australia.

1.4 Length of time back at work

This section of the report examines the length of time for which injured workers returned to work. These measures are based upon periods of time reported by the injured worker. These periods can be contrasted with Scheme based data such as the number of day's compensation paid and claim cost. The Scheme based data provide estimates of the period *away* from work. It should also be noted that the latter are different measures to those reported here.

Length of time is obtained as number of days, weeks or months reported by the respondent. Weeks and months are converted to days to report the estimate of "average" length of time⁶.

When RTW is successful, the injured worker will be in paid employment at the time of interview (just over six months after their claim).

Length of time back at work indicates how substantive the RTW is. The RTW Monitor has found the period to be months, that is, the RTW attempts are substantive even when the outcome is not successful.

⁶ Previous RTW reports used "median" days to report the length of time back at work.

1.4.1 Length of durable RTW

Injured workers who had returned to work, and *were still working* at the time of the interview were asked to estimate how long they had been back at work. Reasons for returning to work are reported in Section 2.4.

A longer period at work indicates an earlier durable RTW.

The national mean length of time back at work for injured workers who were working at the time of interview was 145 days or 21 weeks (Figure 7). The mean length of time back at work had been increasing steadily, peaking at 159 days in 2003/04 and has since been declining and is the lowest it has ever been (Figure 8).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (189 days) and from the Northern Territory (170 days) and Tasmania (163 days) had a higher duration compared to the national average, while Queensland (133 days) was below the Australian national average.

Figure 7: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Comparative)

Q8a. How long have you been back at work?

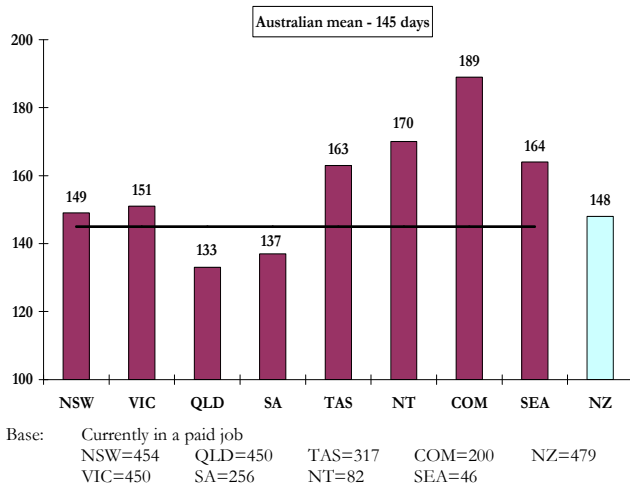
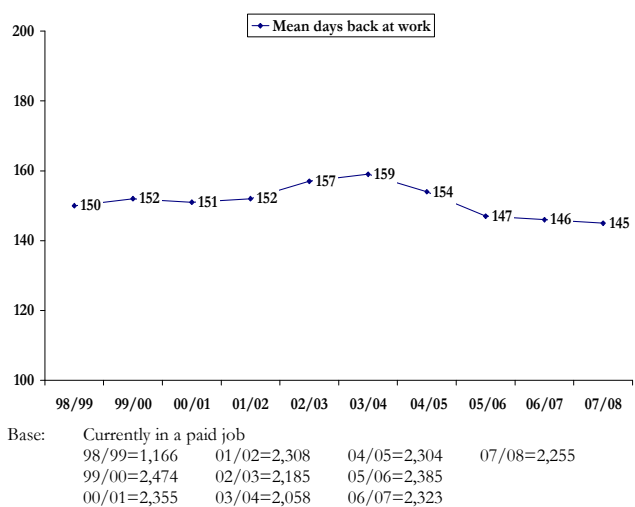


Figure 8: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Trend)

Q8a. How long have you been back at work?



The length of durable RTW had been increasing steadily to 2003/04, although the decline over the last four years has eroded the gains made and resulted in the lowest length of durable RTW.

1.4.2 Length of non-durable RTW

Injured workers who had returned to work, but were no longer working at the time of the interview were asked to estimate how long they had been back at work before they stopped. Reasons for not working are reported in Section 2.4.1.

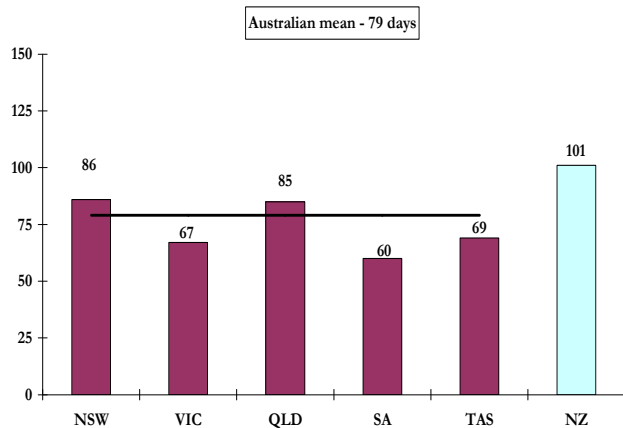
Unsuccessful attempts at RTW are substantive.

The mean estimated duration of non-durable RTW was 79 days or close to 11 weeks (Figure 9). The mean length of time back at work for Australian injured workers with a non-durable RTW has ranged between 64 days and 84 days over the previous years (Figure 10).

Injured workers from New Zealand (101 days) had a higher duration of non-durable RTW compared to the national average (79 days).

Figure 9: Length of time back at work for non-durable RTW (Comparative)

Q10. How long were you back at work before you stopped?

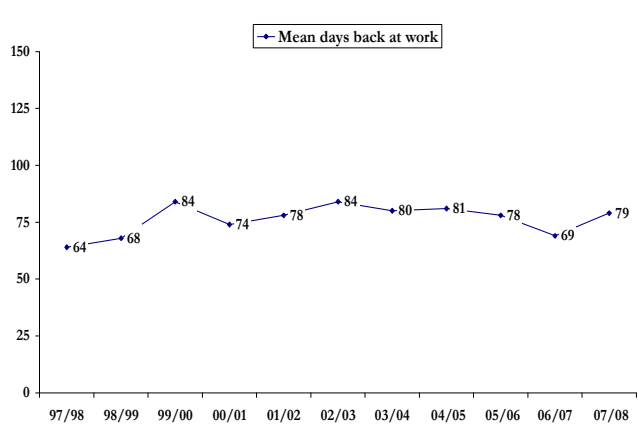


Base: Have returned to work but currently do not work
 NSW=61 QLD=59 TAS=38 COM=15 NZ=45
 VIC=53 SA=44 NT=19 SEA=0

Note: Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare results are not included because of very small sample sizes.
 Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 10: Length of time back at work for non-durable RTW (Trend)

Q10. How long were you back at work before you stopped?



Base: Have returned to work but currently do not work
 97/98=311 00/01=339 03/04=254 06/07=258
 98/99=312 01/02=319 04/05=265 07/08=289
 99/00=314 02/03=301 05/06=217

The mean estimated duration of non-durable RTW was close to 11 weeks.

1.5 Income sources

Measuring income sources identifies a number of dimensions of RTW outcomes. Reported compensation status can be identified, although not to the degree of precision that the jurisdictions can be using claim data. The RTW Monitor uniquely identifies income from employment, social security and instances where the injured worker no longer has any income at all.

Sources of income are identified at two points in time:

- At time of RTW, reported as a process measure (see Section 2.7); and
- At time of interview (reported below).

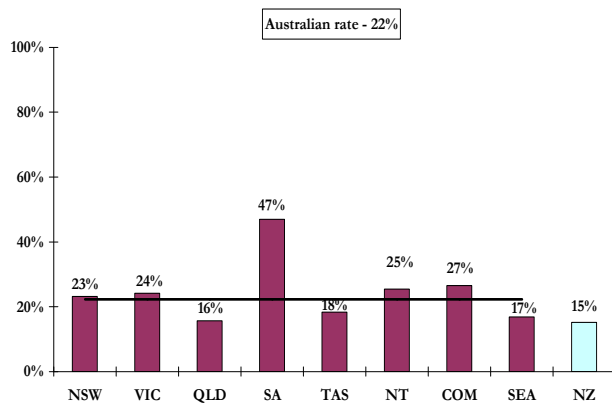
1.5.1 Current compensation status

In 2007/08, one in five (22%) injured workers reported they were still receiving some form of weekly compensation payments at the time of the interview (Figure 11).

Queensland (16%) and New Zealand (15%) had the lowest rates of injured workers receiving compensation at the time of interview when compared with the Australian national average. The highest rate of injured workers receiving compensation payments was in South Australia (47%).

Figure 11: Current compensation status (Comparative)

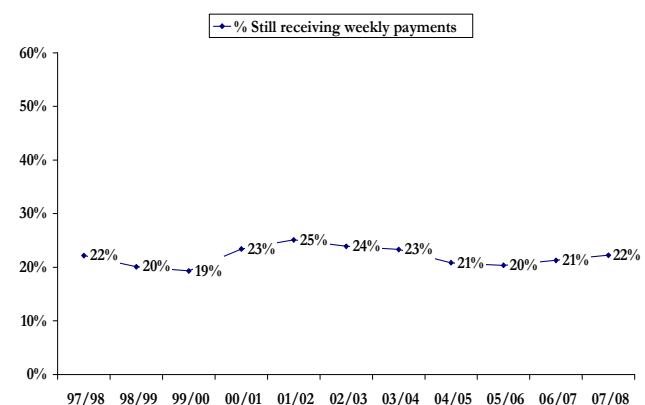
Q19. Are you still receiving weekly payments from <workers' compensation jurisdiction>?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600
 QLD=600 SA=400
 TAS=400 NT=120
 COM=240 SEA=57
 NZ=600

Figure 12: Current compensation status (Trend)

Q19. Are you still receiving weekly payments from <workers' compensation jurisdiction>?



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 98/99=3,095 99/00=3,219
 00/01=3,195 01/02=3,142 02/03=2,966
 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995 05/06=3,014
 06/07=3,019 07/08=3,017

The proportion of injured workers receiving workers' compensation payments at the time of interview has declined from the peak of 25% in 2001/02 and is now significantly lower in 2007/08 (22%) (Figure 12).

One in five injured workers reported they were still receiving workers' compensation payments six months after their claim (at the time of interview).

1.5.2 Main source of income at the time of interview

Three in four injured workers (73%) reported employment as their *main* source of income at the time of interview, while over one in seven (15%) reported workers' compensation payments as their *main* source of income (Table 3).

A smaller proportion of injured workers reported other *main* sources of income including:

- Social security (3%);
- Partner's income (2%); and
- No income at all (2%).

Q20a. Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Employment	73 ^{EG}	74 ^{EG}	74 ^{EG}	72 ^{EG}	59	77 ^{EG}	63	83 ^{ABC} DEG	81 ^{EG}	77 ^{AEG}
Workers' compensation	15 ^{FJ}	15 ^J	16 ^{FJ}	13	30 ^{ABC} DFGHIJ	10	21 ^{DFH} J	12	12	10
Social security	3 ^{CHJ}	3 ^{CHJ}	1	4 ^{CHJ}	3 ^{HJ}	5 ^{ACHJ}	2	0	0	1
Partner's income	2 ^B	1	2	4 ^{ABC}	3 ^B	3 ^B	4 ^B	2	0	4 ^B
No income	2 ^H	3 ^H	3 ^H	2	2	1	2	0	2	3 ^H

Base: All respondents

Note: A superscript capital letter in a column means that the estimate shown in that column is significantly greater (at the 95% confidence level) than comparable estimates shown in the column(s) noted. The corresponding capital letters for comparison may be found in the column header.

Three in four injured workers nationally reported their main source of income at the time of interview was employment.

At the time of interview, RTW outcomes as measured by income sources differed by jurisdiction. Injured workers covered by Comcare (83%) and from New Zealand (77%) were more likely to report employment as their *main* source of income at the time of interview than the Australian national average, while injured workers from South Australia (59%) and the Northern Territory (63%) were less likely to report employment as their *main* source of income.

Injured workers in South Australia (30%) more often reported workers' compensation payments as their *main* income source at time of interview compared to all other jurisdictions.

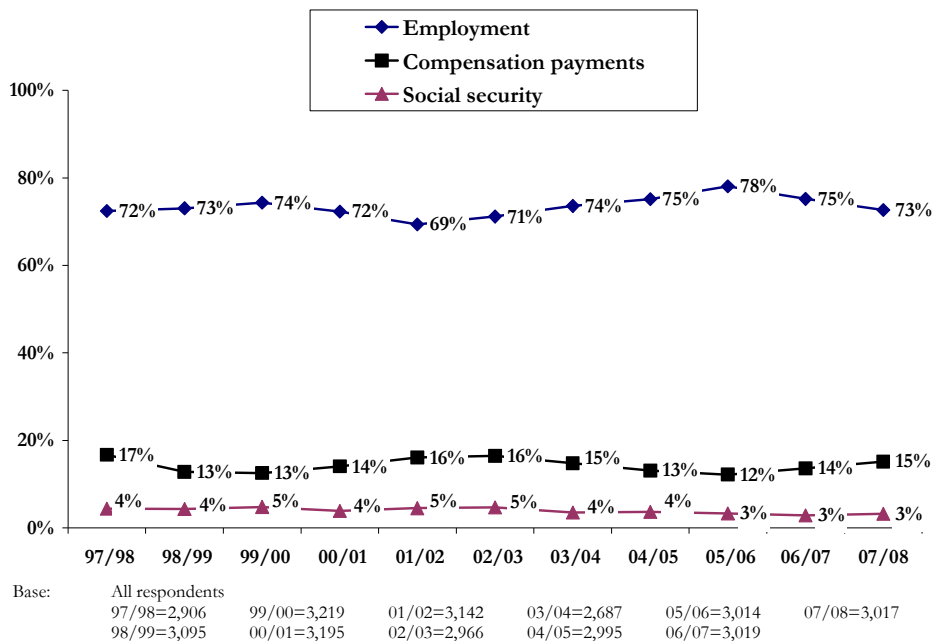
Tasmania injured workers were more likely to report social security as their *main* source of income (5%) compared to the national average (3%).

Injured workers covered by Comcare and from New Zealand were more likely to report employment as their *main* income source at the time of the interview when compared to the Australian national average. South Australian injured workers were more likely to report workers' compensation as their *main* source of income when compared to all other jurisdictions.

The proportion of injured workers reporting employment as their *main* source of income had been steadily increasing since the low of 69% in 2001/02 to 78% in 2005/06, although has declined significantly to 73% in the current period (Figure 13). This decline is reflected by the decrease in the proportion who reported a durable RTW.

Figure 13: Main source of income

Q20a. *Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?*



Three in four injured workers nationally reported their *main* source of income at the time of interview was employment. This incidence gradually increased from 2001/02 to 2005/06 but has since declined.

1.5.3 Total sources of income at time of interview (including partial RTW)

While the *main* source of income identifies the general outcome for the injured worker, *total* sources of income at the time of interview provides a more detailed perspective. In particular, identifying combinations of income can estimate full, partial and non-durable/no RTW outcomes.

Income sources have been categorised into three types:

- Employment;
- Workers' compensation; and
- Other sources (such as social security, partner's wages, etc).

An injured worker can have any combination of these types.

Different combinations of income sources have been used to identify RTW outcomes (Table 4):

- Full RTW (employment only);
- Partial RTW (employment and some other income); and
- No or non-durable RTW (income from any source except employment).

Partial and no/non-durable RTW have been further analysed by identifying workers' compensation as the only "other" income source (Table 5).

Without prompting, at the time of interview:

- Six in ten (62%) injured workers nationally reported that they only obtained income from employment (had a full RTW);
- Over one in ten (12%) had a partial RTW, that is, their income was derived from both employment and some other source; and
- Over two in ten (25%) injured workers in Australia reported they were not deriving any income from employment at the time of interview (had either not returned to work or had a non-durable RTW).

	AUS (3,017) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (400) %	TAS (400) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (57) %	NZ (600) %	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Q20a. <i>Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?</i>											
Q20b. <i>What other sources of income do you have?</i>											
Full RTW (income from employment only)	62 ^{EG}	63 ^{EG}	65 ^{EG}	63 ^{EG}	47	67 ^{EG}	52	67 ^{EG}	74 ^{EG}	68 ^{AD} EG	
Partial RTW (employment plus any other income source)	12	12	11	12	16 ^{ACJ}	12	16	20 ^{AB} CDFIJ	7	11	
Non-durable RTW /No RTW (income from all sources except employment)	25 ^{HJ}	24 ^H	24 ^H	25 ^H	37 ^{AB} CDFHI J	21 ^H	32 ^{FHJ}	13	19	21 ^H	

Base: All respondents

At the time of interview, RTW outcomes as measured by income sources differed by jurisdiction. South Australia (47%) had the lowest proportion of injured workers who reported that they only obtained income from employment and injured workers from the Northern Territory (52%) were also below the Australian national average (Table 4).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (20%) had the highest proportion who derived their income from both employment and some other source (partial RTW). Injured workers in South Australia (37%) had the highest proportion who reported that they were not deriving any income from employment at the time of interview, particularly when compared to Comcare (13%).

Table 5: RTW outcomes involving workers' compensation payments										
<i>Q20a. Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?</i>										
<i>Q20b. What other sources of income do you have?</i>										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Non-durable/no RTW (workers' compensation payments only)	11 ^{FHJ}	10	11 ^{FJ}	11 ^F	24 ^{AB} CDFHJ	6	16 ^{FHJ}	7	12	8
Partial RTW (employment, workers' comp. and other)	4	4 ^D	3	2	10 ^{AB} CDFIJ	3	5 ^D	10 ^{AB} CDFIJ	0	3

Base: All respondents

At the time of interview, one in ten (11%) injured workers in Australia (Table 5) reported workers' compensation payments as their only source of income. Four percent had a partial RTW outcome where income was from both employment and workers' compensation payments.

South Australia had higher proportions of injured workers with "workers' compensation only" outcomes (24%) and higher partial RTW rates where weekly compensation and employment were the only sources of income (10%). Injured workers covered by Comcare (10%) also reported a higher proportion of partial RTW outcomes.

Injured workers from New Zealand (8%) and Tasmania (6%) and those covered by Comcare (7%) had a lower proportion of "workers' compensation only" outcomes compared to the Australian national average (11%).

South Australia had higher proportions of injured workers with both "workers' compensation only" outcomes and partial RTW where weekly compensation and employment were the only sources of income.

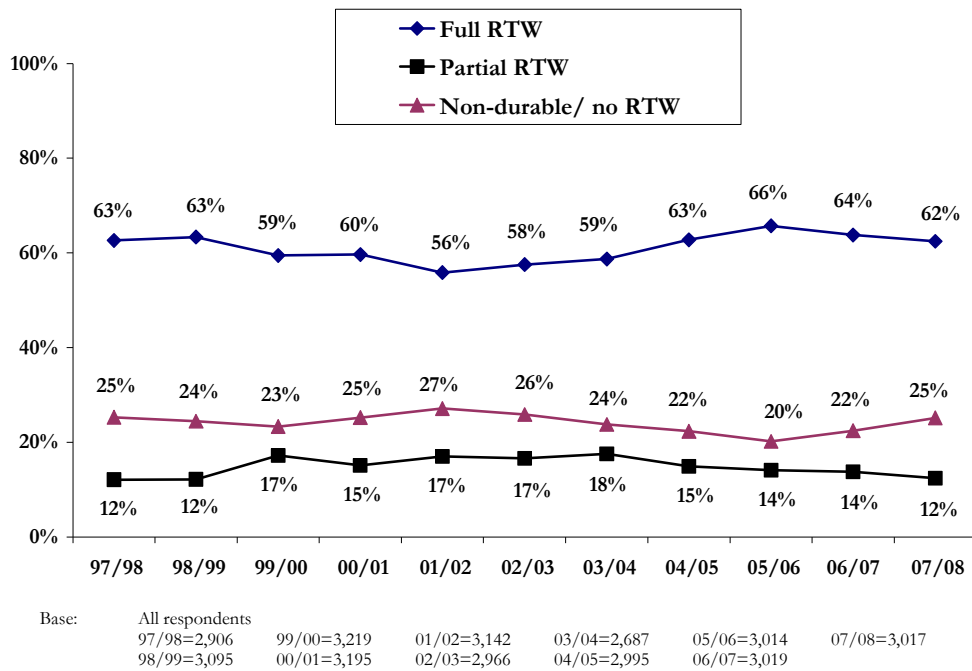


The full RTW rate (62%) is lower than the peak in 2005/06 (66%), although remains significantly higher than the period from 1999/00 to 2003/04 (Figure 14).

The non-durable/no RTW rate (25%) is higher than the last three years and the partial RTW rate (12%) is lower than the peak in 2003/04 (18%).

Figure 14: RTW outcomes measured by income sources at interview

Q20a. *Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?*
 Q20b. *What other sources of income do you have?*



The full RTW rate is now lower than the peak in 2005/06 although remains significantly higher than earlier years of the Monitor.

1.6 Employment and duties

An important factor in RTW is whether the injured worker can return to the same employer that they were working for (Section 1.6.1) or the same duties that they were doing when they were injured (Section 1.6.2) or whether they returned to a new employer.

This section of the report shows changed duties and changes to employer as outcome measures based on the status of the injured workers at the time of interview. (Changed duties at RTW are reported as a process measure in Section 2.6.4).

1.6.1 Employer at time of interview

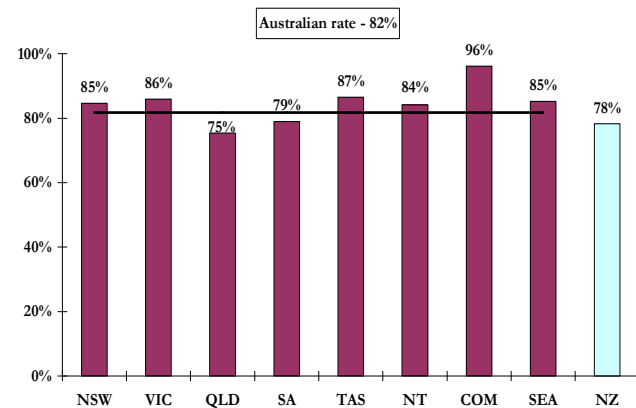
More than four in five (82%) injured workers who returned to work, returned to work with the employer they were working for when they sustained their injury – the “same” employer (Figure 15).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (96%) were most likely to RTW with their original employer, followed by those from Tasmania (87%) and Victoria (86%). Injured workers from Queensland (75%) were less likely to RTW to their original employer compared to the Australian national average.

The rate of RTW with the same employer has been similar since 2002/03, although at a lower level than previous years (Figure 16).

