



**2008/09
Australia &
New Zealand
Return to Work
Monitor**

A report of a survey of 2,965 injured workers in
Australian and New Zealand
workers' compensation jurisdictions

Prepared for

The Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities

June 2009

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
The Return to Work Monitor	i
2008/09 Highlights.....	i
2008/09 Summary of results	ii
How to Read the Report.....	iv
Statistical significance	iv
Jurisdictions	v
Reading graphs and tables	v
Disclaimer	vi
Background on workers' compensation arrangements in Australia	vii
Origins	vii
Public monopoly or private underwriting?	vii
The role of premium	vii
RTW roles and responsibilities	viii
The extent and role of self insurance.....	viii
Factors influencing RTW rates	ix
The RTW Monitor.....	ix
Background to the RTW Monitor	x
1. Return to Work Outcome Measures	1
1.1 RTW rate.....	1
1.2 Durable RTW	2
1.3 Non-durable RTW.....	3
1.4 Length of time back at work	4
1.5 Income sources	6
1.6 Employment and duties.....	12
2. Process Measures.....	15
2.1 Workplace culture.....	15
2.2 Making a claim	19
2.3 Previous claim experience	21
2.4 Reasons for RTW	23
2.5 Reasons for not working.....	25
2.6 RTW plan.....	30
2.7 RTW timing and duties	36
2.8 Partial RTW	43
2.9 Summary of RTW process measures at time of RTW by RTW outcome	45
2.10 Sources of assistance with RTW.....	46
2.11 Rating of customer service by insurer/ Scheme	57

3. Demographic and Claim Characteristics.....	61
3.1 Demographics	61
3.2 Days compensation paid and claim cost	63
3.3 Rehabilitation participation and cost	64
3.4 Enterprise size	65
4. Summary of Differences.....	66
Appendix A: Methodology.....	71
Appendix B: Field Report (2008/09)	75
Appendix C: Terms and Definitions.....	77
Appendix D: CATI Questionnaire (Flow Chart).....	81
Appendix E: Index of Tables.....	83
Appendix F: Index of Figures.....	84

Executive Summary

The Return to Work Monitor

This report is the twelfth 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.

2008/09 Highlights

Over the past twelve years, the national RTW rate has fluctuated between 83% and 87%. This relatively constant RTW rate has occurred while total claims for work related injuries have been falling. The durable RTW rate has shown greater variation – between 72% and 80%. Both the RTW and durable RTW rates have shown a steady decline since 2005/06 - although in 2005/06 the RTW rate was unusually high. Over the last few years there has been a steady decline in the length of durable RTW; it is now taking injured workers longer to return to a durable RTW.

The 2008/09 RTW and durable RTW rates are the lowest on record.

The RTW Monitor has demonstrated that the substantial initiatives put toward improving RTW outcomes have had little impact. In contrast, prevention strategies have resulted in fewer claims.

At the jurisdiction level, there have been some noticeable movements in RTW outcomes. In South Australia both the RTW rate (82%) and durable RTW rate (71%) have registered significant improvement with rates now similar to national levels. Improvements in an early Return to Work focus, and the initial impacts of legislative and non legislative reforms being the main drivers.

Comcare and Tasmania have, in most years, achieved higher RTW and durable RTW rates than the national average; 2008/09 is no exception. Since 2004/05, the New Zealand RTW rate has been similar to Australia, as has the durable RTW rate in 2008/09.

In 2008/09, labour market influences have had an impact on the durable RTW rate. Close to half the injured workers with a durable RTW indicated that recovery from the injury was among the reasons for their return to work, although over the last few years an increasing proportion returned because of economic need. There is evidence that the economic climate has had an impact on those with a non-durable RTW (11%). Since last year, injury related reasons have declined in mention as the reason for not working at the time of interview (from 62% to 48%), while an increasing proportion mentioned being retrenched or dismissed (from 13% to 28% - and higher compared to almost all previous years).

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.

2008/09 Summary of results

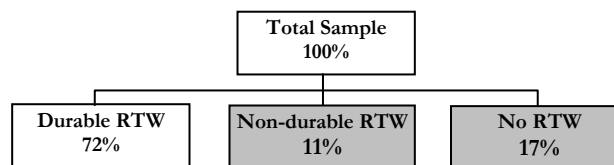
RTW outcomes and differences between jurisdictions

The RTW rate showed steady improvement between 2002/03 (83%) and 2005/06 (87%) returning to pre 2000 levels (mid 80%). There has been no further improvement, with the 2008/09 national RTW rate similar to all previous years (83%). The durable RTW rate has gradually declined over the last four years, with a lower durable RTW rate being recorded in 2008/09 (72%) to 2007/08 (75%).

Where RTW was durable, injured workers had been back at work for an average of 20 weeks; with a steady decline in the length of successful RTW over the last six years by an average of 18 days.

At a jurisdiction level, Comcare and Tasmania recorded RTW and durable RTW rates above the national average. For the first time in five years, the RTW and durable RTW rates in South Australia were similar to the national average, even though a similar proportion of injured workers were still receiving workers' compensation payments in 2008/09 to earlier years.

The proportion of unsuccessful (no RTW) outcomes remains considerable. Over one in four (28%) injured workers either had a non-durable RTW (11%) or had not returned to work at all (17%) by the time they were interviewed (that is seven to nine months after submitting a claim).



1.1.1 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. Under four in ten (37%) injured workers who had a claim of ten days or more in duration reported having a previous claim and three in ten (31%) had a “lost time” claim – the lowest it has ever been.