Figure 15: Return to same employer (Comparative)

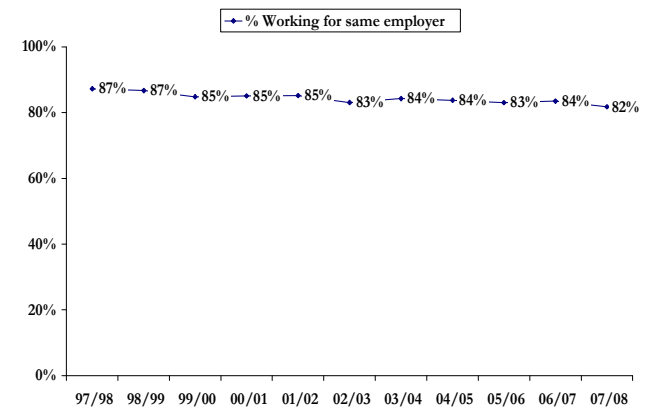
Q11. [Are/Were] you working with the same employer you were working for when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=515 QLD=509 TAS=355 COM=215 NZ=524
 VIC=503 SA=300 NT=101 SEA=46

Figure 16: Return to same employer (Trend)

Q11. [Are/Were] you working with the same employer you were working for when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 97/98=2,440 00/01=2,693 03/04=2,312 06/07=2,579
 98/99=2,639 01/02=2,627 04/05=2,569 07/08=2,544
 99/00=2,788 02/03=2,486 05/06=2,602

More than four in five injured workers who returned to work, returned to work with the employer they were working for when they sustained their injury.

1.6.2 Duties at time of interview

Three in four (73%) injured workers who had returned to work were doing the same duties at the time of interview (or when they stopped working) as they were doing before they were injured (Figure 17).

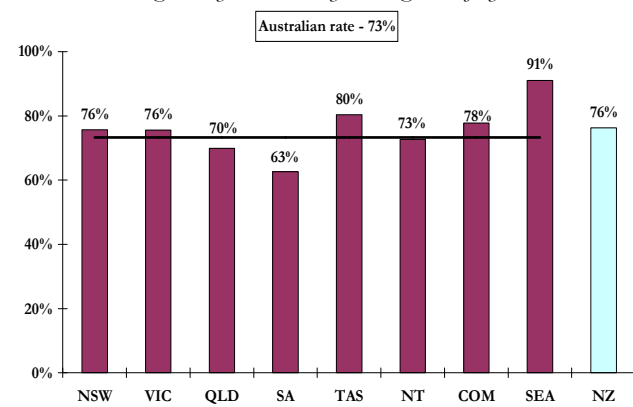
Injured workers from South Australia (63%) who had returned to work were less likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the Australian national average.

Those covered by Seacare (91%) and from Tasmania (80%) were more likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the national average.

There was a declining trend in the proportion of injured workers who had returned to the *same* duties from 2005/06 (Figure 18).

Figure 17: Return to same duties (Comparative)

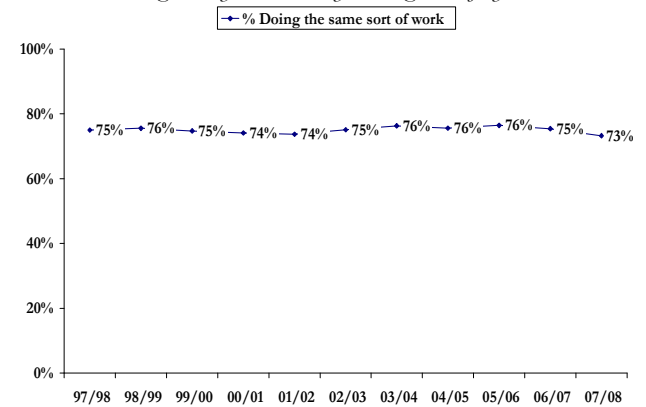
Q12. [Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=515 QLD=509 TAS=355 COM=215 NZ=524
 VIC=503 SA=300 NT=101 SEA=46

Figure 18: Return to same duties (Trend)

Q12. [Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 97/98=2,440 00/01=2,693 03/04=2,312 06/07=2,579
 98/99=2,639 01/02=2,627 04/05=2,569 07/08=2,544
 99/00=2,788 02/03=2,486 05/06=2,602

Three in four injured workers who had returned to work were doing the same duties at the time of interview (or when they stopped working) as they were doing before they were injured.

1.6.3 Continuity of employer and duties

Two in three (66%) injured workers nationally who had returned to work, returned to the same employer *and* carried out the same duties as prior to their injury (Table 6). Injured workers from Queensland (62%) and South Australia (57%) less frequently returned to the *same employer* and carried out the *same duties* when compared to injured workers nationally. However, they were more likely to return to a *different employer* and *different duties* (16% each) compared to the Australian national average (11%).

South Australian injured workers who had returned to work were also more likely to return to the *same employer* but given *different duties* (22%) compared to the national average (15%).

Table 6: Continuity of employer and duties at interview										
Q11. [Are/Were] you working with the same employer you were working for when you incurred your original injury?										
Q12. [Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?										
	AUS (2,544) % A	NSW (515) % B	VIC (503) % C	QLD (509) % D	SA (300) % E	TAS (355) % F	NT (101) % G	COM (215) % H	SEA (46) % I	NZ (524) % J
Same employer/ same duties	66 ^{DE}	69 ^{DE}	70 ^{DE}	62	57	76 ^{ABD} EG	65 ^{ADE}	75 ^{ADE}	78 ^{DE}	69 ^{DE}
Same employer/ different duties	15 ^{FJ}	16 ^J	16 ^J	14 ^J	22 ^{ABC} DFIJ	11	19 ^{FJ}	21 ^{ADF} IJ	7	10
Different employer/same duties	7 ^H	7 ^H	5	8 ^H	5	5	7	3	13 ^{CEF} H	8 ^H
Different employer/different duties	11 ^{HI}	9 ^H	9 ^H	16 ^{ABC} FHI	16 ^{ABC} FHI	9 ^H	9 ^H	1	2	14 ^{BCF} HI

Base: Have returned to work

Two in three injured workers nationally who had returned to work, returned to the same employer *and* carried out the same duties as prior to their injury.

2. Process Measures

The previous section identified a number of key outcomes measured by the RTW Monitor. Key process indicators are reported in this section.

The process measures include:

- The culture of the workplace where the injury occurred (identifying characteristics that are supportive of the RTW process)⁷;
- The process of lodging a claim;
- The RTW process, specifically:
 - The development of a RTW plan;
 - Assistance with RTW;
 - Changed duties;
 - Partial RTW;
 - The people who were the most help and least help; and
- Rating of insurance type services.

2.1 Workplace culture

Injured workers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with six statements about the workplace where they sustained their injury to gain a perspective of workplace culture⁸. These were converted into a scale from one to five, where one was “*strongly disagree*” and five was “*strongly agree*”. A score of three indicates “*neither agree nor disagree*”. The average score for all respondents is reported and the proportion who agreed with the statement.

The attributes of the workplace that were rated included:

- Work importance:
“The work that you do at your workplace is very important to you”
- Work satisfaction:
“You are very satisfied with the work you do”
- Valued at work:
“People at work really value what you do”
- Management’s help with RTW:
“Generally, management at the place where you work will do what they can to help you get back to work”
- OH&S spending:
“Your employer is prepared to spend the money and time required to make the workplace safe”
- RTW policies and procedures:
“Your employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work”.

Overall, at least six in ten and up to nine in ten, injured workers agreed with the statements as reflected by the mean ratings ranging from 3.5 to 4.3 (Figure 19).

⁷ The impact of Workplace Culture on Return to Work, Comcare Australia paper presented to WorkCongress5, Adelaide 2001.

⁸ This question was introduced in May 2000.

The importance of work (4.3 mean rating) and work satisfaction (4.2) had the highest levels of agreement among injured workers in the Australian jurisdictions with nine in ten in agreement (92% and 89% respectively). This was closely followed by being valued at their workplace (3.9) – three in four (77%) injured workers agreed.

Workplace attributes associated with returning to work and workplace safety had lower levels of agreement. Fewer injured workers in Australia agreed that:

- Management would help injured workers RTW (3.6) – 69% agreed;
- Their employer had clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work (3.6) – 65% agreed; and
- Management was prepared to spend time and money to make the workplace safe (3.5) – 65% agreed.

Injured workers from New Zealand were more likely than those from Australia to agree that:

- They were valued at their workplace (4.1 – 85% agreed);
- Management would do what was necessary to help them get back to work (3.8 – 75% agreed); and
- Management would spend time and money to make the workplace safe (3.7 – 74% agreed).

Figure 19: Rating level of agreement with attitude statements towards the workplace

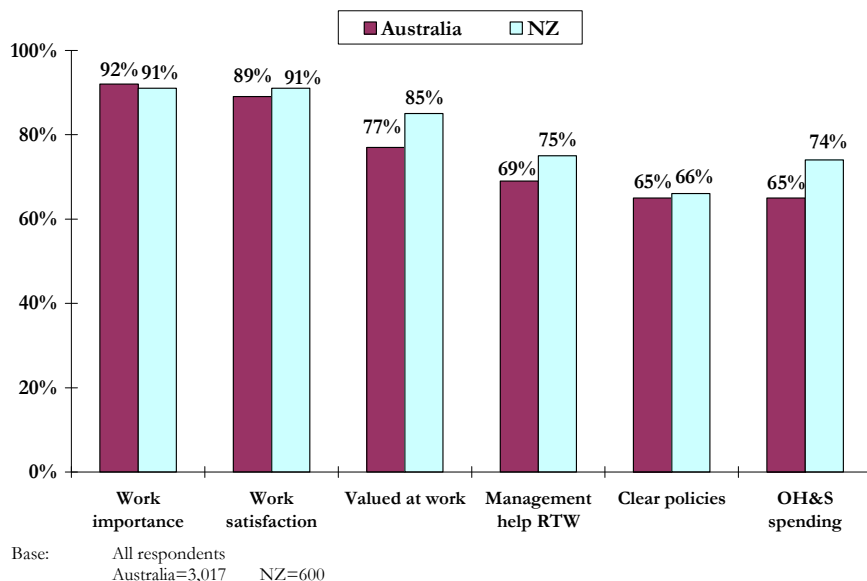
Q34.

Level of agreement with statements



Figure 20: Level of agreement with value statements towards the workplace

Q34. Level of agreement with statements



Injured workers generally feel their work is important and are satisfied with their work, with lower levels of agreement with attributes associated with returning to work and workplace safety.

There were a number of differences in attitudes towards the workplace by jurisdiction when compared to the Australian national average (Table 7).

As previously indicated, injured workers from New Zealand were more likely to agree that they are valued at work (4.1), that their employer would do what they can to help them get back to work (3.8) and that their employer is prepared to spend time and money on Occupational Health and Safety (3.7) compared to the Australian national average.

The mean agreement rating that their employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work has higher among injured workers covered by Seacare (3.9) and Comcare (3.8) and those from Tasmania (3.7). Tasmanian injured workers were also more likely to agree that management will help them to get back to work (3.8) when compared to the Australian national average.

Injured workers from South Australia recorded the lowest level of agreement in regard to their employer doing what was necessary to help them get back to work (3.4), their employer is prepared to spend time and money on Occupational Health and Safety (3.2) and their employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work (3.3).

Table 7: Mean rating level of agreement with attitude statements towards the workplace										
Q34. Level of agreement with statements										
	AUS (3,017) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (400) %	TAS (400) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (57) %	NZ (600) %
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Work importance	4.3	4.3	4.4 ^D	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3
Work satisfaction	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.3 ^D	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.2
Valued at work	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.0 ^{CE}	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.1 ^{ABC} DEGH
Management help RTW	3.6 ^E	3.7 ^E	3.6 ^E	3.6 ^E	3.4	3.8 ^{AC} DE	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8 ^{ACD} E
Clear RTW policies and procedures	3.6 ^E	3.6 ^E	3.6 ^E	3.6 ^E	3.3	3.7 ^{AC} DE	3.6 ^E	3.8 ^{AB} CDEJ	3.9 ^{AB} CDEJ	3.6 ^E
OH&S spending	3.5 ^E	3.6 ^{CE}	3.4	3.5 ^E	3.2	3.6 ^{CE}	3.5	3.6 ^E	3.6	3.7 ^{ABC} DEF

Base: All respondents

2.2 Making a claim

An important part of RTW includes access to, and complexity of, information needed to put in a claim. These results are examined in the following sections, together with the relationship between these aspects of claim experience and RTW.

2.2.1 Information needed for putting in a claim

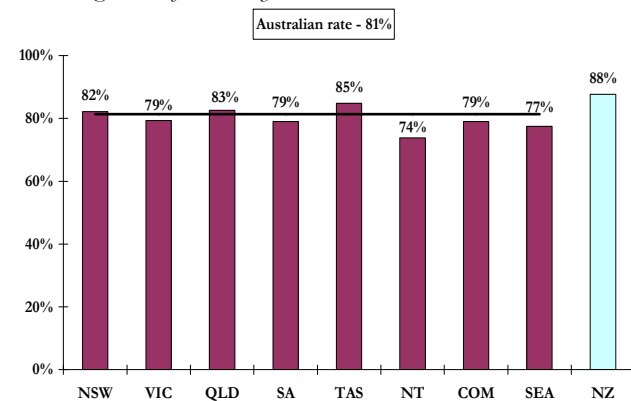
Eight in ten (81%) injured workers in Australia reported that it was easy to get the information they required for lodging a claim (Figure 21).

Injured workers from New Zealand (88%) were more likely to rate the access to information as easy when compared to the Australian national average (81%). Fewer injured workers from the Northern Territory (74%) reported that it was easy to get the information needed to make a claim compared to the Australian national average.

The incidence of injured workers assessing access to information as easy has remained stable over the last six years of the Monitor. Importantly this is at a higher level when compared with the 1998/99 to 2001/02 period (Figure 22).

Figure 21: Easy to get information for a claim (Comparative)

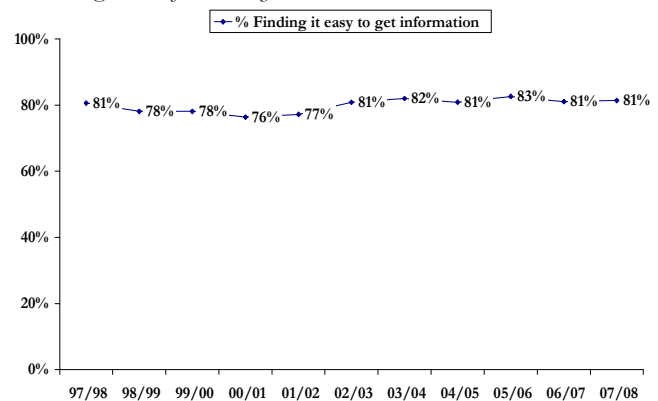
Q1. When you put in your claim under <jurisdiction>, was it easy to get the information you needed to make a claim?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600 QLD=600 SA=400 TAS=400 NT=120 COM=240 SEA=57 NZ=600

Figure 22: Easy to get information for a claim (Trend)

Q1. When you put in your claim under <jurisdiction>, was it easy to get the information you needed to make a claim?



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 98/99=3,095 99/00=3,219 00/01=3,195 01/02=3,142 02/03=2,966 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995 05/06=3,014 06/07=3,019 07/08=3,017

Eight in ten injured workers found it easy to get information needed to make a claim.

2.2.2 Complexity of putting in a claim

Over seven in ten injured workers (73%) considered it *simple* to put in a claim, while two in ten (19%) considered the process *complicated* (Table 8). A small minority believed it was *very simple* (15%), while fewer (4%) considered the claim process *very complicated*. Eight percent could not say either way.

A higher proportion of injured workers in Tasmania (79%) and New Zealand (81%) rated the claim process as simple when compared to the Australian national average. In contrast, a higher proportion of injured workers covered by Comcare (32%) and Victoria (26%) rated the process of putting in a claim as complicated.

Over the last six years of the Monitor, one in five injured workers rated the claim process as complicated. This represents a significant decline from the peak of 28% in 1998/99.

Table 8: Ease of putting in a claim										
<i>Q2a. Would you describe the process of putting in a claim as?</i>										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Simple	59 ^H	59 ^H	57 ^H	60 ^H	61 ^H	59 ^H	55	44	54	64 ^{ACH}
Very simple	15 ^C	15 ^C	11	16 ^C	12	20 ^{ACE G}	12	15	17	17 ^{CE}
Total simple	73 ^{CH}	74 ^{CH}	68 ^H	76 ^{CG H}	73 ^H	79 ^{ACG H}	67	59	71	81 ^{ABCD EGH}
Complicated	15 ^{BF}	12	21 ^{ABD EFJ}	14 ^F	13 ^F	8	18 ^{BF}	23 ^{ABD EFJ}	20 ^{BF}	14 ^F
Very complicated	4	4	6 ^{DJ}	3	8 ^{ABDF J}	4	6	9 ^{ABCD FJ}	2	3
Total complicated	19 ^F	16	26 ^{ABD EFJ}	17 ^F	21 ^{BF}	12	25 ^{BDF J}	32 ^{ABD EFJ}	22 ^F	17 ^F
Can't Say	8 ^J	10 ^{CEJ}	6 ^J	7 ^J	6 ^J	9 ^{CJ}	9 ^J	9 ^J	7 ^J	2

Base: All respondents

One in five injured workers considered it *complicated* to put in a claim.

2.3 Previous claim experience

2.3.1 Previous claim

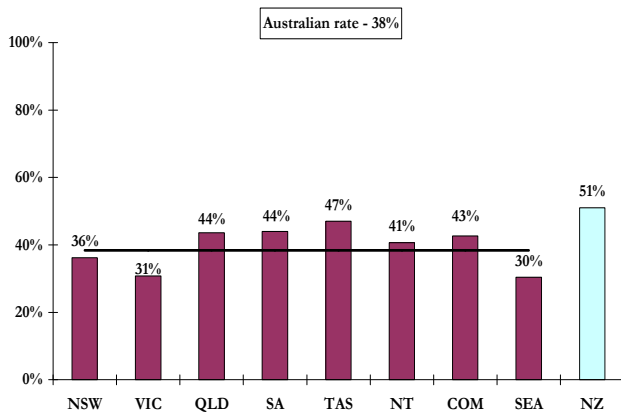
A question about previous claim experience was introduced to the Monitor for the first time in 2002.

Two in five (38%) injured workers who made a claim of ten days or more in duration reported having a previous workers' compensation claim (Figure 23). Injured workers from New Zealand (51%), Tasmania (47%), South Australia (44%) and Queensland (44%) were more likely to have had a previous claim when compared to the Australian national average. Victorian injured workers were least likely to have had a previous workers' compensation claim (31%).

The reported incidence of previous claims has, in general, ranged between 32% and 41%. The rate of previous claims is lower in 2007/08 (38%) compared to 2006/07 (41%) (Figure 24).

Figure 23: Previous claim (Comparative)

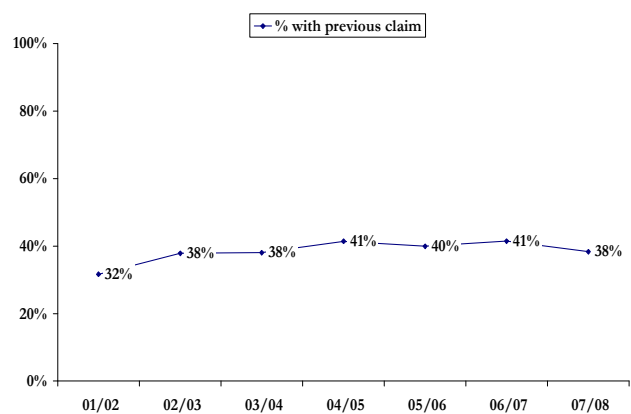
Q1a. Have you had any other workers' compensation claim BEFORE that claim (you made in September or October last year)?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600
 QLD=600 SA=400
 TAS=400 NT=120
 COM=240 SEA=57
 NZ=600

Figure 24: Previous claim (Trend)

Q1a. Have you had any other workers' compensation claim BEFORE that claim (you made in September or October last year)?



Base: All respondents
 01/02=1,566 02/03=2,966
 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995
 05/06=3,014 06/07=3,019
 07/08=3,017

Two in five injured workers reported having a previous claim. This incidence is higher than that reported in 2001/02.

2.3.2 Previous lost time claims

A question was introduced in 2003 asking injured workers who reported they had a previous claim, if they had any time off work because of those earlier claims.

Under nine in ten (85%) injured workers who reported they had a previous claim had time off work as a result of that earlier claim.

When based on all injured workers, one in three (33%) reported that they had time of work because of an earlier claim, that is, they had a “lost time” claim (Figure 25). Injured workers in New Zealand (45%) and Tasmania (40%) and were more likely to report a previous lost time claim when compared to the Australian national average. Injured workers from Victoria were less likely to report a previous lost time claim (25%). The differences, by jurisdiction, coincide with those noted for previous claims.

The incidence of previous “lost time” claims peaked at 37% in 2004/05 and was lower in the current period (33%) (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Previous lost time claims (Comparative)

Q1b. Did you have any time off work because of those earlier claims?

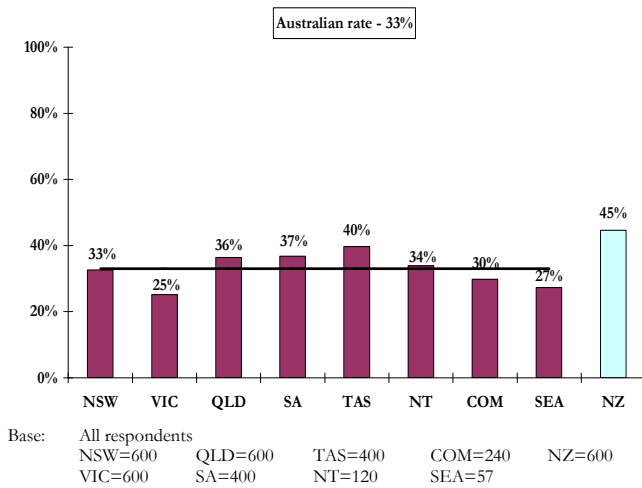
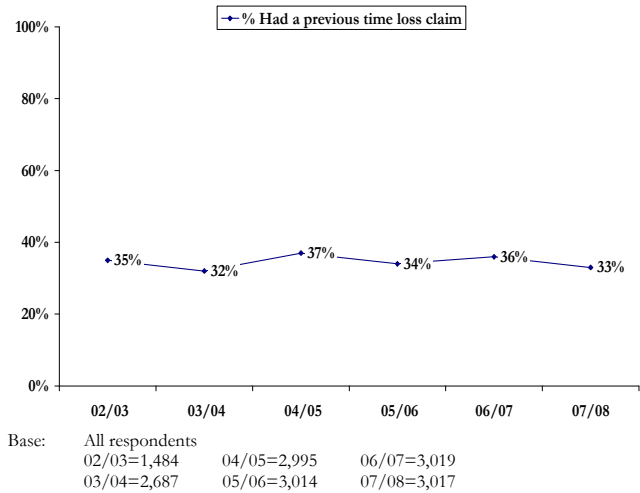


Figure 26: Previous lost time claims (Trend)

Q1b. Did you have any time off work because of those earlier claims?



One in three injured workers had time off work because of earlier claims.

2.4 Reasons for RTW

In total, 85% of Australian injured workers had returned to work. Of these, two in five (42%) injured workers stated (without prompting), that their *main* reason for returning to work was that they had *recovered from injury* (Table 9). Less than one in five workers mentioned that they returned because of *economic need* (17%) or because they *wanted to RTW* (15%).

When injured workers were probed for *any other reasons* for returning to work, *recovered from injury* was mentioned by half (49%). Three in ten workers mentioned that they returned because they *wanted to RTW* (30%), or because of *economic need* (29%).

Since the first year of the Monitor, *recovered from injury* has been the most frequently mentioned reason for returning to work, followed at a distance by *wanted to* and *economic need*. One in ten injured workers mentioned *changes in duties*, being *bored at home* and being *told to by the doctor* as reasons for returning to work.

Table 9: Reasons for RTW		
<i>Q4a. What is the main reason you returned to work?</i>		
<i>Q4b. Were there any other reasons you returned to work?</i>		
	National Main Reason (2,544) %	National Total Reasons (2,544) %
Recovered from injury	42	49
I wanted to return to work	15	30
Economic need/needed the money	17	29
Bored at home	5	11
Offered alternative duties	7	10
I was told to return by doctor/doctor's advice	5	9
Wanted to keep job	2	5
Pressured from employer	3	4
Benefits stopped/too low	1	2
Pressured by insurer	1	1
Offered part-time work	0	1
Supportive employer	0	1
Part of RTW plan	0	0
Didn't like being on worker's compensation	0	0
Self employed/run own business/farm	0	0

Base: Have returned to work

Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Although the relative order for return to work has been consistent since the start of the Monitor, there have been a number of trends observed in the *total* reasons given for RTW over that time:

- *Recovered from injury* declined over the first five years of the Monitor (50% in 1997/98 to 45% in 2001/02) but has since increased from 2002/03 with half of all respondents spontaneously mentioning this reason.
- There has been a turnaround in the proportion of injured workers who mentioned that they *wanted to RTW* (30%) from the previous three years – lowest in 2005/06 (27%).
- *Economic need* increased in the first three years to a peak of 32% in 1999/00. It has since fluctuated between one in four and three in ten injured workers.
- *Told by doctor* was a reason for RTW by close to one in eight injured workers from 1997/98 to 2001/02, although has been closer to one in ten over the last seven years of the Monitor – 9% in 2007/08).
- As in previous years, *pressure from employer/insurer/WorkCover* was rarely identified as a reason for RTW (combined net of 8% in 2007/08).

2.4.1 Reasons for not working

The National RTW Monitor identifies reasons reported by injured workers for currently not working. The objective of this measure is to identify the impact of non-injury related factors such as retrenchment, enterprises closing down and retirement. Responses to this question are unprompted.

In total, 25% of injured workers were not working at the time of interview. Of these, half (47%) stated (without prompting), that their *main* reason for not working was that they were *still injured* (Table 10). Another 12% indicated that their *old injury got worse*.

When injured workers were probed for *any other reasons* for not working, being *still injured* was mentioned by over half (54%).

Of the less frequently reasons for not working (and not included in the net result), 2% indicated that they took *maternity leave* and 2% noted that their *employer was not facilitating their return to work*.

Table 10: Reasons for not currently working		
<i>Q9a. What is the main reason you are not working now?</i>		
<i>Q9b. Are there any other reasons you are not working now?</i>		
	National Main Reason (762) %	National Total Reasons (762) %
Still injured	47	54
New injury	3	5
Old injury got worse/aggravated	12	16
Psychological reasons	1	3
Can't work in that type job due to type of injury	1	3
Retired	2	3
Resigned	5	5
Studying	2	2
No work available/seasonal	4	9
Employer closed down	1	1
Retrenched	4	6
Dismissed by employer	5	7
Maternity leave	1	2
Work not facilitating return/ uncooperative	1	2
Other	5	8
Don't know	7	11

Base: Total not working

Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Reasons for not working have been summarised as three main types (Figure 27)⁹:

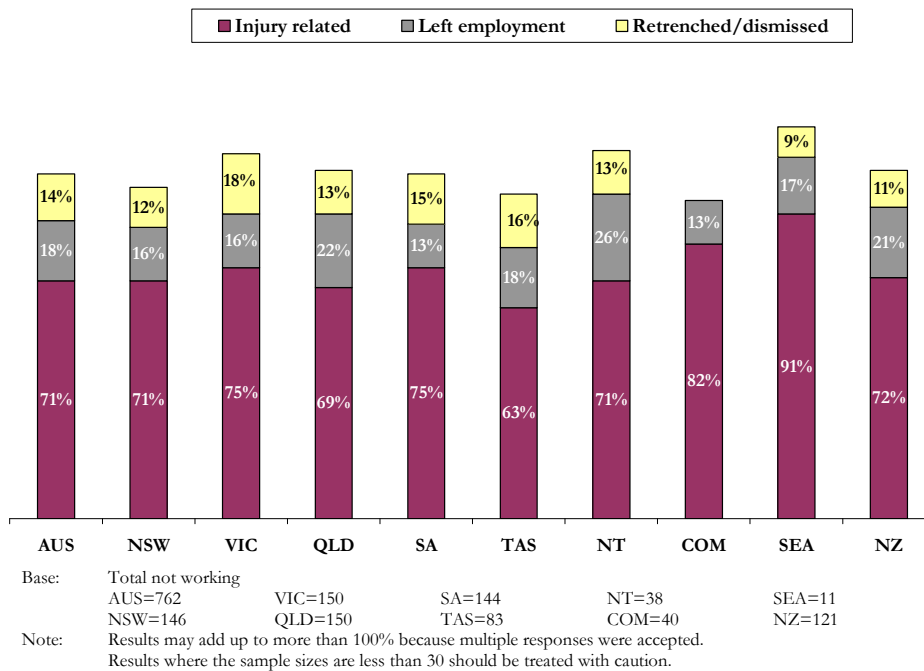
1. **Injury related**, including: still injured; new injury; old injury got worse or aggravated; psychological reasons; and can't work in that job due to type of injury.
2. **Left employment**, referring to those who indicated they had left the workforce on a permanent or temporary basis including: retired; resigned; studying; and no work available/seasonal.
3. **Retrenched/dismissed**, including: retrenched; dismissed by employer; and employer closed down.

In total, 25% of Australian injured workers were not working at the time of interview. Of these, seven in ten (71%) mentioned injury related reasons as a reason for not working (Figure 27) – *still injured* by over five in ten (54%), *aggravated injury* by more than one in six (16%), while *new injury* accounted for one in twenty (5%). Injury related reasons were cited by a similar proportion of injured workers in each jurisdiction.

Two in ten (18%) injured workers indicated that they had left employment either on a permanent or temporary basis. This was more often cited as a reason for not working by injured workers in the Northern Territory (26%). One in seven (14%) injured workers indicated that they had been retrenched or dismissed by their employer. No injured workers covered by Comcare mentioned this as a reason for not working.

Figure 27: Select total reasons for not working

Q9a. What is the main reason you are not working now?
 Q9b. Are there any other reasons you are not working now?



Injury related reasons were more often cited by those who had not returned to work (70%) compared to those with a non-durable RTW (56%). Conversely, left employment was less often mentioned by those who had not returned to work (8%) compared to those with a non-durable RTW (19%).

⁹ The net categories were amended in the 2007/08 RTW Monitor report. The results will differ slightly to previous reports.

Injury related issues were the primary reason for not working at the time of interview.

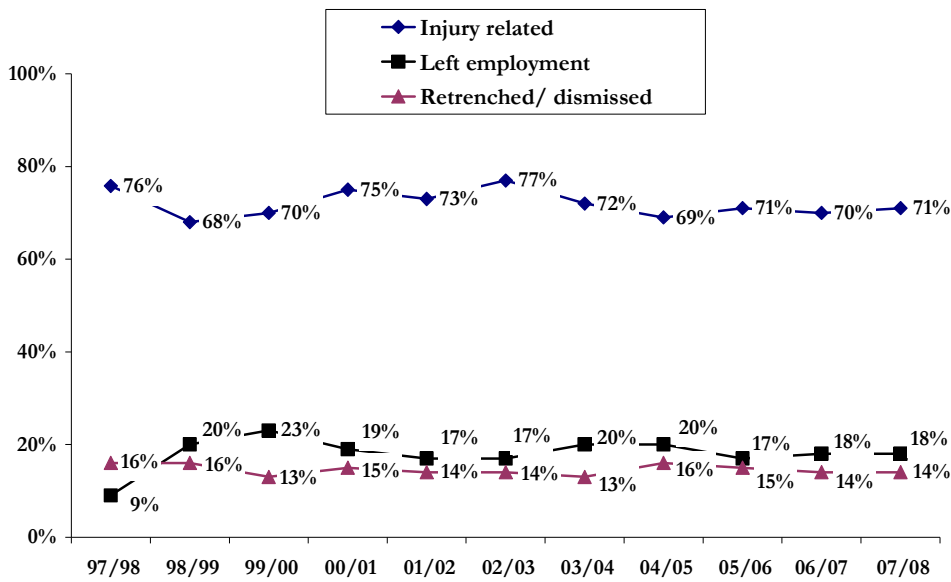
Injury related reasons have fluctuated over the eleven years of the Monitor (Figure 28) from a high of 77% in 2002/03 to a low of 69% in 2004/05. The last five years have been stable.

The incidence of *leaving the workforce voluntarily* has remained stable since 2000/01 – 18% in 2007/08.

The incidence of injured workers being *retrenched or dismissed* has been stable over the course of the Monitor and accounted for close to one in seven of those not currently working – 14% in 2007/08.

Figure 28: Total reasons for not working

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently



Base: Total not working
 97/98 = 777 99/00 = 745 01/02 = 834 03/04 = 629 05/06=629 07/08=762
 98/99 = 768 00/01 = 841 02/03 = 781 04/05 = 691 06/07=698

Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Labour market influences on RTW have remained relatively stable over time.

2.5 RTW plan

RTW plans are developed to assist injured workers achieve a RTW outcome. The Monitor measures:

- The injured workers' awareness of RTW plans;
- The extent to which the injured worker was involved in the RTW plan; and
- The helpfulness of the RTW plan from the perspective of the injured worker.

2.5.1 Development of and involvement in RTW plan

Half (51%) of injured workers nationally reported they had a RTW plan developed for them (Figure 29).

Wide variation between jurisdictions has been observed over the eleven years of the Monitor.

RTW plans were more frequently reported among injured workers in South Australia (68%), Tasmania (61%) and New South Wales (56%) and injured workers covered by Comcare (74%) when compared to the Australian national average. A below average incidence of RTW plans were prepared for those in Queensland (41%) and New Zealand¹⁰ (36%) and covered by Seacare (37%).

Since the commencement of the Monitor, the proportion of injured workers reporting development of RTW plans has steadily increased from four in ten to five in ten injured workers since 2002/03.

Figure 29: Development of RTW plan (Comparative)

Q13. Did anyone write a plan of action with you to help you to return to work? It could have been called a return to work plan or a rehabilitation plan. Either your employer or a rehabilitation provider would have been involved.

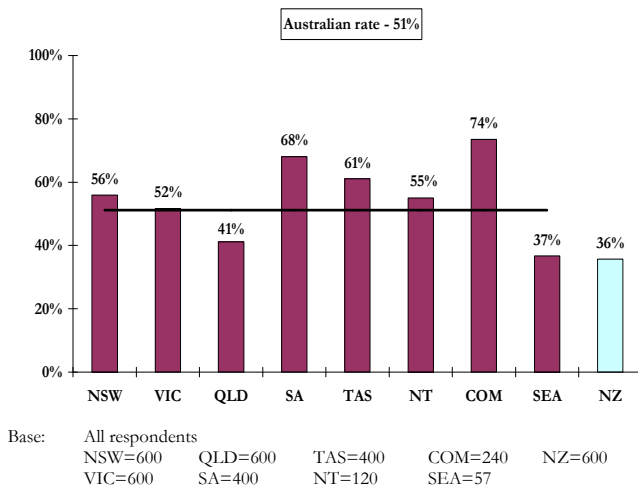
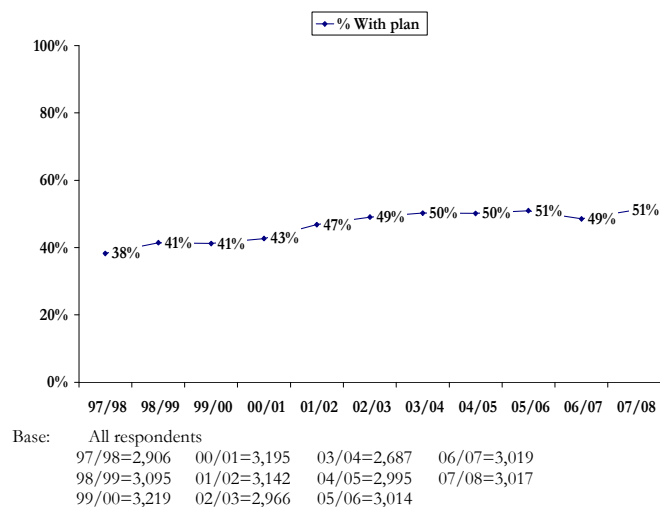


Figure 30: Development of RTW plan (Trend)

Q13. Did anyone write a plan of action with you to help you to return to work? It could have been called a return to work plan or a rehabilitation plan. Either your employer or a rehabilitation provider would have been involved.



One in two injured workers nationally reported they had a RTW plan developed for them.

¹⁰ In New Zealand RTW plans are not a requirement for claims under 13 weeks. A comparative analysis of RTW plans has been undertaken as a separate report available to participating jurisdictions.

Injured workers with a RTW plan were also asked if they had been involved in the development of that plan.¹¹

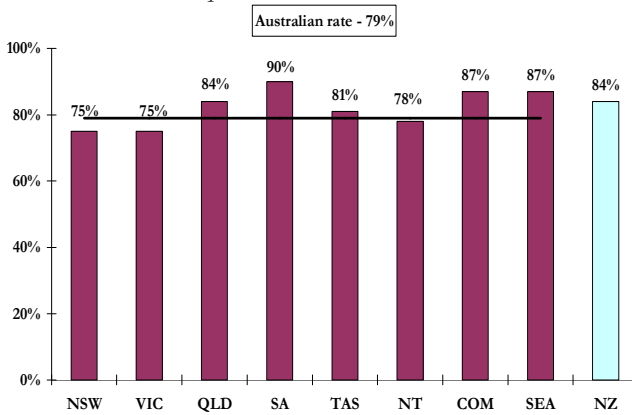
Eight in ten (79%) workers with a RTW plan were involved in development of that plan.

Injured workers in South Australia (90%) and covered by Comcare (87%) were more likely to be involved in the development of a RTW plan compared to the Australian average (Figure 31).

Since November 2000, all jurisdictions have been asked about injured worker involvement in RTW plans. From this time the incidence has been stable (Figure 32).

Figure 31: Involvement in RTW plan (Comparative)

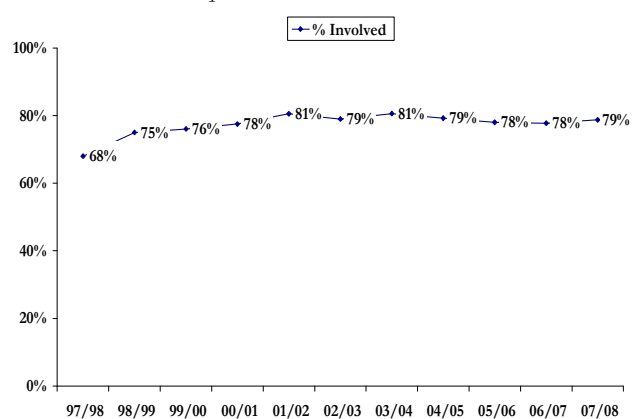
Q13a. Were you involved in development of the return to work plan or a rehabilitation plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=336 QLD=247 TAS=244 COM=174 NZ=214
 VIC=310 SA=272 NT=66 SEA=21
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 32: Involvement in RTW plan (Trend)

Q13a. Were you involved in development of the return to work plan or a rehabilitation plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=252 00/01=1,506 03/04=1,419 06/07=1,591
 98/99=327 01/02=1,582 04/05=1,633 07/08=1,670
 99/00=473 02/03=1,541 05/06=1,666

Eight in ten injured workers with a RTW plan were involved in the development of the plan.

¹¹ Prior to November 2001, this question was only asked in Victoria, ACT and Comcare.



2.5.2 Helpfulness of RTW plan

Three in four (76%) injured workers who received a RTW plan considered the plan to be helpful (Figure 33).

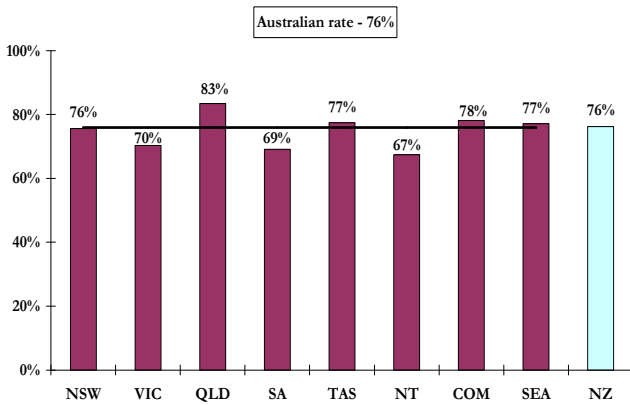
Injured workers in Queensland (83%) were more likely to consider the plan helpful and those in South Australia (69%) and Victoria (70%) were less likely to consider the plan helpful compared to the Australian average.

Importantly, injured workers involved in the development of the RTW plan were more likely to rate the plan helpful (82%) than those who had no involvement in the development of the plan (53%).

There had been a declining trend from 1997/98 (77%) to 2002/03 (72%) in the proportion of injured workers who received RTW plans and agreed that they were helpful. This has since been turned around (76% in 2007/08).

Figure 33: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Comparative)

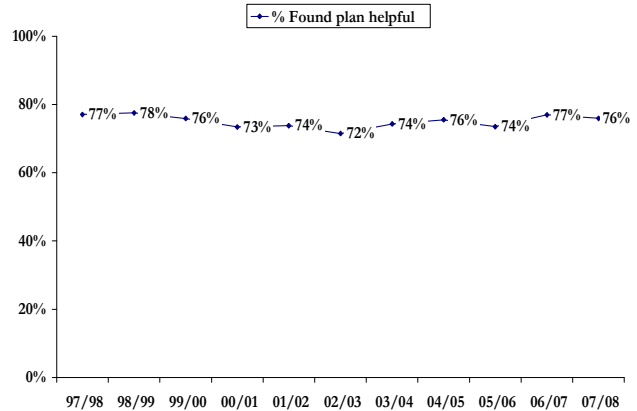
Q15. Was the plan helpful?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=336 QLD=247 TAS=244 COM=174 NZ=214
 VIC=310 SA=272 NT=66 SEA=21
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 34: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Trend)

Q15. Was the plan helpful?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=1,329 00/01=1,506 03/04=1,419 06/07=1,591
 98/99=1,483 01/02=1,582 04/05=1,633 07/08=1,670
 99/00=1,510 02/03=1,541 05/06=1,666

Three in four injured workers who received a RTW plan considered it helpful.

2.5.3 Given help to follow RTW plan

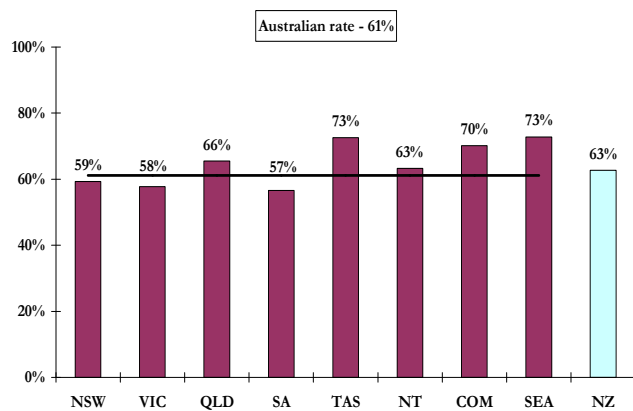
Six in ten (61%) injured workers in Australia who received a RTW plan reported they were given help to do what was recommended in their RTW plan (Figure 35).

Assistance with following the RTW plan was highest among injured workers covered by Seacare (73%) although due to a low sample size did not represent a significant difference to the national average, and among injured workers covered by Comcare (70%) and in Tasmania (73%).

The proportion of injured workers given help to do what was recommended in the RTW plan declined from a high of 63% in 1997/98 to 56% in 2001/02 and has since been reversed reaching 61% in 2007/08 – the last five years have remained stable (Figure 36).

Figure 35: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Comparative)

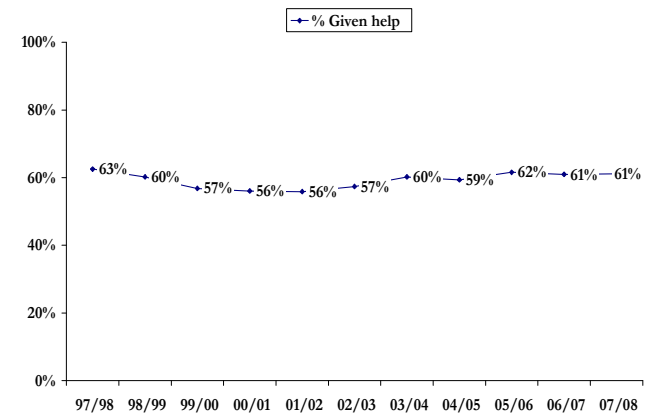
Q16. Were you given help to follow RTW plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=336 QLD=247 TAS=244 COM=174 NZ=214
 VIC=310 SA=272 NT=66 SEA=21
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 36: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Trend)

Q16. Were you given help to follow RTW plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=1,329 00/01=1,506 03/04=1,419 06/07=1,591
 98/99=1,483 01/02=1,582 04/05=1,633 07/08=1,670
 99/00=1,510 02/03=1,541 05/06=1,666

Six in ten injured workers received assistance to follow their RTW plan.

When asked *who helped* with the RTW plan (Table 11), in most cases it was someone within the workplace (36% net someone within the workplace). Injured workers from New Zealand (18%), Northern Territory (24%) and South Australia (26%) were less likely to mention a person from work helping with the RTW plan. More specifically, the person at work who helped the injured worker was mainly either the employer (15%) or a workplace supervisor (15%), followed by the workplace rehabilitation coordinator (9%):

- The employer was less likely to be mentioned by those covered by Comcare (7%), although they were more likely to mention the main supervisor at work (25%) and the workplace rehabilitation co-ordinator (17%);
- Injured workers from New Zealand were less likely to report their supervisor at work assisting (7%) and no one mentioned a workplace rehabilitation co-ordinator; and

- The workplace rehabilitation coordinator was more likely to be mentioned by those covered by those from Queensland (15%), while few from South Australia (3%) indicated they received help from the coordinator.

Help from outside the workplace generally came from the rehabilitation provider (15%). Injured workers covered by Comcare (35%) and from the Northern Territory (25%), Tasmania (23%) and South Australia (23%) more frequently mentioned rehabilitation providers as providing help with the RTW plan.

A minority of injured workers received help from their insurer (5%), with a higher incidence in New Zealand (16%) - in New Zealand the ACC is the equivalent of the insurer in Australian jurisdictions – and Tasmania (11%).

Table 11: Person that helped with RTW plan										
<i>Q16b. Who gave you that help? Did anyone else help?</i>										
	AUS (1,670) % A	NSW (336) % B	VIC (310) % C	QLD (247) % D	SA (272) % E	TAS (244) % F	NT (66) % G	COM (174) % H	SEA (21) % I	NZ (214) % J
Someone from work (net)	36 ^{EJ}	34 ^{EJ}	37 ^{EGJ}	39 ^{EGJ}	26 ^J	41 ^{EGJ}	24	41 ^{EGJ}	13	18
Rehab provider (outside work)	15	12	15	14	23 ^{ABC} DJ	23 ^{ABC} DJ	25 ^{ABC} DJ	35 ^{ABC} DEFJ	32	11
Employer	15 ^H	14 ^H	16 ^H	15 ^H	11	15 ^H	15	7	9	12
Main supervisor at work	15 ^J	16 ^J	18 ^{GJ}	13	14 ^J	18 ^{GJ}	7	25 ^{ABD} EGJ	4	7
Workplace rehab coordinator (at work)	9 ^{EJ}	7 ^{EJ}	8 ^{EJ}	15 ^{ABC} EJ	3 ^J	10 ^{EJ}	6 ^J	17 ^{ABC} EFGJ	0	0
Someone else	9	10 ^J	9	9	8	6	9	8	4	5
Doctor	8	8	8	9	9	11 ^J	9	9	0	6
Insurer	5 ^H	6 ^H	3	5	4	11 ^{ABC} DEH	5	1	0	16 ^{ABC} DEGH
Myself	1	1	1	2	1	1 ^J	0	0	6	0

Base: Received RTW / rehabilitation plan
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

2.6 RTW timing and duties

2.6.1 Readiness to RTW

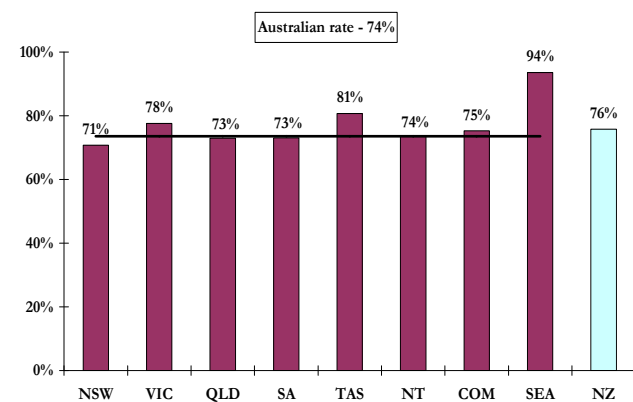
In 2007/08, three in four (74%) Australian injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so (Figure 37).

A higher proportion of injured workers covered by Seacare (94%) and from Tasmania (81%) felt ready to RTW compared to other jurisdictions.

Over the ten years of the Monitor, between seven in ten and eight in ten injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so. There have been a number of significant changes over this time, however, the last three years have been stable (Figure 38).

Figure 37: Readiness to RTW (Comparative)

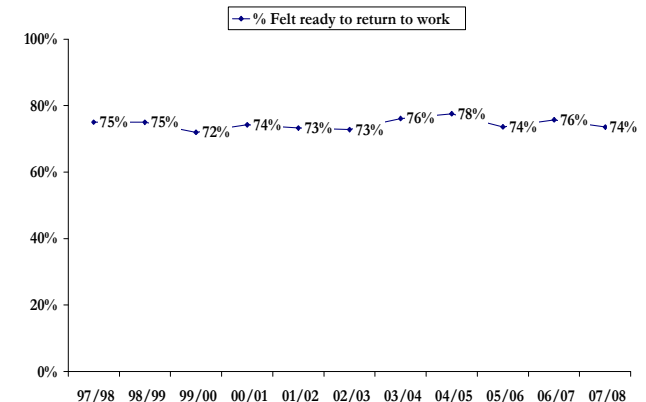
Q7. Did you feel ready to return to work?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=515 VIC=503
 QLD=509 SA=300
 TAS=355 NT=101
 COM=215 SEA=46
 NZ=524

Figure 38: Readiness to RTW (Trend)

Q7. Did you feel ready to return to work?



Base: Have returned to work
 97/98=2,440 98/99=2,639 99/00=2,788
 00/01=2,693 01/02=2,627 02/03=2,486
 03/04=2,312 04/05=2,569 05/06=2,602
 06/07=2,579 07/08=2,544

Three in four Australian injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so.

2.6.2 Reasons for not feeling ready to RTW

Since 2003, all injured workers who returned to work but reported that they did not feel ready to RTW were asked why they did not feel ready. Multiple responses were accepted.

Four in five (82%) of these Australian injured workers reported the reason for not feeling ready to RTW was that they were *still injured or in pain*. This has been consistent over the six years of the Monitor for which this question has been asked.

One in ten (11%) reported that they were *pressured by their employer/insurer/doctor*, that is, while they felt pressured to return to work they actually did not feel ready and one in ten (11%) indicated that the *duties or hours were not appropriate*. Fewer injured workers who did not feel ready to return to work said that they were *mentally unprepared* (5%).

Similarly to injured workers from all jurisdictions, those covered by Comcare were most likely to indicate that they were not ready to return to work because they were *still injured or in pain* (77%). However, they were more likely to say that they returned to work because they *did not want to jeopardise their position* (13%), *felt it was necessary to aid their recovery* (11%) and *the promise was made by the employer to give alternative duties or reduce hours* (8%).

<i>Q7a. What was the reason you did not feel ready to return to work?</i>									
	AUS (557) % A	NSW (130) % B	VIC (94) % C	QLD (127) % D	SA (71) % E	TAS (61) % F	NT (24) % G	COM (48) % H	NZ (116) % J
Still injured/in pain	82	82	83	83	79	84	78	77	86
Employer/insurer/ doctor pressure	11 ^J	12 ^J	17 ^{DJ}	6	10 ^J	10 ^J	9	17 ^{DJ}	3
Duties/hours were not appropriate	11 ^J	14 ^J	14 ^J	7	6	5	9	12	4
Mentally unprepared	5	5	5	5	6	5	4	9 ^J	2
Did not want to jeopardise position/lose job	3	3	2	2	0	0	5	13 ^{ABC} DEF ^J	1
Employer promised but did not give alternative duties/ reduced hours	3	4	4 ^J	1	0	0	5	8 ^{ADEFJ}	0
Had to RTW against doctor's advice	2	1	4 ^J	1	1	2 ^J	5	4 ^{BDJ}	0
Felt it was necessary to aid recovery	1	0	2	1	3	3 ^{BJ}	4	11 ^{ABC} DE ^J	0

Base: Total did not feel ready to RTW

Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Seacare results have been excluded due to very small sample size (n=2).

Four in five injured workers in Australia who had returned to work but did not feel ready reported that they were *still injured or in pain*.

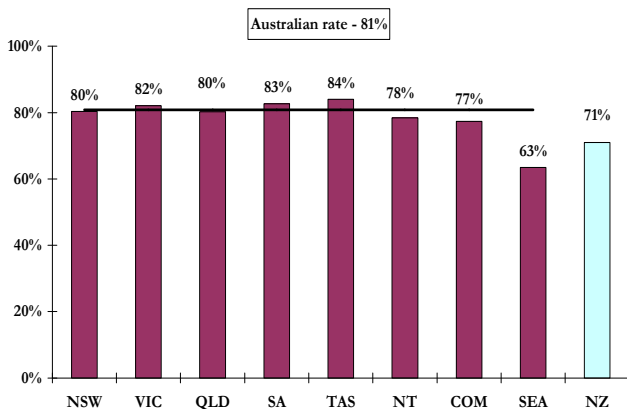
2.6.3 Suitable duties at RTW

Four in five (81%) Australian injured workers reported suitable duties at RTW (Figure 39). Conversely, under one in five (18%) considered the duties they were given at RTW *not* suitable.

Injured workers covered by Seacare (63%) and from New Zealand (71%) were less likely than the Australian national average to report their duties at RTW were suitable (Figure 39). Over the eleven years of the Monitor, the proportion reporting that their RTW duties were suitable has improved from seven in ten injured workers to eight in ten injured workers. The last five years have been stable (Figure 40).

Figure 39: Suitable duties at RTW (Comparative)

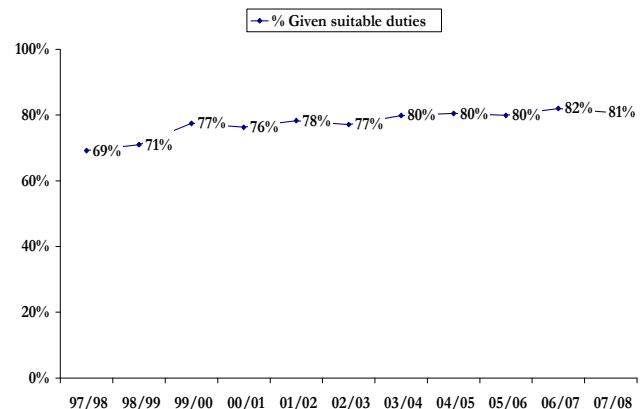
Q5. When you first returned to work after your injury, were you given suitable duties at work?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=515 VIC=503
 QLD=509 SA=300
 TAS=355 NT=101
 COM=215 SEA=46
 NZ=524

Figure 40: Suitable duties at RTW (Trend)

Q5. When you first returned to work after your injury, were you given suitable duties at work?



Base: Have returned to work
 97/98=2,440 98/99=2,639 99/00=2,788
 00/01=2,693 01/02=2,627 02/03=2,486
 03/04=2,312 04/05=2,569 05/06=2,602
 06/07=2,579 07/08=2,544

2.6.4 Changed duties at RTW

Injured workers were asked "What was different about your duties when you returned to work?" The objective of this question was to identify the extent of support provided in returning to work by their employers, and the nature of this support without prompting the injured worker. Subsequent questions identify partial RTW and reduced hours at RTW.

Figure 41: Changed duties at RTW (Comparative)

Q5a. What was different about your duties when you returned to work?

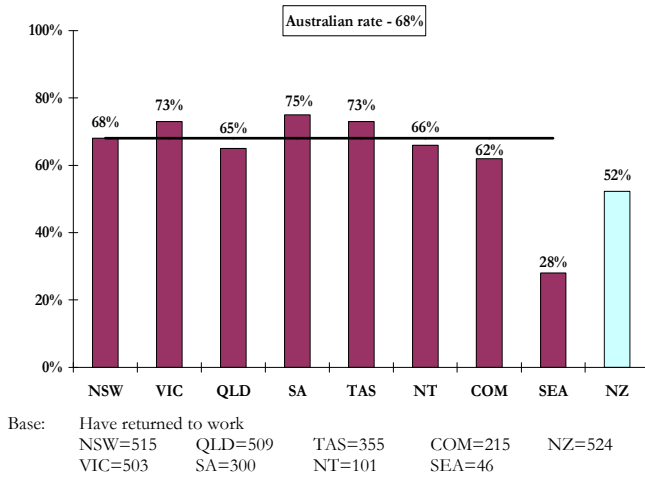
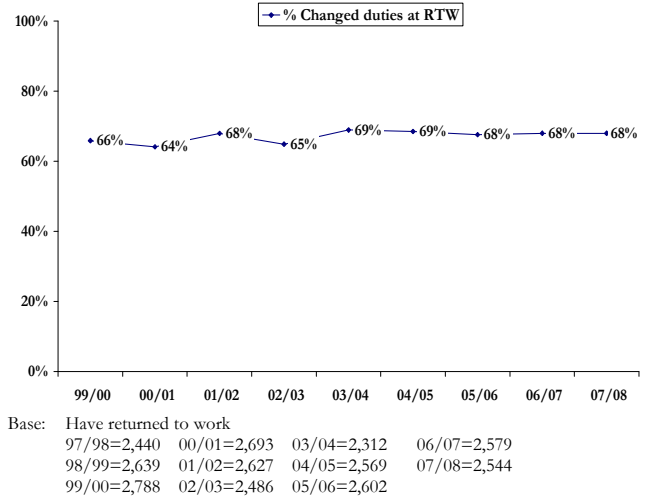


Figure 42: Changed duties at RTW (Trend)

Q5a. What was different about your duties when you returned to work?



Two in three (68% net) Australian injured workers reported some change in their duties when they returned to work compared with what they were doing when they were injured. This predominantly included *lighter duties* and *no heavy lifting*.

A change in duties was less common among those injured workers covered by Seacare (28%) and those in New Zealand (52%) compared to the Australian national average (Figure 41). The low proportion of injured workers covered by Seacare who changed duties at RTW reflects the requirement of seamen to be fully fit to work on ships at sea.

Two in three injured workers who returned to work reported some change in their duties. Fewer injured workers in New Zealand and those covered by Seacare reported a change in duties at RTW.

Three in five (59%) Australian injured workers reported they were given lighter duties at RTW (Figure 43) including:

- Duties are flexible to meet needs;
- Being given equipment to make tasks easier; and
- Being given duties that would not strain the injury.

Coinciding with fewer reporting any change in duties, injured workers in New Zealand (43%) and injured workers covered by Comcare (50%) and Seacare (24%) were less likely to report lighter duties.

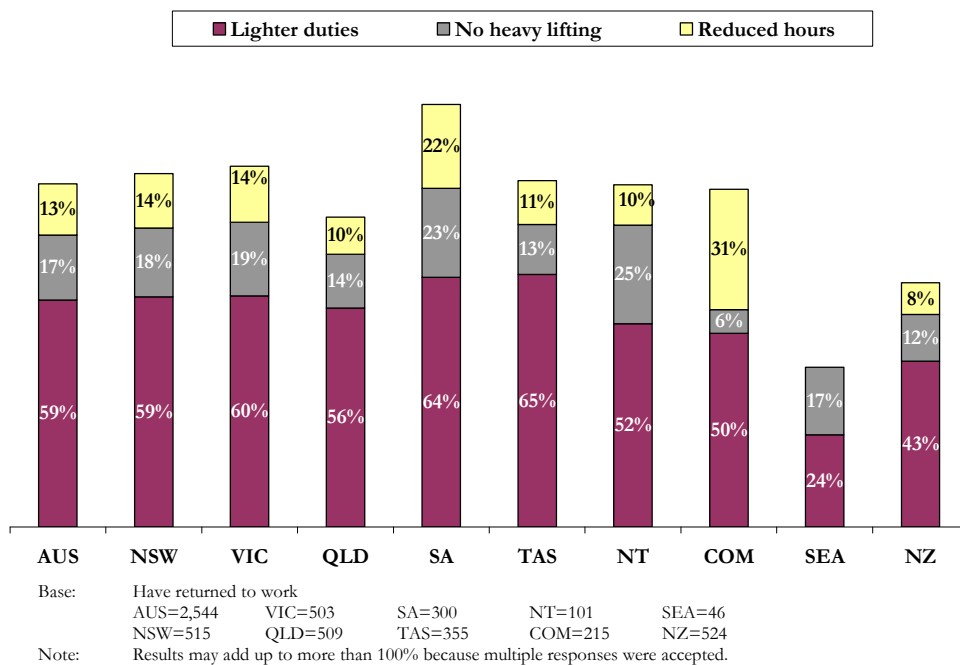
One in five (17%) injured workers in Australia reported being given duties that did not require heavy lifting, with a lower incidence among those in New Zealand (12%) and covered by Comcare (6%).

Reduced hours (which was not included in the “net change in duties at RTW”) was mentioned by over one in ten (13%).

Overall, one in four (24%) Australian injured workers indicated that there was “nothing different about the duties at RTW”, that is, they did the same type of duties as prior to their injury. Injured workers covered by Seacare (60%) and in New Zealand (43%) were more likely to report that their duties were not changed.

Figure 43: Type of change in duties at RTW (Comparative)¹²

Q5a. *What was different about your duties when you returned to work?*

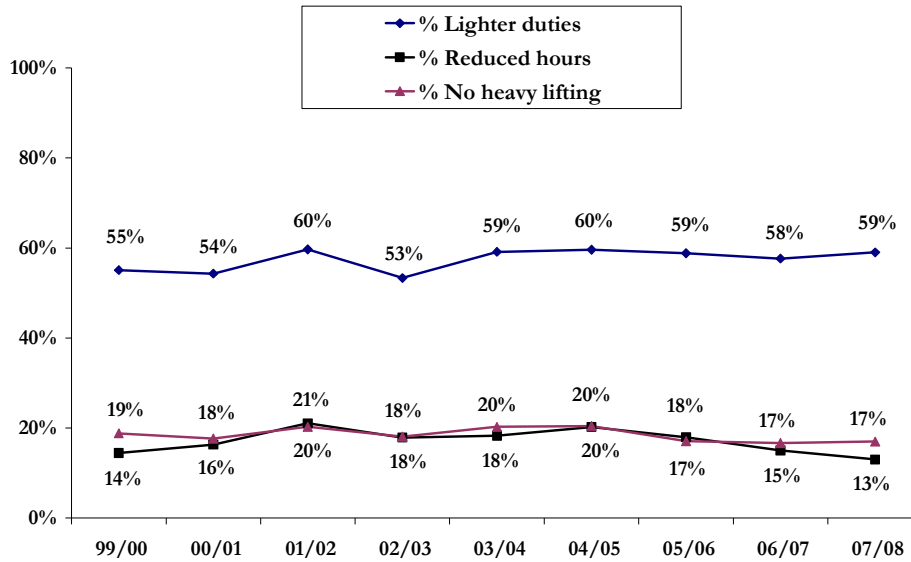


¹² This question was introduced in May 1999.

The proportion of injured workers reporting lighter duties has been stable for the last five years at three in five injured workers (59%) (Figure 44). Over the same time there has been a declining trend in the proportion of injured workers reporting reduced hours and no heavy lifting.

Figure 44: Type of change in duties at RTW (Trend)

Q5a. What was different about your duties when you returned to work?



Base: Have returned to work
 99/00 = 2,788 01/02 = 2,627 03/04 = 2,312 05/06 = 2,602 07/08 = 2,544
 00/01 = 2,693 02/03 = 2,486 04/05 = 2,569 06/07 = 2,579

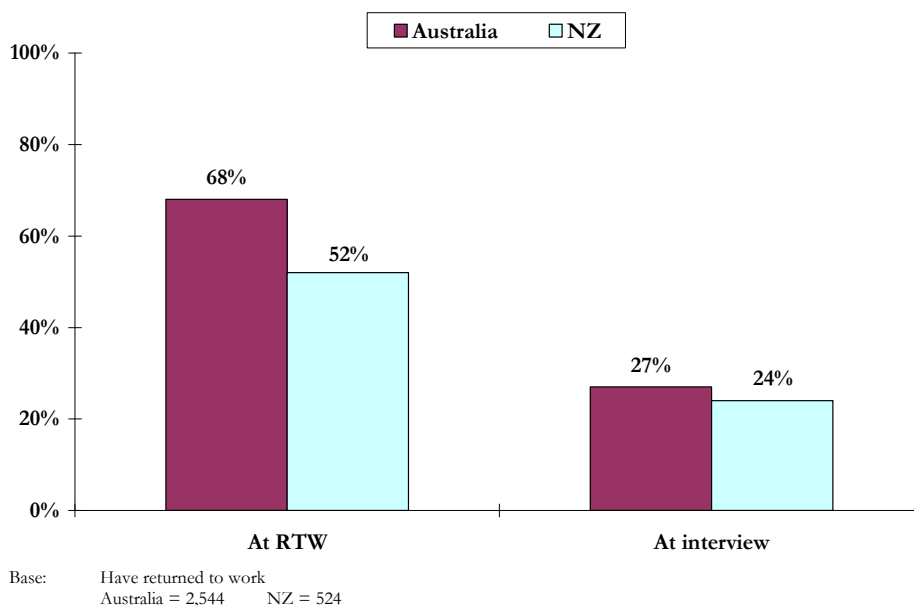
Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Changes in duties at RTW were generally temporary. Among Australian injured workers, two in three (68%) reported a change in duties at the time of RTW, however, at the time of interview (or leaving work for those with a non-durable RTW) this had declined to one in four (27%) (Figure 45). This relativity also applied to injured workers in New Zealand, with 52% reporting a change in duties at return to work (lower when compared to the Australian national average) and declining to 24% at the time of interview.

Figure 45: Different duties at RTW and at interview

Q5a. *What was different about your duties at RTW? (At RTW)*

Q12. *[Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury? (At interview)*



2.7 Partial RTW

The terms “partial RTW” and “full RTW” are technical expressions not necessarily understood by injured workers. A “full RTW” does not necessarily mean return to full-time employment since the injured worker may have been working on a part-time basis at the time of injury. Rather, it means return to a level of paid employment equivalent to that at the time of injury. “Partial RTW” as an *outcome* has been estimated from the proportion of workers who have returned to work and are deriving their income from both employment and workers’ compensation payments (see page 74).

One in four (25%) of all injured workers (or 29% of those who had returned to work) returned to work on a partial basis at the time of RTW (Figure 46). Few (5%) injured workers were unsure whether they were receiving workers’ compensation payments.

The partial RTW rate was lower for injured workers covered by Seacare (3%) and in New Zealand (19%) when compared to the Australian national average.

The partial RTW rate has been stable over the last seven years of the Monitor, although at a higher rate than for the first four years (Figure 47).

Figure 46: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Comparative)¹³

Q6. Still thinking about when you first returned to work, were you receiving any weekly payments from <Authority> in addition to your wages?

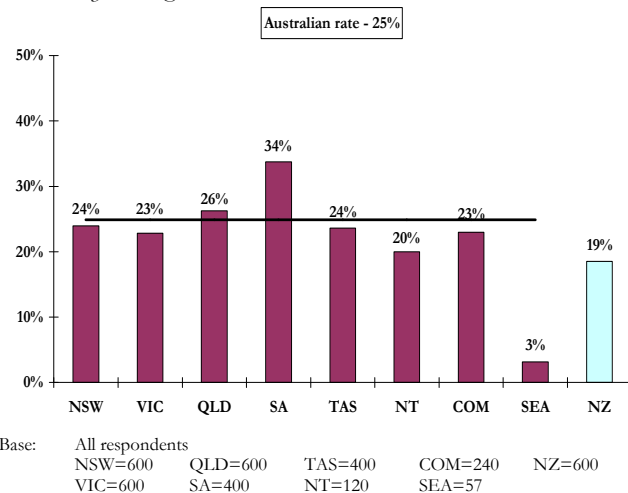
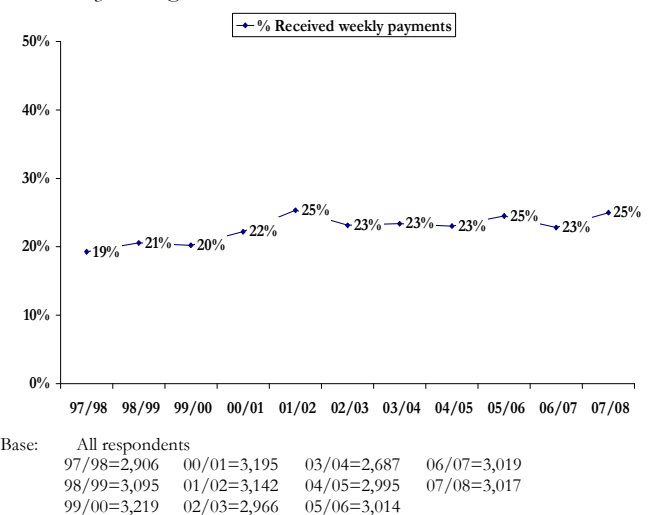


Figure 47: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Trend)

Q6. Still thinking about when you first returned to work, were you receiving any weekly payments from <Authority> in addition to your wages?



One in four of all injured workers returned to work on a partial basis at the time of RTW, that is, they were still receiving workers’ compensation payments.

¹³ Previously reported on the base of “have returned to work”.

2.7.1 Returned to previous hours

Another measure of partial RTW is the number of hours worked. Pre-injury hours may have included overtime which is unlikely to be part of post-injury RTW.

Of those Australian injured workers who returned to work, over half (55%) returned to their previous hours (Figure 48).

There was a higher rate of return to previous hours for injured workers in New Zealand (66%) and covered by Seacare (96%), particularly when compared to workers covered by Comcare (34%) and in South Australia (43%).

The proportion of injured workers returning to their pre-injury hours has been stable over the last eight years of the Monitor (Figure 49).

Figure 48: Returned to previous hours (Comparative)

Q6a. Still thinking about when you first returned to work, did you return to your previous hours?

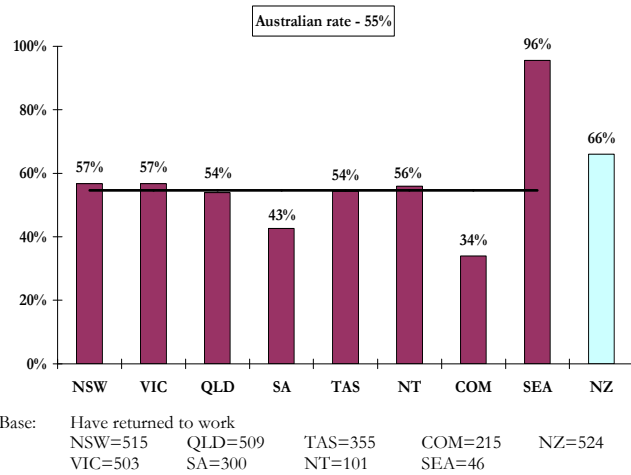
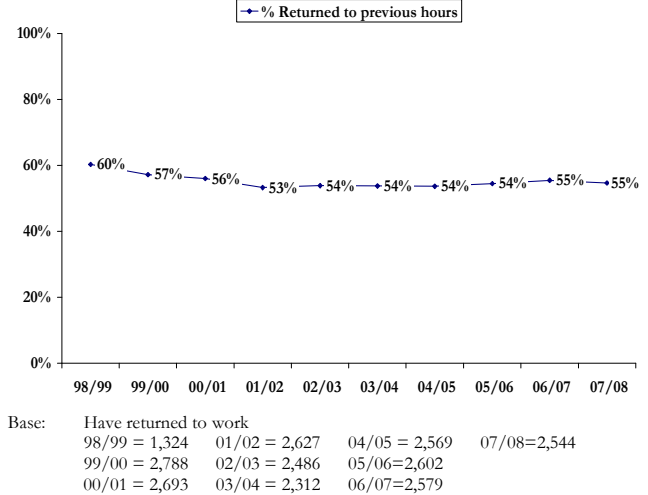


Figure 49: Returned to previous hours (Trend)

Q6a. Still thinking about when you first returned to work, did you return to your previous hours?



Of those injured workers who returned, over half returned to their pre-injury hours.
 This incidence has been stable over the last eight years.

2.8 Sources of assistance with RTW

Assistance to RTW is measured in a number of ways:

- Injured workers are asked, *without prompting*, who helped the most and who helped the least to RTW; and
- Injured workers are then asked to rate the helpfulness of key people – the doctor, rehabilitation provider, workplace rehabilitation coordinator (case manager in New Zealand), employer, main supervisor and insurer or compensation provider.

The findings are discussed in the following section.

2.8.1 Who helped injured workers RTW the most?

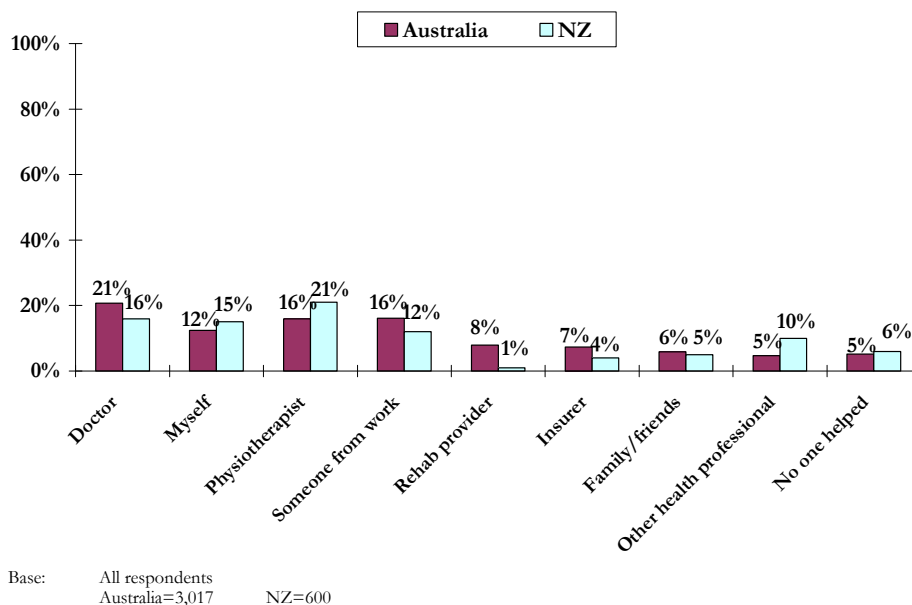
Injured workers were asked who helped them RTW the most (Figure 50).

Doctors were most frequently mentioned by Australian injured workers with one in four injured workers (21%) indicating they *helped the most*. This incidence was lower among those in New Zealand (16%) (Table 13). The high proportion of injured workers identifying *doctors* as the person who provided the most help in getting them back to work is in contrast to the proportion identifying doctors assisting with RTW plans (Section 2.5.3).

In New Zealand, of the professionals, physiotherapists (21%) were most frequently identified as the most help, and more so than for Australian injured workers (16%).

Figure 50: People who were the most help to RTW

Q28. Thinking of all the people who helped you to get back to work, who helped you the MOST?



Under one in eight (12%) Australian injured workers identified *themselves* as the person who was most helpful in the RTW process. Injured workers covered by Comcare (7%) were less likely to consider themselves to be the person who helped the most to RTW.

Doctors and physiotherapists were often identified as providing most help with getting the injured worker back to work. A substantial minority relied on themselves for their RTW.

Sixteen per cent of Australian injured workers reported *someone from work* helping the most to get them back to work. A lower proportion of injured workers from South Australia (9%), the Northern Territory (7%) and New Zealand (12%) identified someone from work helping them RTW.

Less than one in ten (8%) Australian injured workers identified *rehabilitation providers* as being the most help in RTW. Injured workers covered by Comcare (20%) and Seacare (17%) were more likely to mention rehabilitation providers as were those in South Australia (18%) and Tasmania (14%). Few New Zealand (1%) injured workers mentioned rehabilitation providers.

A minority (7%) of injured workers reported their *insurer* or the Workers' Compensation Scheme as being the most help. This was higher in Queensland where 13% identified Q-COMP.

Table 13: People who were the most help										
<i>Q28. Thinking of all the people who helped you to get back to work, who helped you the MOST?</i>										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Doctor	21 ^J	24 ^{DHJ}	20	18	21	22 ^J	24 ^J	17	15	16
Myself	12 ^H	12 ^H	13 ^H	12 ^H	11	13 ^H	17 ^H	7	17 ^H	15 ^H
Physiotherapist	16	15	15	17	15	15	24 ^{ABC} EF	16	16	21 ^{ABC} EF
Someone from work	16 ^{EGJ}	15 ^{EG}	19 ^{EGJ}	17 ^{EGJ}	9	17 ^{EGJ}	7	16 ^{EG}	21 ^{EGJ}	12
Rehabilitation provider	8 ^J	7 ^J	7 ^J	6 ^J	18 ^{ABC} DJ	14 ^{ABC} DJ	11 ^J	20 ^{ABC} DFGJ	17 ^{ABC} DJ	1
Insurer	7 ^{CFHIJ}	6 ^C	3	13 ^{ABC} EFGHIJ	5	3	6	3	0	4
Other health professional	5	4	6 ^{FG}	4	6 ^{FG}	3	0	6 ^G	0	10 ^{ABC} DEFGI
No one	5	4	5	6 ^B	6	5	7	5	6	6

Base: All respondents

2.8.2 Who helped the most to RTW? – someone from work

When injured workers reported someone from the workplace as the most helpful to RTW they were then asked “Who was that person from work?”.

Of those who mentioned someone from work (16%), four in ten (39%) identified their employer. The supervisor was the next most frequently mentioned person (31%), followed by the OH&S officer (10%), a workmate (4%) and the HR Department (4%).

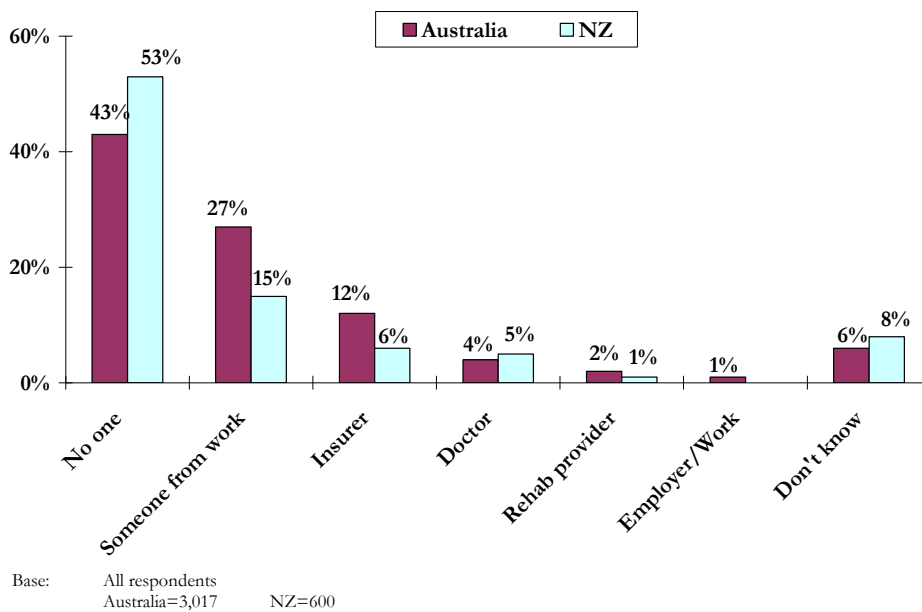
2.8.3 Who helped injured workers RTW the least?

Injured workers had difficulty in identifying a person as being the least helpful, that is, who hindered them in returning to work. When asked who was the least help, four in ten (43%) injured workers in Australia and five in ten (53%) in New Zealand could not identify anybody (Figure 51). When they did identify a person as least helpful, the person was most likely to be someone from work or the insurer.

One in four (27%) Australian injured workers identified someone from work as being the least help and one in eight (12%) reported their insurer/Scheme/WorkCover was the least helpful. The incidences were significantly lower in New Zealand (15% and 6% respectively).

Figure 51: People who were the least help to RTW

Q29. And who helped you the least?



Someone from work was more likely to be identified as helping the least than helping the most with the RTW process.

2.8.4 Who helped the least to RTW? – someone from work

When injured workers reported someone from the workplace as *least* helpful to RTW they were asked “Who was that person from work?”

Of those who mentioned someone from work (27%), three in five (62%) identified their employer. Supervisors were the next most frequently mentioned person (23%). The HR Department (3%), OH&S officer (2%), and workmate (2%) were seldom mentioned.

Injured workers covered by Comcare who mentioned someone from work who helped the least with their return to work were almost equally as likely to mention their supervisor (38%) and their employer (33%).

2.8.5 Rating of helpfulness of those involved in RTW process

The person who helped the most or least provides an unprompted identification of those who helped or hindered the RTW process. Prompted ratings of those who were involved in the RTW process provide a comparative evaluation across the population.

To obtain the prompted rating, injured workers were asked to rate a range of different people who may have helped or hindered getting them back to work. The ratings are reported on a scale of one to five where one is “made it a lot harder” and five is “helped a lot”. A score of three indicates “neither helpful nor unhelpful”.

On average, all categories of people were rated as helpful by injured workers (Figure 52). Doctors (4.3 mean rating), rehabilitation providers (4.2) and work rehabilitation coordinators (3.8) were rated the most helpful. Work supervisors (3.6), employers (3.6) and insurers (3.6) were rated as less helpful.

Compared to Australian injured workers, New Zealanders gave a lower rating to doctors (4.1) and rehabilitation providers (3.8), but were more favourable in their rating of the insurer (3.7).

Figure 52: Rating of helpfulness to RTW

Q21. Helpfulness rating of different people



Base: All respondents
 Australia=3,017 NZ=600



When compared to the national average, injured workers covered by Comcare gave a higher rating for the helpfulness of the doctor (4.5), rehabilitation provider (4.4) and main supervisor (3.8) (Table 14).

The workplace rehabilitation co-ordinator in South Australia (4.0) and Tasmania (4.0) was rated above the national average and Tasmanian injured workers rated the helpfulness of their employer (3.8) above many other jurisdictions.

There were a number of other differences in the average helpfulness rating between jurisdictions.

<i>Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people</i>										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Doctor	4.3 ^{IJ}	4.4 ^{DG} IJ	4.3 ^{IJ}	4.3 ^J	4.4 ^{DG} IJ	4.4 ^{IJ}	4.2	4.5 ^{AC} DGIJ	4.0	4.1
Rehab provider	4.2 ^J	4.4 ^{AC} DEJ	4.1 ^J	4.2 ^J	4.2 ^J	4.2 ^J	4.2 ^J	4.4 ^{AC} DJ	4.3 ^J	3.8
Work rehab coordinator	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.0 ^{AB} DHIJ	4.0 ^{AB} DIJ	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.9
Main supervisor	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7 ^E	3.6	3.8 ^{AD} E	3.6	3.7
Insurer	3.6 ^{CGI}	3.6 ^{CGI}	3.4	3.8 ^{AB} CEFGH I	3.6 ^{CGI}	3.6 ^{CGI}	3.2	3.5 ^G	3.2	3.7 ^{AB} CGHI
Employer	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.8 ^{AC} DE	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7 ^E

Base: All respondents

New Zealand injured workers gave a lower rating for the helpfulness of doctors and rehabilitation providers in the return to work process compared to their Australian counterparts, but a higher rating for their insurer (the ACC).

While the average helpfulness score provides a summary comparison of those who may have been involved in the RTW process, it is also useful to identify the proportion of injured workers who rated each type of person as either having helped in the RTW process (*a lot or a little*) and those who made it harder (*a lot or a little*) for the injured worker to get back to work.

Doctors were rated as helping the RTW process by four in five (78%) injured workers in Australia, while half rated their employer (51%), main supervisor (50%), and insurer (47%) as helpful. Over one in ten injured workers rated their employer (16%) and supervisor (14%) as making it harder for them to RTW. This result aligns with those who, with prompting, identified someone from work as being least helpful in the RTW process (Section 2.8.3).

More specifically:

- 78% of injured workers in Australia rated their **doctor** as having helped in the RTW process and 3% thought that they made it harder – more injured workers from South Australia (83%) and those covered by Comcare (85%) and fewer from New Zealand (66%) rated the doctor as having helped (Table 15);
- 76% of injured workers rated their **rehabilitation provider** as having helped and 5% thought that they made it harder for them to RTW – more from New South Wales (82%) while fewer from New Zealand (56%) and Victoria (70%) rated the rehabilitation provider as helping the RTW process;
- 62% of injured workers rated their **work rehabilitation coordinator** as having helped and 8% considered that they made it harder for them to RTW – more from South Australia (69%) while fewer in New Zealand (56%) thought that they had helped;
- 50% of injured workers rated their **main supervisor** as having helped and 14% thought that they had made it harder for them the RTW – more injured workers covered by Comcare (61%) considered that their supervisor had helped them RTW, and fewer from New Zealand (8%) thought that supervisor had made it harder for them to RTW;
- 51% of injured workers rated their **employer** as having helped and 16% thought that they made it harder for them to RTW – more injured workers from Tasmania (57%) and those covered by Comcare (58%) rated employer as helping the RTW process; and more injured workers from South Australia (21%) thought that their employer had made it harder for them to RTW; and
- 47% of injured workers rated their **insurer** as having helped and 10% considered that the insurer had made it harder for them to RTW – more injured workers from Queensland (56%) and fewer from Victoria (38%), Tasmania (40%), Northern Territory (37%) and Seacare (29%) thought that the insurer had helped them in the RTW process.

Close to one in five injured workers from South Australia rated their employer and main supervisor as those who made it harder for them to RTW. Injured workers from Queensland were more likely to rate their insurer as helping the RTW process.

Table 15: Rating of people who helped/make it harder to RTW											
<i>Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people</i>											
		AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Doctor (n=2,927)	Helped	78 ^J	82 ^{DGI} J	77 ^J	75 ^J	83 ^{ACD} GIJ	80 ^J	73	85 ^{ACD} GIJ	70	66
	Made it harder	3	3	2	4	4	4	6 ^C	3	7 ^{CJ}	3
Rehab provider (n=2,206)	Helped	76 ^{CJ}	82 ^{ACD} EFJ	70 ^J	76 ^J	75 ^J	73 ^J	78 ^J	82 ^{CFJ}	82 ^J	56
	Made it harder	5 ^J	5 ^J	5 ^J	5 ^J	4 ^J	3 ^J	2	5 ^J	2	1
Work rehab coordinator (n=1,939)	Helped	62 ^J	59	60	63 ^J	69 ^{ABC} IJ	66 ^J	60	61	51	56
	Made it harder	8 ^J	9 ^J	6	8 ^J	7	7	7	14 ^{ABC} DEFJ	10	4
Main supervisor (n=2,621)	Helped	50	51	51	49	47	54	45	61 ^{ABC} DEGIJ	45	48
	Made it harder	14 ^J	14 ^J	13 ^J	13 ^J	16 ^J	13 ^J	12	14 ^J	6	8
Employer (n=2,828)	Helped	51	53	51	49	49	57 ^{ADE} J	49	58 ^{ADE} J	53	50
	Made it harder	16 ^{FJ}	17 ^J	17 ^J	15 ^J	21 ^{ADF} GIJ	12	11	17 ^J	10	9
Insurer (n=2,773)	Helped	47 ^{CFGI}	46 ^{CI}	38	56 ^{ABC} FGHI	50 ^{CFG} I	40	37	46 ^{CI}	29	52 ^{CFG} I
	Made it harder	10 ^F	10 ^F	13 ^{DFJ}	8	12 ^{DFJ}	5	19 ^{ABD} FJ	14 ^{DFJ}	15 ^F	8

Base: All respondents who provided a rating

2.8.6 Rating of helpfulness of compensation provider involved in RTW process

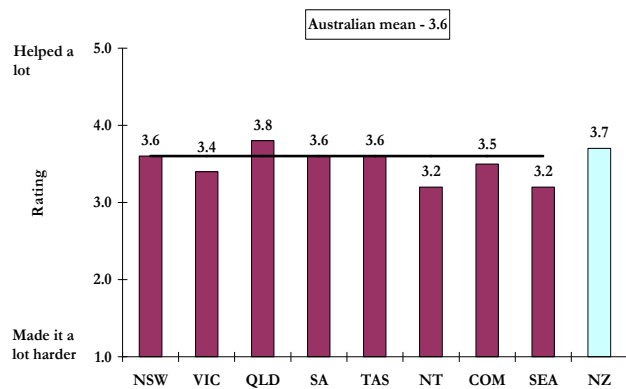
The following section of the report provides a more detailed analysis of injured workers' satisfaction with the services provided by the compensation provider.

In South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria this was the insurance companies who are Claims Agents and in New Zealand the Accident Compensation Corporation.

Injured workers in Queensland (3.8) and New Zealand (3.7) gave higher ratings to the helpfulness of their compensation provider compared to the Australian national average. Injured workers from Victoria (3.4), the Northern Territory (3.2) and covered by Seacare (3.2) rated their compensation provider below the national average (Figure 53).

Figure 53: Rating of compensation provider helpfulness (Comparative)

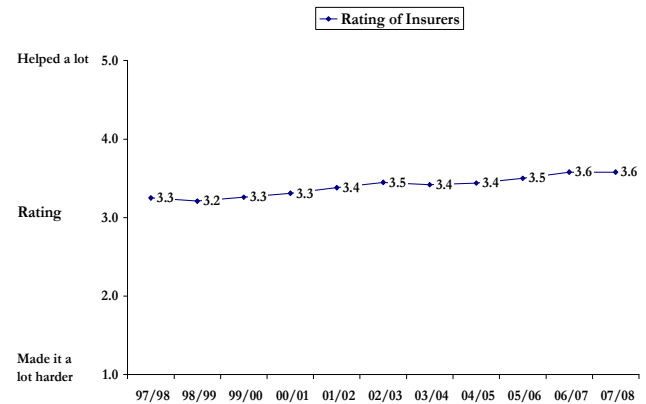
Q21c. Helpfulness rating of compensation provider



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 QLD=600 TAS=400 COM=240 NZ=600
 VIC=600 SA=400 NT=120 SEA=57

Figure 54: Rating of compensation provider helpfulness (Trend)

Q21c. Helpfulness rating of compensation provider



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 00/01=3,195 03/04=2,687 06/07=3,019
 98/99=3,095 01/02=3,142 04/05=2,995 07/08=3,017
 99/00=3,219 02/03=2,966 05/06=3,014

The helpfulness of Australian compensation providers has improved over the course of the Monitor and is the highest it has ever been.

2.8.7 Someone made it harder in RTW process

Injured workers were asked to rate six different people who may have helped or hindered (*a lot or a little*) getting them back to work (Section 2.8.5):

“Now I am going to read a list of different people. For each person I would like you to tell me if they helped you get back to work, made it harder to go back to work or had no effect on you getting back to work.”

One in four (27%) injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder (*a lot or a little*) for them to RTW (Figure 55) – 72% rated all people as either helping or having no effect in getting the injured worker back to work.

A lower proportion of injured workers in New Zealand identified someone who made it harder for them to get back to work (22%), while a higher proportion of injured workers from Comcare identified someone who made the process harder (35%) compared to the Australian national average.

Those who identified at least one person making it harder for them to get back to work were more likely to:

- Have participated in rehabilitation (32%) compared to those who had not (22%);
- Did not consider their duties suitable at RTW (44%) compared to those who thought their duties to be suitable (20%);
- Still received weekly compensation benefits at the time of interview (36%) compared to those who were not (24%); and
- Had not returned to work (38%) or had a non-durable RTW (35%) compared to those who had a durable RTW (24%).

There was no difference in the proportion who identified at least one person making it harder to RTW when analysed by employer size.

Figure 55: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Comparative)

Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people

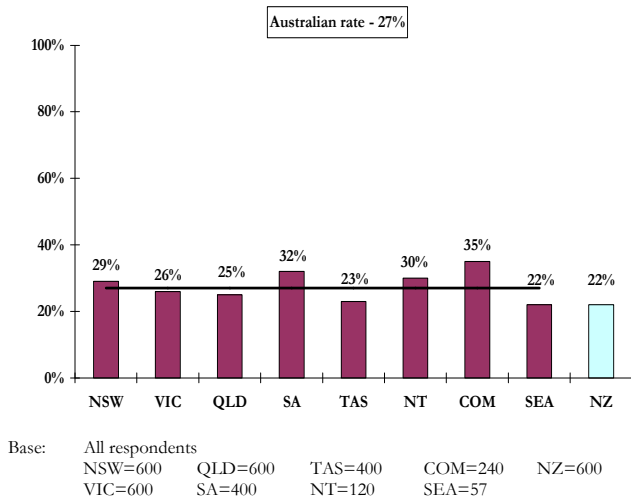
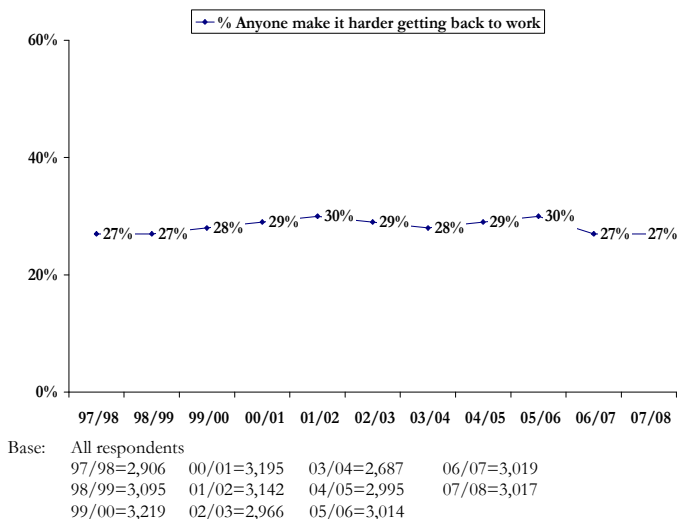


Figure 56: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Trend)

Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people



One in four injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder (*a lot or a little*) for them to RTW.



This data has also been re-analysed to ascertain the RTW outcomes of those who indicated at least one person in the RTW process made it harder for them to get back to work compared to those who indicated that those in the RTW process either helped or had no effect on them returning to work.

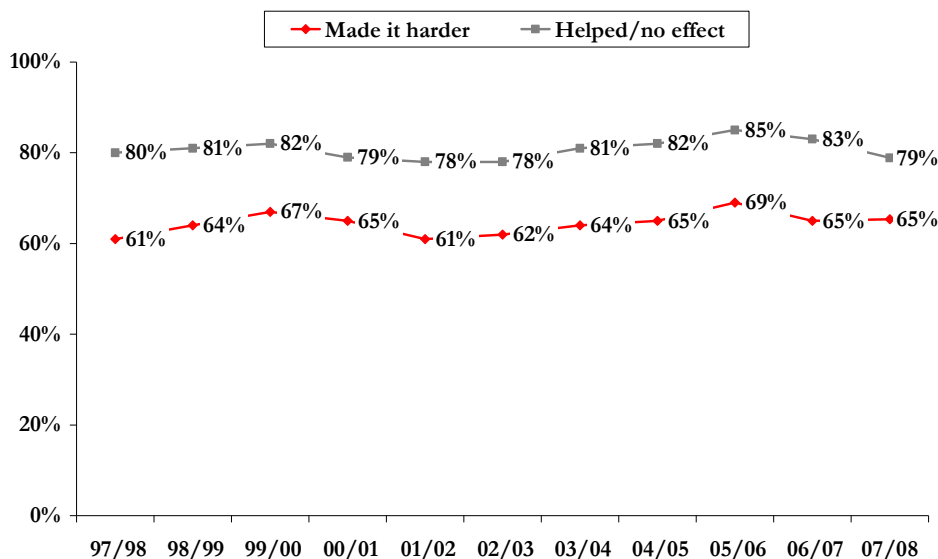
The results indicate a relationship which has been consistent over the eleven years of the Monitor. This provides evidence of the importance of an injury management program for successful RTW.

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were less likely to have a durable RTW (65% in 2007/08) compared to those who either rated those in the RTW process as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (79%) (Figure 57).

Figure 57: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on durable RTW

Q3/Q8. Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim? Are you currently working in a paid job?

Q21. Helpfulness rating of different people



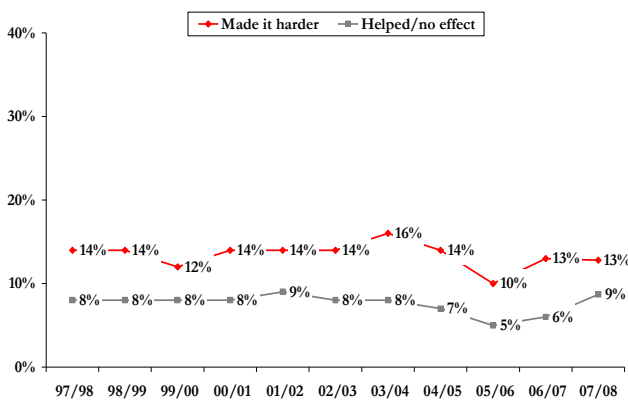
Base:	All respondents who provided a rating					
People who made it harder to RTW	97/98=788	99/00=948	01/02=939	03/04=776	05/06=889	07/08=827
	98/99=865	00/01=932	02/03=890	04/05=872	06/07=812	
People who helped or have no effect on RTW	97/98=2,100	99/00=2,257	01/02=2,177	03/04=1,895	05/06=2,111	07/08=2,170
	98/99=2,214	00/01=2,235	02/03=2,055	04/05=2,102	06/07=2,183	

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were more likely to have a non-durable RTW (13%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (9%) (Figure 58).

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were more likely to have not returned to work at all (22%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (12%) (Figure 59).

Figure 58: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on non-durable RTW

- Q3. *Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?*
- Q8. *Are you currently working in a paid job?*
- Q21. *Helpfulness rating of different people*

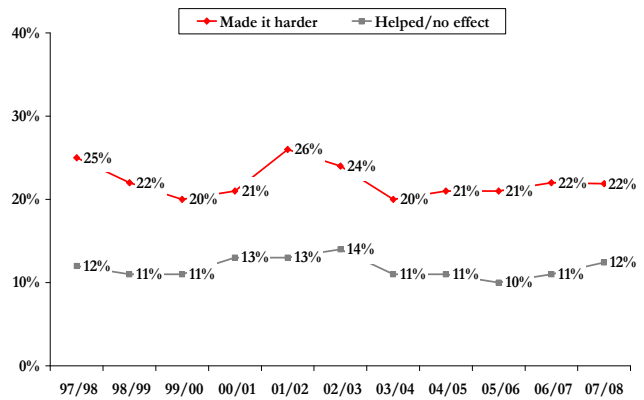


Base: All respondents who provided a rating
 People who made it harder to RTW
 97/98=788 00/01=932 03/04=776 06/07=812
 98/99=865 01/02=939 04/05=872 07/08=827
 99/00=948 02/03=890 05/06=889

People who helped or have no effect on RTW
 97/98=2100 00/01=2235 03/04=1895 06/07=2183
 98/99=2214 01/02=2177 04/05=2102 07/08=2170
 99/00=2257 02/03=2055 05/06=2111

Figure 59: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on no RTW

- Q3. *Would you please tell me whether you have returned to work at all since you put in your workers' compensation claim?*
- Q8. *Are you currently working in a paid job?*
- Q21. *Helpfulness rating of different people*



Base: All respondents who provided a rating
 People who made it harder to RTW
 97/98=788 00/01=932 03/04=776 06/07=812
 98/99=865 01/02=939 04/05=872 07/08=827
 99/00=948 02/03=890 05/06=889

People who helped or have no effect on RTW
 97/98=2100 00/01=2235 03/04=1895 06/07=2183
 98/99=2214 01/02=2177 04/05=2102 07/08=2170
 99/00=2257 02/03=2055 05/06=2111

There is a relationship between the perception of people helping or hindering the injured worker to RTW and RTW outcomes. This provides evidence of the importance of an injury management program for successful RTW.

2.9 Rating of customer service by insurer/ Scheme

2.9.1 Communication with insurer

Over four in ten injured workers (45%) had contact with their insurer in the three months prior to the interview (Figure 60). Contact about the RTW Monitor was specifically excluded.

Contact with the insurer was more likely for injured workers in South Australia (54%) and covered by Comcare (52%). Conversely, injured workers covered by Seacare (19%) and those in New Zealand (26%) and Tasmania (30%) were far *less* likely to have contact with their insurer than all other Australian jurisdictions.

Contact with the insurer in the previous three months has gradually increased over the course of the Monitor from under four in ten to over four in ten injured workers (Figure 61).

Figure 60: Contact with insurer in last three months (Comparative)

Q26. Have you had any contact with <jurisdiction insurer> in the last three months?

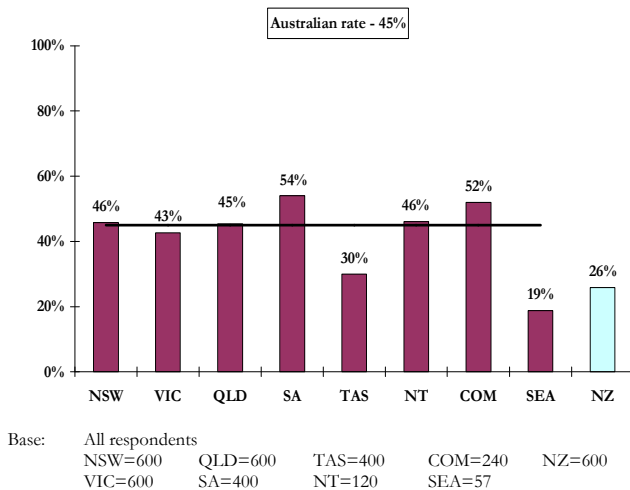
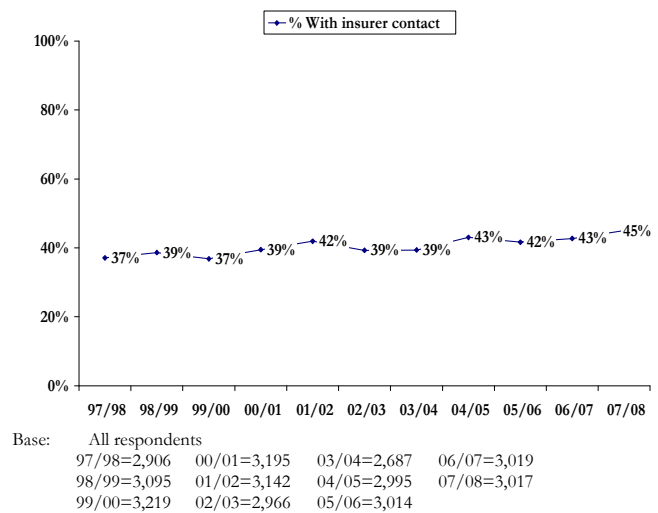


Figure 61: Contact with insurer in last three months (Trend)

Q26. Have you had any contact with <jurisdiction insurer> in the last three months?



Contact with the insurer has gradually increased over the course of the Monitor from under four in ten to over four in ten injured workers.

2.9.2 Rating of customer service

Injured workers were asked to rate the performance of the agency providing insurance type services on a number of aspects relating to the way in which the insurer handled the injured worker's claim. The performance of the insurer was rated on a one to five point scale where one was "poor" and five was "excellent". The insurers were rated on:

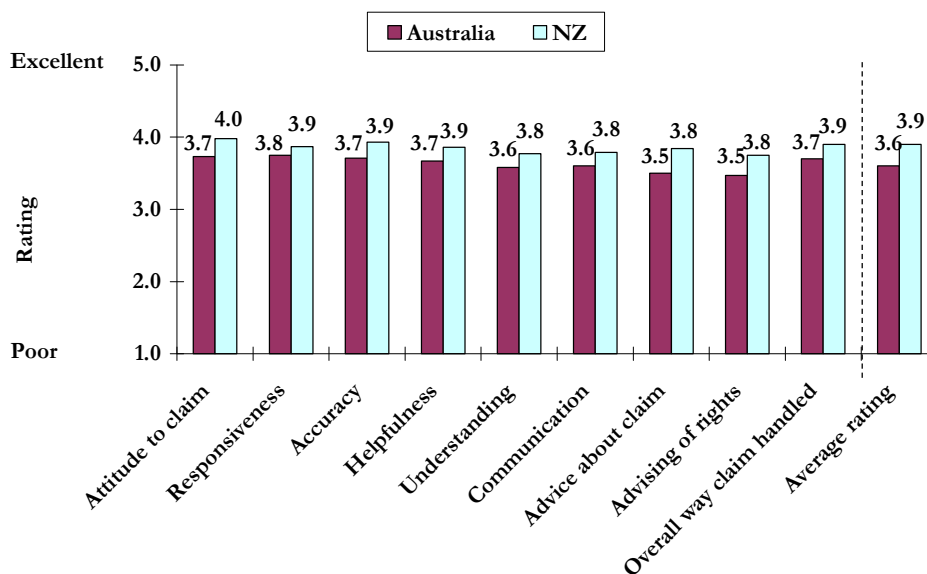
- Attitude of the insurer to claim;
- The way in which the insurer responded to enquiries;
- Providing accurate information;
- Helpfulness;
- Understanding the worker's situation;
- Communicating with worker;
- Giving advice about claim; and
- Giving advice about rights.

Injured workers rated their insurers above average (3.0 mean rating) on all dimensions (Figure 62) and were most favourable regarding responding to enquiries (3.8 – 60% top two box) and least favourable in terms of giving advice about their rights (3.5 – 52% top two box). All measures of customer service have improved over the course of the Monitor, and five of the eight attributes of customer service were rated more favourably than in 2006/07:

- The way in which the insurer responded to enquiries (3.7 in 2006/07 to 3.8 in 2007/08);
- Helpfulness (3.6 in 2006/07 to 3.7 in 2007/08);
- Communicating with worker (3.5 in 2006/07 to 3.6 in 2007/08);
- Giving advice about claim (3.4 in 2006/07 to 3.5 in 2007/08) ; and
- Giving advice about rights (3.4 in 2006/07 to 3.5 in 2007/08).

Figure 62: Rating of insurer type services

Q27. Now I am going to read out a list of different statements about the insurer handling your claim. For each statement how would you rate the insurer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.



Base: All respondents
 Australia=3,017 NZ=600



The Accident Compensation Corporation in New Zealand (3.9) and WorkCover in Queensland (3.9) were rated, on average, higher than all other jurisdictions across the range of customer service measures (Table 16). Insurers in Victoria (3.4) received consistently lower ratings for insurer customer services and injured workers in South Australia, the Northern Territory and covered by Seacare and Comcare also rated their insurer below average for a number of services.

Table 16: Mean rating of insurer type services										
<i>Q27. Now I am going to read out a list of different statements about the insurer handling your claim. For each statement how would you rate the insurer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent</i>										
	AUS (3,017) % A	NSW (600) % B	VIC (600) % C	QLD (600) % D	SA (400) % E	TAS (400) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (57) % I	NZ (600) % J
Response to enquiries	3.8 ^{CEH}	3.7	3.5	4.0 ^{ABC EFGHIJ}	3.5	3.8 ^{CEH I}	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}
Attitude to claim	3.7 ^{CGH}	3.7	3.5	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.6	4.0 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0 ^{ABC EGHI}
Provision of accurate info	3.7 ^{CEI}	3.6 ^I	3.5	4.0 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.6	3.8 ^{BCE GI}	3.5	3.7 ^I	3.2	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}
Helpfulness	3.7 ^{CEH}	3.6 ^E	3.5	3.9 ^{ABC EFGHI}	3.4	3.7 ^{CEH}	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}
Communication	3.6 ^{CEG HI}	3.6 ^{EGH I}	3.4	3.9 ^{ABC EFGHI}	3.4	3.5 ^{GI}	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.8 ^{ABC EFGHI}
Understanding situation	3.6 ^{CH}	3.5 ^C	3.4	3.8 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.4	3.7 ^{CEH}	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.8 ^{ABC EGHI}
Advice about claim	3.5 ^{CEG I}	3.5 ^{CGI}	3.3	3.8 ^{ABC EFGHI}	3.3 ^I	3.5 ^{CGI}	3.1	3.3 ^I	2.9	3.8 ^{ABC EFGHI}
Advice about rights	3.5 ^{CGI}	3.5 ^{CGI}	3.2 ^I	3.6 ^{ACE FGI}	3.4 ^{GI}	3.4 ^{GI}	3.0	3.6 ^{CGI}	2.6	3.8 ^{ABC EFGI}
Average customer service rating	3.6 ^{CEG HI}	3.6 ^{CI}	3.4	3.9 ^{ABC EFGHI}	3.5	3.7 ^{CEG HI}	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.9 ^{ABC EFGHI}
Overall way claim handled	3.7 ^{CEG HJ}	3.7 ^{CH}	3.5	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.5	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.9 ^{ABC EGHI}

Base: All respondents

On average, the ACC in New Zealand and WorkCover Queensland were rated consistently higher and Victoria was rated consistently lower on customer service provided by the insurer/Scheme.

A customer service rating has been derived for insurers based on the average of the eight aspects relating to the way in which the insurer handled the injured worker's claim. Nationally, the average rating of customer service has steadily improved for each year of the Monitor, from 3.1 in 1997/98 to 3.6 in 2007/08 (Figure 64). On average in 2007/08, a more favourable rating was given by injured workers in Queensland (3.9) and New Zealand (3.9) and less favourable for injured workers in Victoria (3.4), South Australia (3.5), the Northern Territory (3.4) and covered by Seacare (3.2) and Comcare (3.5) when compared to the Australian national average.

Figure 63: Average service rating for insurer type services (Comparative)

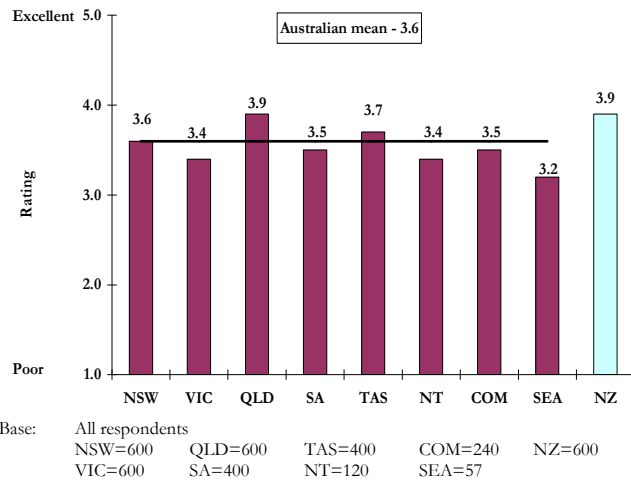
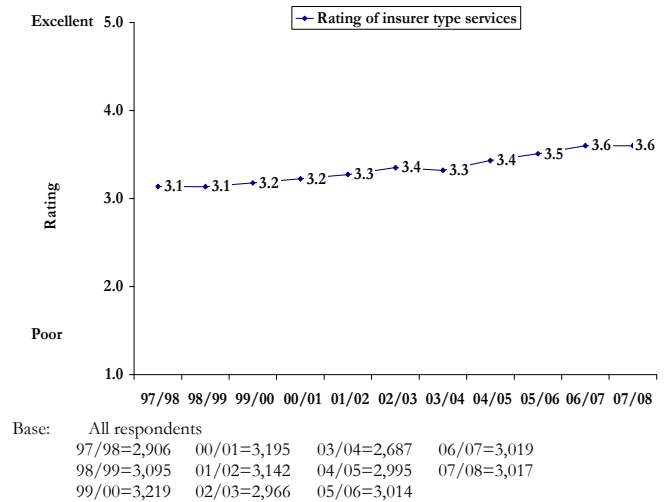


Figure 64: Average service rating for insurer type services (Trend)

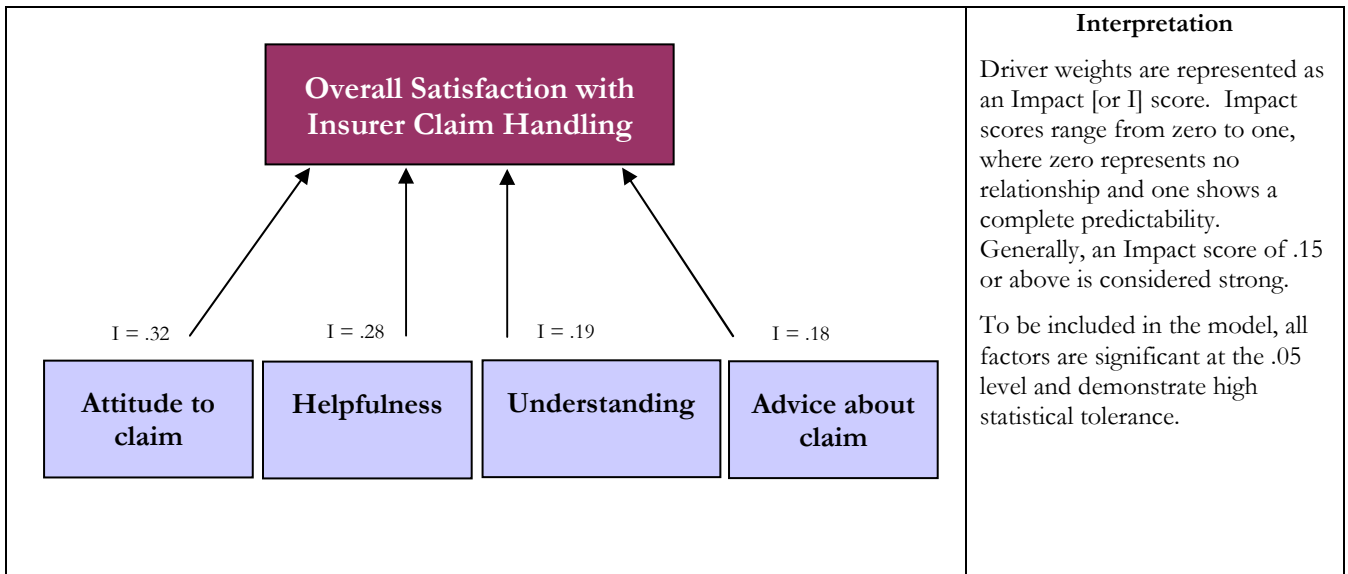


At the national level, insurer services have been improving steadily since 1997/98.

In November 2005, a new statement was added to the RTW Monitor "The overall way in which your claim was handled". The purpose of this inclusion was to develop a hierarchical customer satisfaction model for the relationship between insurer claim handling and injured worker satisfaction. A summary of the model is shown below (Figure 65).

The hierarchical customer satisfaction model reveals four key drivers of customer satisfaction with insurer claim handling. The strongest driver of satisfaction was the insurers attitude to the claim (I=.32) followed by their helpfulness (I=.28). Although the weight of the relationship was lower, understanding your situation (I=.19) and giving advice about the claim (I=.18) impact on injured worker satisfaction with the claim handling process. The other four aspects were not found to impact significantly on satisfaction levels and as such have not been included in the model.

Figure 65: Model of Injured Worker Satisfaction

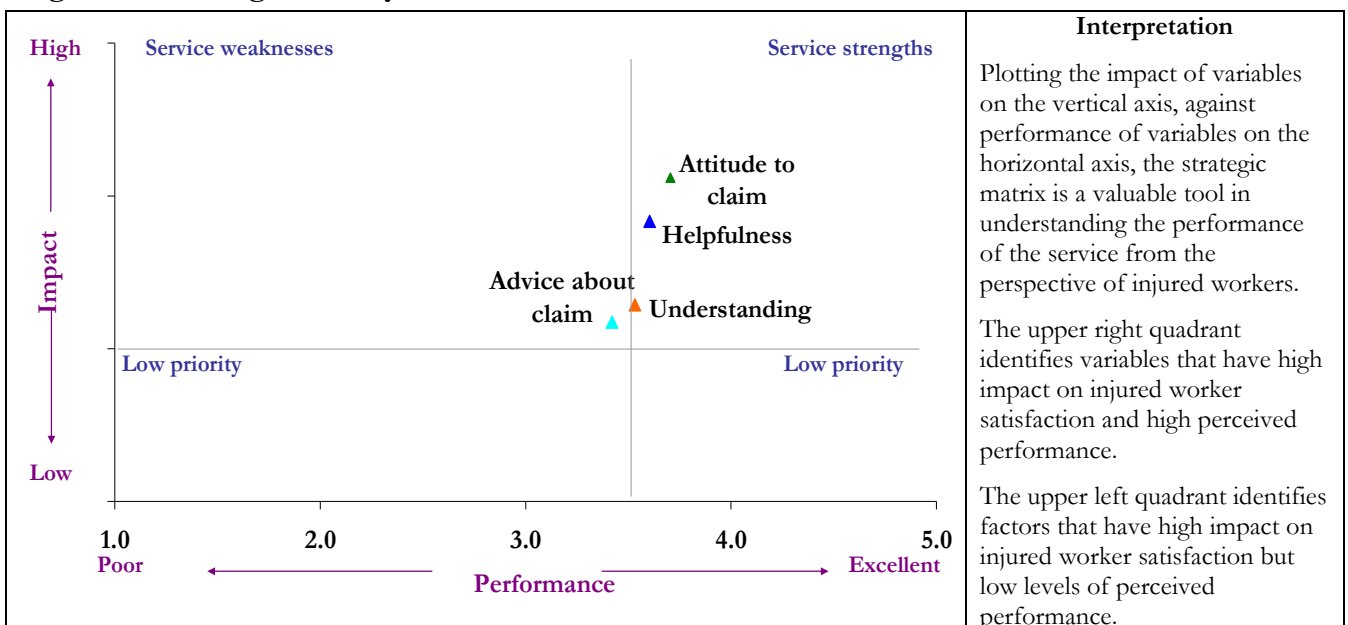


The Strategic Priority Matrix plots driver weights against the average performance across the four aspects relating to the way in which the insurer handled the injured worker's claim (Figure 66).

The attitude to the claim was a particularly strong predictor of injured worker satisfaction with the insurers claim handling process and was the most favourably rated of all aspects of service. Helpfulness and understanding your situation were rated similarly in terms of performance, while giving advice about the claim was one of the lowest rated areas of performance.

The greatest gains to injured worker satisfaction will be achieved by improved performance in terms of the attitude of the insurer to the claim and to a lesser extent their helpfulness.

Figure 66: Strategic Priority Matrix



3. Demographic and Claim Characteristics

Additional information on injured workers was provided by individual jurisdictions. Only those injured workers who consented to be interviewed were included in this analysis. Injured workers with a language other than English (Section 3.1.3) were identified in the survey. Scheme based data is restricted to that available at the end of the quarter preceding each survey wave.

3.1 Demographics

3.1.1 Gender

Three in five (62%) injured workers in Australia were male (Figure 67). This represents a significant decline from the previous two years (66%) and matches the low reported in 2004/05 (Figure 68).

Almost all (98%) injured workers covered by Seacare were male. There was a below average incidence of male injured workers covered by Comcare (33%).

Figure 67: Proportion of males (Comparative)

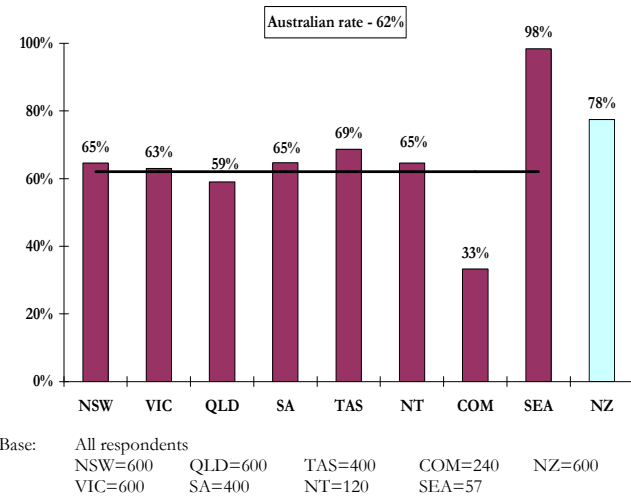
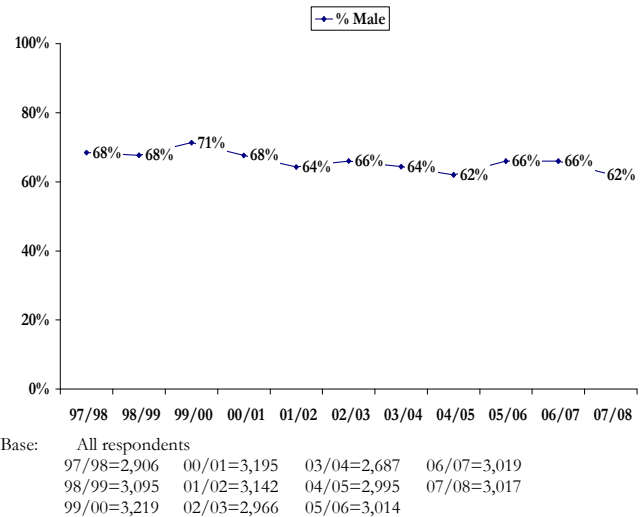


Figure 68: Proportion of males (Trend)



3.1.2 Age

In 2007/08, the average age of injured workers was 42 years of age (Figure 69). On average, injured workers covered by Comcare (46 years of age) and in South Australia (44 years) were older and injured workers from Tasmania (41 years) were younger.

The average age of injured workers has remained relatively stable since the commencement of the Monitor (Figure 70).

Figure 69: Mean age of injured workers (Comparative)

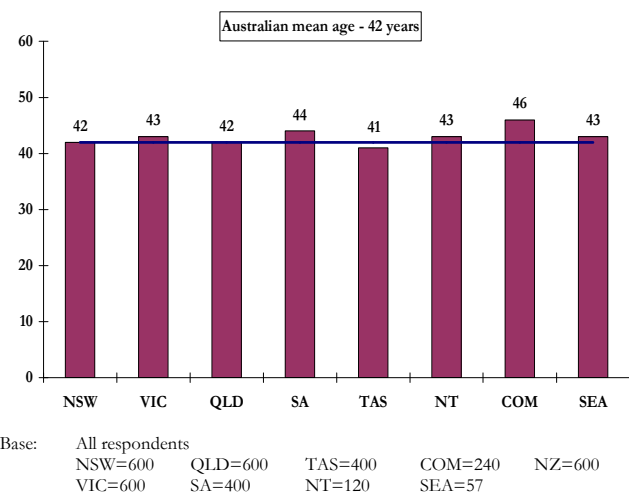
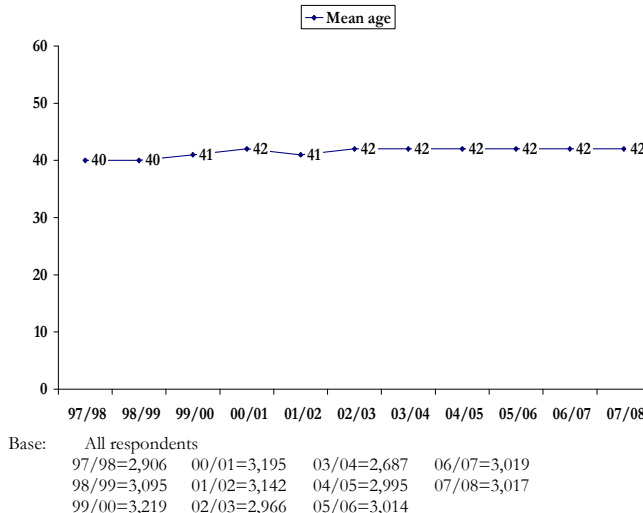


Figure 70: Mean age of injured workers (Trend)



3.1.3 Language spoken at home

Less than one in ten (8%) Australian injured workers spoke a language other than English (LOTE) at home. The most common languages, other than English, spoken at home were European (e.g. Italian, Serbian, Greek and Croatian) and Asian (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian) (3% each).

New South Wales (13%) had the highest proportion of injured workers who spoke a language other than English, followed by Victoria (9%), while it was lower in all other Australian jurisdictions.

One in ten Victorians (11%) who spoke a language other than English needed the assistance from an interpreter when putting in their claim.

3.2 Days compensation paid and claim cost

Days compensation paid is the number of days compensation paid up to the end of quarter before the interview (September for the November wave and March for the May wave¹⁴). In 2007/08, an average of 55 days compensation was paid to injured workers (Figure 71). Injured workers covered by Seacare (127 days) followed by injured workers in South Australia (80 days) had the highest average number of paid compensation days. Injured workers in Tasmania (43 days), New South Wales (48 days) and New Zealand (51 days) had the lowest average number of paid compensation days.

The national average number of days compensation paid has varied over the eleven years of the Monitor and was higher in 2007/08 compared to the two previous years (Figure 72).

Figure 71: Mean number of days compensation paid (Comparative)

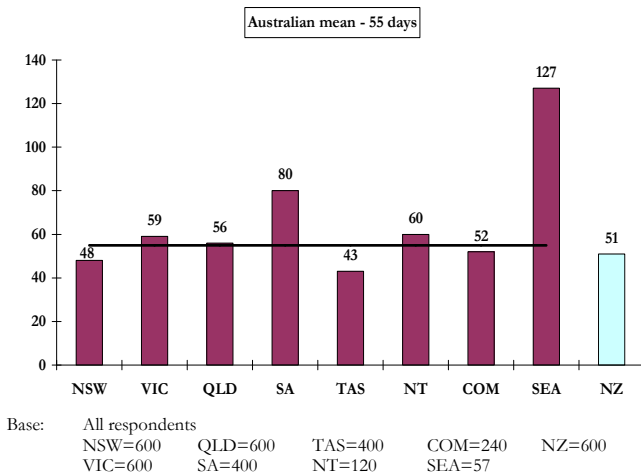
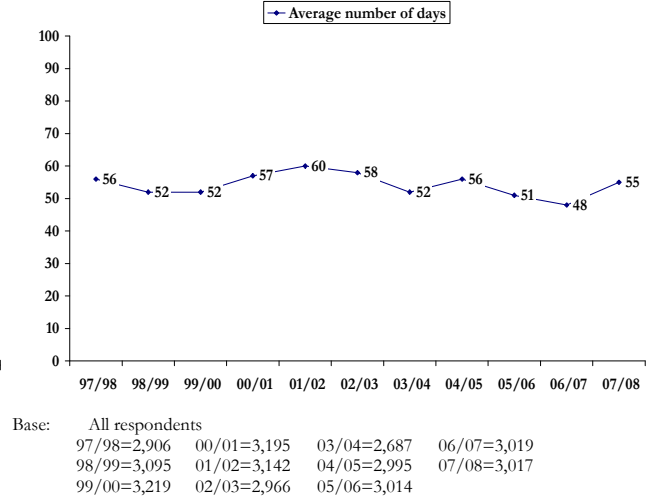


Figure 72: Mean number of days compensation paid (Trend)



In 2007/08 the average claim cost paid for Australian injured workers for the first six to eight months of their claim was \$12,141 (Figure 73). The average claim cost was highest among injured workers covered by Seacare (\$17,075). The average claim cost has continued to increase since the start of the Monitor (Figure 74).

Figure 73: Mean claim cost (Comparative)

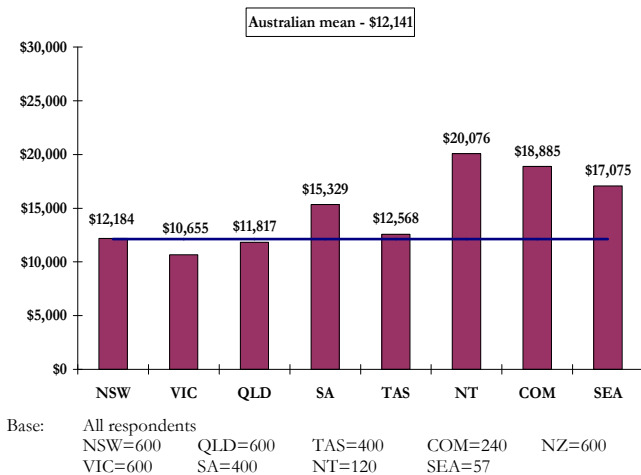
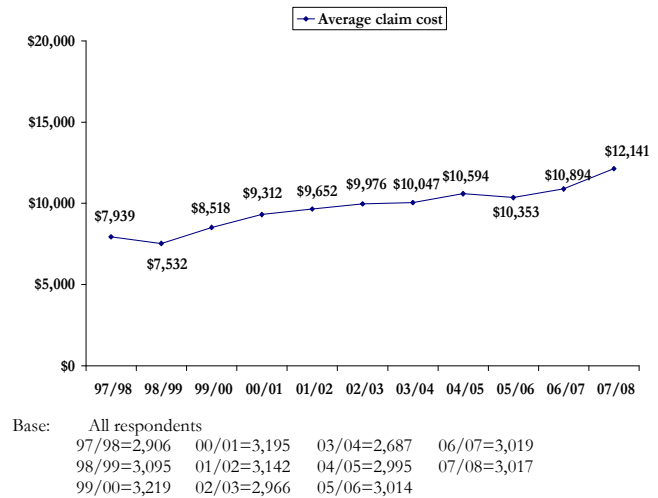


Figure 74: Mean claim cost (Trend)



¹⁴ New South Wales extended data for the May wave is as at 31st December 2007

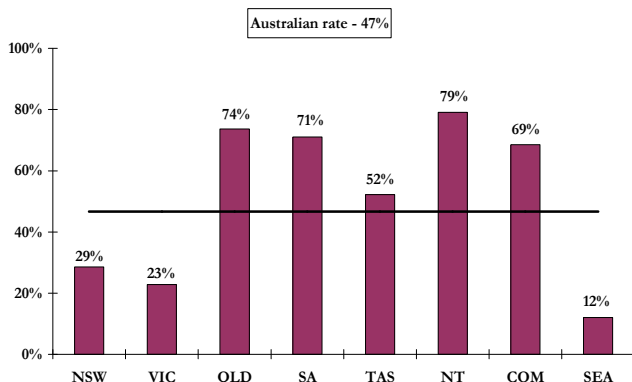


3.3 Rehabilitation participation and cost

Participation in rehabilitation was measured by some rehabilitation expenditure being recorded as part of the claim cost. It should be noted that rehabilitation costs may be incurred directly by the employer and not included in these data. In 2007/08, half of injured workers (47%) participated in rehabilitation. There were substantial differences in the rate of rehabilitation participation between jurisdictions (Figure 75). Highest rates of rehabilitation participation were in the Northern Territory (79%), Queensland (74%) and South Australia (71%). The lowest rates of rehabilitation participation were for injured workers in Victoria (23%) and New South Wales (29%) and covered by Seacare (12%).

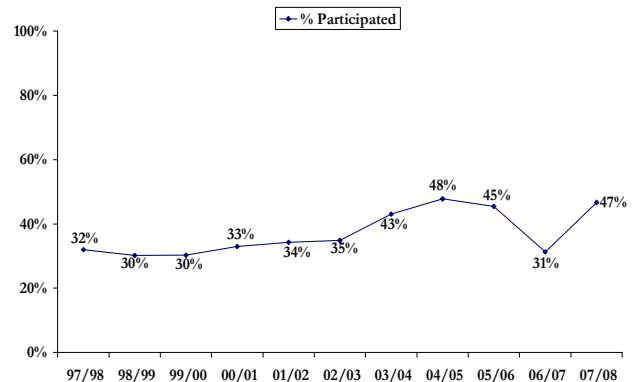
There was a steady increase in rehabilitation participation since 1999/00 from three in ten to over four in ten injured workers in 2005/06. The decline in 2006/07 (31%) has been turned around in the current period (47%) (Figure 76).

Figure 75: Participation in rehabilitation (Comparative)



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600 QLD=600 SA=400 TAS=400 NT=120 COM=240 SEA=57 NZ=600

Figure 76: Participation in rehabilitation (Trend)



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 98/99=3,095 99/00=3,219 00/01=3,195 01/02=3,142 02/03=2,966 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995 05/06=3,014 06/07=3,019 07/08=3,017

The average cost of rehabilitation¹⁵ in 2007/078 was \$1,530 – 47% reported a rehabilitation cost. There was variation in the average cost of rehabilitation across jurisdictions. The highest costs were in the Northern Territory (\$2,658) and for Comcare (\$2,650) and the lowest cost was in Queensland (\$1,139).

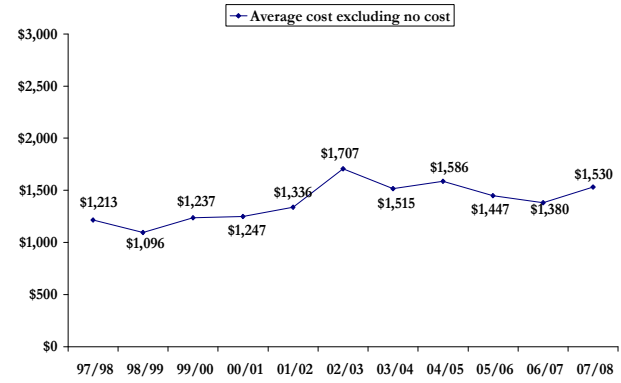
The average cost of rehabilitation declined from 2002/03 to 2006/07, although increased significantly in the current period to \$1,530 (Figure 78).

Figure 77: Mean rehabilitation costs (Comparative)



Base: Participated in rehabilitation
 NSW=171 VIC=137 QLD=442 SA=284 TAS=209 NT=95 COM=162 SEA=9
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 78: Mean rehabilitation costs (Trend)



Base: Participated in rehabilitation
 97/98=1,161 98/99=1,220 99/00=1,270 00/01=1,329 01/02=1,385 02/03=1,264 03/04=1,313 04/05=1,559 05/06=1,524 06/07=1,430 07/08=1,509

¹⁵ This measure is calculated only from cases where there was a rehabilitation cost claim.

3.4 Enterprise size

Three in five (58%) of Australian injured workers were employed in larger enterprises (where remuneration was over \$2,000,000) – over one quarter (27%) in enterprises where remuneration was \$20,000,000 and over. One in four (25%) were employed in medium enterprises (\$350,000 to \$2,000,000 remuneration) and under one in five (17%) were employed in small enterprises (less than \$350,000 remuneration).

A higher proportion of injured workers in New Zealand (24%) and New South Wales (22%) came from smaller enterprises compared to the Australian average. New Zealand (40%) and New South Wales (50%) were also under represented among large sized enterprises when compared to the national incidence (58%) and also South Australia (50%) and Tasmania (48%).

A higher proportion of injured workers in Victoria (64%) and covered by Comcare (100%) and Seacare (100%) came from large enterprises when compared to the national average (58%).

Enterprise size	AUS (2,703) % A	NSW (500) % B	VIC (573) % C	QLD (560) % D	SA (395) % E	TAS (398) % F	NT (120) % G	COM (240) % H	SEA (37) % I	NZ (566) % J
Small (less than \$350,000 remuneration)	17 ^{CHI}	22 ^{ACD} HI	13 ^{HI}	16 ^{HI}	21 ^{CHI}	21 ^{CDH} I	*	0	0	24 ^{ACD} HI
Medium (\$350,000 - \$2,000,000 remuneration)	25 ^{HI}	28 ^{HI}	23 ^{HI}	24 ^{HI}	30 ^{CDH} I	31 ^{ACD} HI	*	0	0	36 ^{ABC} DHI
Large (over \$2,000,000 remuneration)	58 ^{BEFJ}	50 ^J	64 ^{ABE} FJ	60 ^{BEFJ}	50 ^J	48 ^J	*	100 ^{AB} CDEFJ	100 ^{AB} CDEFJ	40
\$20,000,000 and over	27 ^{BEFJ}	20 ^{EFJ}	31 ^{ABE} FJ	31 ^{BEFJ}	10	13 ^J	*	100 ^{AB} CDEFJ	100 ^{AB} CDEFJ	8

Base: Information supplied
 * Information not supplied

¹⁶ Data on employer size was not supplied by the Northern Territory and Seacare.

4. Summary of Differences

The following table summarises the national Australian results and identifies jurisdictions that have results that are statistically different to the national Australian results. Statistically significant differences with the Australian national results for 2006/07 are included.

More detailed descriptions of trends over the course of the Monitor are included in the main body of the report.

Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2007/08	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2006/07
RTW Outcomes					
Q3. RTW rate	1	85%	COM, TAS	SA	-
Q3/8. Durable RTW	2	75%	COM, NZ	SA	-
Q3/8. Non-durable RTW	3	10%	NT	SEA	Increase
Q8a. Mean length of durable RTW	4	145 days	TAS, NT, COM	QLD	-
Q10. Mean length of non-durable RTW	5	79 days	NZ	-	-
Q19. Compensation payment status at time of interview	6	22%	SA	QLD, NZ	-
Q20a/b. Full RTW (employment as the only source of income at time of interview)	9	62%	NZ	SA, NT	-
Q20a/b. Partial RTW (employment plus any other source of income at time of interview)	9	12%	SA, COM	-	-
Q20a/b. Non-durable RTW / no RTW (income from all sources except employment)	9	25%	SA	COM, NZ	Increase
Q11. Continuity of employer	12	82%	VIC, TAS, COM	QLD	-
Q12. Returning to same duties at time of interview	13	73%	TAS, SEA	SA	-
RTW Process Measures					
Workplace Culture					
Q34c. Work importance (mean rating)	15	4.3	-	-	-
Q34d. Work satisfaction (mean rating)	15	4.2	-	-	-
Q34e. Valued at work (mean rating)	15	3.9	NZ	-	-
Q34a. Management help RTW (mean rating)	15	3.6	TAS, NZ	SA	-

Table 18: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2007/08	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2006/07	
Q34f. Clear RTW policies and procedures (mean rating)	15	3.6	TAS, COM, SEA	SA	-	
Q34b. OH&S spending (mean rating)	15	3.5	NZ	SA	-	
Making a claim						
Q1. Ease of getting information to put in a claim	19	81%	NZ	NT	-	
Q2a. Ease of putting in a claim (simple)	20	73%	TAS, NZ	VIC, COM	-	
Q1a. Previous claim experience	21	38%	QLD, SA, TAS, NZ	VIC	Decrease	
Q1b. Previous lost time claim	22	33%	TAS, NZ	VIC	Decrease	
Reasons for RTW & not working						
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Recovered from injury	23	49%	TAS, SEA	SA	-	
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Wanted to RTW	23	30%	-	NZ	-	
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net economic need	23	29%	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, TAS, COM, SEA	-	
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net assisted by RTW process	23	11%	SA	SEA, NZ	-	
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net health provider influence	23	9%	SA, SEA	NZ	-	
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net WorkCover/employer pressure	23	8%	-	TAS	Increase	
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net injury related	25	71%	-	-	-	
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net left employment	25	18%	-	-	-	
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net retrenched/dismissed	25	14%	-	COM	-	
RTW plan						
Q13. Development of a RTW plan	28	51%	NSW, SA, TAS, COM	QLD, SEA, NZ	-	
Q13a. Involvement in the development of RTW plan	28	79%	SA, COM	-	-	
Q15. Helpfulness of the RTW plan	30	76%	QLD	VIC, SA	-	

Table 18: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2007/08	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2006/07	
Q16. Assistance given to follow the RTW plan	31	61%	TAS, COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Rehab provider	31	15%	SA, TAS, NT, COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Employer	31	15%	-	COM	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Main supervisor	31	15%	COM	NZ	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Workplace rehab coordinator	31	9%	QLD, COM	SA, NZ	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Someone else	31	9%	-	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Doctor	31	8%	-	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Insurer	31	5%	TAS, NZ	COM	-	
RTW						
Q7. Readiness to RTW	33	74%	TAS, SEA	-	-	
Q5. Suitable duties at RTW	35	81%	-	SEA, NZ	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: Lighter duties	36	59%	TAS	COM, SEA, NZ	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: Reduced hours	36	13%	SA, COM	QLD, SEA, NZ	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: No heavy lifting	36	17%	SA, NT	COM, NZ	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: No change	36	24%	SEA, NZ	SA	-	
Q5a. Changed duties at RTW	36	68%	SA	SEA, NZ	-	
Q6. Partial RTW at RTW	40	25%	SA	SEA, NZ	-	
Q6a. Return to previous hours	41	55%	SEA, NZ	SA, COM	-	
Rating of help to RTW						
Q28. Most assistance: Doctor	42	21%	-	NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Myself	42	12%	-	COM	Decrease	
Q28. Most assistance: Someone from work	42	16%	-	SA, NT, NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Physiotherapist	42	16%	NT, NZ	-	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Rehab provider	42	8%	SA, TAS, COM, SEA	NZ	-	

Table 18: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2007/08	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2006/07	
Q28. Most assistance: No one	42	5%	-	-	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Insurer	42	7%	QLD	VIC, TAS, COM, SEA, NZ	-	
Q29. Least assistance: No one	44	43%	NT, SEA, NZ	-	Decrease	
Q29. Least assistance: Someone from work	44	27%	COM	SEA, NZ	Increase	
Q29. Least assistance: Insurer	44	12%	-	TAS, SEA, NZ	Increase	
Q29. Least assistance: Doctor	44	4%	SEA	-	-	
Q29. Least assistance: Rehab provider	44	2%	SA, COM	NZ	-	
Rating of helpfulness of people in RTW						
Q21. Doctor (mean rating)	45	4.3	COM	SEA, NZ	-	
Q21. Rehabilitation provider (mean rating)	45	4.2	NSW, COM	NZ	-	
Q21. Work rehabilitation coordinator (mean rating)	45	3.8	SA, TAS	-	-	
Q21. Main supervisor (mean rating)	45	3.6	COM	-	-	
Q21. Employer (mean rating)	45	3.6	TAS	-	-	
Q21. Insurer (mean rating)	45	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, SEA	-	
Rating of insurer's customer service						
Q26. Contact with insurer in the last three months	53	45%	SA, COM	TAS, SEA, NZ	-	
Q27. Attitude to claim (mean rating)	54	3.7	QLD, TAS, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	-	
Q27. Accuracy of information (mean rating)	54	3.7	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, SEA	-	
Q27. Response to enquiries (mean rating)	54	3.8	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, COM	Increase	
Q27. Helpfulness (mean rating)	54	3.7	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, COM	Increase	
Q27. Understanding of worker's situation (mean rating)	54	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, COM	-	
Q27. Communicating with worker (mean rating)	54	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, NT, COM, SEA	Increase	

Table 18: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2007/08	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2006/07	
Q27. Giving advice about claim (mean rating)	54	3.5	QLD, NZ	VIC, SA, NT, SEA	Increase	
Q27. Giving advice about rights (mean rating)	54	3.5	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, SEA	Increase	
Q27. Overall way claim handled (mean rating)	54	3.7	QLD, TAS, NZ	SA, NT, COM, SEA	-	
Demographics						
Gender: proportion of males	58	62%	TAS, SEA, NZ	COM	Decrease	
Mean age	59	42 years	SA, COM	TAS	-	
Language other than English spoken at home	59	8%	NSW	QLD, SA, TAS, NT, NZ	-	
Mean number of days compensation paid	60	55 days	SA, SEA	NSW, TAS, NZ	Increase	
Mean claim cost	60	\$12,141	SEA	VIC	Increase	
Participation in rehabilitation	61	47%	QLD, SA, TAS, NT, COM	NSW, VIC, SEA, NZ	Increase	
Mean cost of rehabilitation (excluding no cost)	61	\$1,530	NSW, TAS, NT, COM	QLD	Increase	

Appendix A: Methodology

Two waves of telephone interviews are conducted each year of the Monitor. The interviews were carried out using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility. The same interviewers conducted the interviews across all jurisdictions. Differences cannot be attributed to different interviewing procedures. Results were analysed using the Quantum data analysis package.

Sample

The sample base of prospective injured workers for the aggregate survey was drawn by each jurisdiction from their claim database. The original criteria for inclusion were:

- Had submitted a claim between March and April 2007 (February to April 2007 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the November 2007 survey wave;
- Had submitted a claim between September and October 2007 (August to October 2007 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the May 2008 survey wave; and
- The injured worker had 10 days or more compensation (including any excess) paid.

Due to the size of the Seacare Authority compared to other jurisdictions, the annual population of Seacare Authority injured workers are invited to be interviewed over four rounds, rather than two samples in three-month periods as in other jurisdictions.

Seacare interviews are conducted in August, November, February and May each year.

Consent and privacy

A passive consent process is used for all jurisdictions. The passive consent entails:

- A letter being sent to injured workers before contact is made for the interview advising them about the nature of the interview, the voluntary nature of participation, the anonymity and confidentiality of responses and providing a contact within the workers' compensation jurisdiction to allow the injured worker to withdraw from the interview or update their contact details.
- Interviewers are trained under Interview Quality Control Australia (IQCA) Standards ensuring they are familiar with privacy and confidentiality procedures.
- A special briefing is given to interviewers for each wave of the survey stressing that injured workers should not be coerced into taking part and emphasising that injured workers can cease to give their consent at any point during the interview and their interview results will be expunged.

Interview responses are kept in a separate file to contact details. On completion of each annual report, contact details of the injured worker are destroyed, except where explicit permission has been given otherwise.

Campbell Research & Consulting do not provide any information that will identify individual injured workers to any third party.

Weighting

The Australian national results are weighted by the relative population from which the samples have been drawn. In the current report the weighting for the Australian national result has been adjusted to account for the different time periods.

Smaller jurisdictions are recruited over a three-month period and larger jurisdictions over a two-month period. An adjustment has been made to account for the different time periods. Both time periods have been adjusted to an equivalent of six months (by multiplying the two-month population by three and the three-month populations by two). The weighting calculation is outlined in Table 19 and Table 20.

This adjustment was reviewed by A/Prof. Ian Gordon, Head of the Statistical Consulting Centre at Melbourne University who agreed that this adjusted approach to weighting was appropriate for the Australian national results.

	Population	Data collection period (months)	Estimated population over a 6 month period	Interview Sample size	Recommended weights
NSW	3,583	2	10,749	290	37.07
VIC	2,460	2	7,380	301	24.52
QLD	3,412	2	10,236	300	34.12
SA	625	2	1,875	200	9.38
TAS	465	3	930	200	4.65
NT	231	3	462	60	7.70
COM	327	3	654	120	5.45
SEA	39	6	39	20	1.95
NZ	1,920	2	5,760	300	19.20

	Population	Data collection period (months)	Estimated population over a 6 month period	Interview Sample size	Recommended weights
NSW	3,432	2	10,296	310	33.21
VIC	2,469	2	7,407	300	24.69
QLD	3,739	2	11,217	300	37.39
SA	617	2	1,851	200	9.26
TAS	426	3	852	200	4.26
NT	274	3	548	60	9.13
COM	199	3	398	120	3.32
SEA	55	6	55	37	1.49
NZ	1,949	2	5,847	300	19.49

Sampling error

A sample of all eligible injured workers is surveyed, as such the statistics produced have sampling error associated with them. That is, estimates from the survey may differ from the numbers that would have been produced if all eligible injured workers had been surveyed. The statistical estimate of sampling error is the standard error.

The standard error provides a basis for measuring the precision to which the sample estimate can estimate the population value. There is about a 5% chance that the true value lie outside a range of two standard errors either side of the sample estimate. Such a range defines a 95% confidence interval (CI) for that estimate.

Table 21 provides confidence intervals for sample estimates of 80% and 50%.

For example, if 50% of the 2007/08 sample of 3,017 gave a particular response, we can be 95% certain that between 48.2% and 51.8% of the entire population from which the sample was drawn (injured workers with more than two weeks compensation paid) would give this response. If the estimate was 80% we can be 95% certain that between 78.6% and 81.4% would give that response.

Sample size	Survey estimate of 50%			Survey estimate of 80%		
	Confidence interval	Lower band	Upper band	Confidence interval	Lower band	Upper band
3,017	± 1.8%	48.2%	51.8 %	± 1.4%	78.6%	81.4%

Time series comparisons

The report provides indicative national estimates based on an aggregation across Australian jurisdictions appropriately weighted in accordance with the reported claim population for each participating jurisdiction.

Direct time series comparisons are shown for the last eleven years: 1997/98 through to 2007/08. The national time series is based on Australian jurisdictions but does not include self-insurers. There have been some variations in the national jurisdictions because of different jurisdictions participating. Comcare and ACT jurisdictions did not participate until November 1998 and Seacare until November 2000. The Northern Territory jurisdiction did not participate in 1998/99 and 2000/01 through to 2002/03, and the ACT did not participate in 1997/98 and from 2003/04 onwards.

New Zealand has not been included in the national Australian figures – Australian national average.

Trends in time series have been reported where there is a trend over at least three years, even if not statistically significant between each wave.

Population characteristics

Each jurisdiction provided statistics for key characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn for each survey wave.

Selected characteristics of the populations from which the November 2007 and May 2008 wave samples were drawn for each of the jurisdictions are included in Table 22 and Table 23.

	NSW (3,583) Mean	VIC (2,460) Mean	QLD (3,412) Mean	SA (625) Mean	TAS (465) Mean	NT (231) Mean	COM (286)** Mean	SEA (39) Mean	NZ (1,920) Mean
Age	40	43	40	41	39	41	45	42	40
Days compensation	44	60	52	77	42	47	47	121	66
Cost per claim	\$11,043	\$10,992	\$10,979	\$14,471	\$12,226	\$13,357	\$15,833	\$18,018	\$12,088
Rehab. cost	\$2,088*	\$1,488*	\$729	\$1,572*	\$2,231*	\$2,331*	\$2,729*	\$1,282*	\$1,056*

* Excludes no cost

** Population excluding refusals (Actual population was 327)

	NSW (3,432) Mean	VIC (2,469) Mean	QLD (3,739) Mean	SA (617) Mean	TAS (426) Mean	NT (274) Mean	COM (166)** Mean	SEA (55) Mean	NZ (1,868) Mean
Age	40	42	39	41	38	40	45	45	40
Days compensation	48	59	51	70	39	54	51	109	66
Cost per claim	\$11,887	\$10,734	\$10,957	\$13,863	\$12,538	\$17,877	\$18,614	***	\$13,064
Rehab. cost	\$2,218*	\$1,564*	\$694	\$1,573*	\$2,159*	\$2,759*	\$2,401*	1,794*	\$998*

* Excludes no cost

** Population excluding refusals (Actual population was 199)

*** Not supplied for all

Appendix B: Field Report (2007/08)¹⁷

Interviews were conducted by telephone outside business hours from the Melbourne office of the Wallis Group.

A high level of response has been achieved for the survey (Table 24). The response rate where contacts were made was 75%.

	AUS (3,998) %	NSW (842) %	VIC (774) %	QLD (779) %	SA (558) %	TAS (522) %	NT (166) %	COM (295) %	SEA (62) %	NZ (764) %
Response rates	75	71	78	77	72	77	72	81	92	79

Base: Total contacts made

The response rate for the national sample was 45% (Table 25). The main reason for non-response was inactive or invalid telephone numbers (15%). One in four (25%) injured workers were not interviewed because the quotas were filled (that is, the target number of interviews for the jurisdiction was reached). One in seven (15%) of the total sample refused to participate in the interview.

	n	%
Interviews	3,017	45
Refusals	981	15
Total contacts made	3,998	59
Remaining "active" telephone numbers	1,706	25
Unused telephone numbers	25	0
"Inactive" telephone numbers	1,006	15
Total sample provided	6,735	

Base: Total sample provided

Note: "Active" numbers include engaged, no answer, answering machine or interviewer asked to call back at another time.
 "Inactive" numbers include person not on number, invalid (fax, modem, etc), disconnected/Telstra message or language barrier (indicates that the interviewer could not establish a language other than English for the interview to be conducted in).

¹⁷ The field report for November 2007 is included in the mid (financial) year report to jurisdictions.

Table 26: Field report for 2007/08 (Comparative)									
	NSW (1,352) %	VIC (1,175) %	QLD (1,373) %	SA (1,078) %	TAS (764) %	NT (449) %	COM (450) %	SEA (94) %	NZ (1,390) %
Interviews	44	51	44	37	52	27	53	61	43
Refusals	18	15	13	15	16	10	12	5	12
Total contacts made	62	66	57	52	68	37	66	66	55
Remaining "active" numbers	20	19	29	35	14	40	28	12	21
Unused numbers	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	6	0
"Inactive" numbers	17	15	14	13	17	20	6	16	24

Base: Total sample provided

Appendix C: Terms and Definitions

Table 27: Terms used in this report	
Injured worker	A worker who made a workers' compensation claim and had 10 days or more compensation paid (including any excess).
Return to work (RTW)	An injured worker who reported returning to work between the time of the claim and the time of the interview.
Durable RTW	An injured worker who returned to work and was still working at the time of the survey, seven to nine months after their claim. Durable RTW is measured by the injured worker reporting their work status, sources of income and compensation status.
Full RTW	An injured worker who returns to work to their former level of paid employment and is not receiving workers' compensation payments.
Partial RTW	An injured worker who returns to work, or is working at the time of interview, while still receiving workers' compensation payments for lost income.
No/Non-Durable RTW	An injured worker not working and not deriving income from employment. Non-durable RTW refers to workers who returned to work for a period of time but were not deriving income from employment at the time of the interview.
RTW plan	Return to work plan, or in some jurisdictions this is called a rehabilitation plan. This is a formal structured plan designed to enhance the achievement of a durable RTW within the limitation of the injured workers' functional capacity.
Jurisdiction	Refers to the compensation authority that has legal jurisdiction over a population of injured workers. It generally refers to individual states and territories. In Australia, workers' compensation is the responsibility of individual states and territories. Two entities, Comcare and Seacare have responsibility for Commonwealth agencies and seafarers respectively.
Financial year	The Australian financial year is from 1 July to 30 June the following year.
Australian national rate	The combined results for the financial year for all participating jurisdictions. In 2007/08 this included New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare. Western Australia has not participated in the RTW Monitor. Northern Territory participated in 1997/98, 1999/00 and 2003/04 to 2007/08. The Australian Capital Territory did not participate in 2003/04 to 2007/08.

Compensation Provider	Is used to refer to the provider of workers' compensation payment and insurer type services. In most jurisdictions this is the insurer or claims agent. In New Zealand it is the Accident Compensation Corporation. For self-insurers it is the employer.
Comcare	Comcare is the body responsible for managing workers' compensation for all Commonwealth government agencies. Comcare is also responsible for managing workers' compensation for the Australian Capital Territory government agencies.
LOTE	A language other than English is spoken at the home of the injured worker.
Remuneration	Comprises both salary and non-salary payments to employees. It may include superannuation and salary sacrifice payments.
Significant result	All results discussed in the text of this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Durability of RTW

There are three principal ways to measure durability of RTW. These are:

1. Durable RTW (returned to work and still employed)

The durable RTW rate is the proportion of injured workers who have returned to work and were still working at the time of interview. The question that obtains this measure is:

"Are you still working in a paid job?" (Question 8, Section 1.2).

This measure is supplemented by questions identifying the reasons why injured workers are not working (Section 2.4.1) to identify the extent of non-injury related factors such as retrenchment, enterprises closing down or workers reaching retirement age. By asking injured workers their current work status, a measure of durability that is independent of claim status or the relationship with the original, or any other, employer is obtained.

2. Compensation status

Compensation status is the proportion of injured workers still receiving weekly workers' compensation payments for income lost as a result of a work related injury. Injured workers were asked:

"Are you still receiving weekly payments from <workers' compensation jurisdiction>?" (Question 19, Section 1.5.1).

It is a cruder measure of RTW, or RTW not fully achieved or a non-durable RTW.

This measure reflects the limits of workers' compensation data as a measure of durability of RTW.

3. Source of income

Detailed information about income sources at the time of interview provides a further measure of durability. The survey identifies the injured workers' *main* source of income in Question 20a:

"Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?" (Section 1.5.2)

as well as *all other* sources of income in Question 20b:

“What other sources of income do you have?”

Combining main and other sources gives *total sources of income* (Section 1.5.3).

Analysis of total sources of income provides a measure of:

- Full RTW (income from employment only);
- Partial RTW (income from employment plus any other income source); and
- Non-durable or no RTW (income from all sources except employment).

The National RTW Monitor measures durability of RTW independently of claim or employment status.

Changes in duties “at RTW” and “at interview”

There are five questions that identify “changes in duties” or “suitability of duties” for injured workers who have returned to work. Because of the different terminology used in different jurisdictions the term used in this report is “changed duties”¹⁸.

Four questions refer to the duties undertaken at time of RTW and one question identifies workers’ duties at the time of interview.

- As part of **reasons for returning to work**, injured workers were asked: *“What is the main reason you returned to work?”* (Question 4a) and *“Were there any other reasons you returned to work?”* (Questions Q4b, Section 2.4).
 - This question is unprompted, meaning no fixed choice responses were offered to the respondent. The workers’ initial response was coded into general categories as their “main reason for RTW”. Interviewers probed to identify if there were any other reasons for returning to work (Question 4b). These were also coded into broad categories and combined with the main reason for RTW to become “total reasons for RTW”.
 - For example, a worker may report that their main reason for RTW was that the employer changed their duties so that they could manage the job until fully recovered from their injury. These responses were coded into a category labelled “offered changed duties”.
 - If they also mentioned “economic need” when prompted for “other reasons” their total reason would include **both** “offered changed duties” **and** “economic need”.
- Injured worker’s **perception of suitability of duties at time of RTW** was identified in Question 5: *“When you first returned to work after your injury, were you given suitable duties at work?”* (Section 0).
 - Responses to this question were a simple “yes” or “no”.
- Injured workers were also asked whether there were any **changes in duties when they returned to work**. Question 5a asked: *“What was different about your duties when you returned to work? (compared to what you were doing when you were injured?)”* (Section 2.6.4).
 - Responses to this question were coded into three broad categories including “lighter duties”, “no heavy lifting” or “reduced hours”.

¹⁸ In previous reports the wording “*alternative duties*” has been used.

- “Nothing – did the same type of duties” identifies workers who returned to their original duties.
- Change in the **number of hours worked** at the time a worker first returned to work was further explored in Question 6a: “*Still thinking about when you first returned to work, did you return to your previous hours?*” (Section 2.7.1).
 - Responses to this question were a simple “yes” or “no”.
- **“Same or different” duties at the time of the interview** compared with the time of injury is explored in Question 12 (Section 1.6.2). This section identifies whether employees were undertaking the same duties or different duties and how the continuity of duties influenced levels of RTW. Question 12 is asked differently depending on whether the respondent was working at the time of interview or not. For example:
 - Those who were working at the time of interview (durable RTW) were asked, “*Are you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?*”
 - Those who were not working at the time of interview (non-durable RTW) were asked, “*Were you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?*”
- **“Same or different” employer at the time of the interview** compared with the time of injury was also explored in Question 11 (Section 1.6.1). The relevant wording and analysis of that question was similar to that as discussed in Question 12 immediately above.

Interpretation of results for the Seacare Authority

Seacare Authority injured workers are unique in the problems faced when attempting to RTW. Results in this report must be interpreted in light of the differences as summarised here.

- The majority of Seacare Authority injured workers are stationed on ships at sea and are away at sea for 4-6 weeks at a time.
- An injured seafarer ready to RTW must have access to a supernumerary position on a ship for a graduated return to seafarer duties or must be passed medically fit by an Australian Maritime Safety Authority approved medical practitioner in accordance with fitness for duty regulations if able to return to full pre-injury seafarer duties. There are few supernumerary positions on ships. As ships are often away from port for 4-6 weeks, the option for graduated RTW under such conditions is limited.
- Additionally, many seafarers live in different locations to the employer’s offices, making access to shore based duties as part of a graduated RTW program difficult to arrange.

Appendix D: CATI Questionnaire (Flow Chart)

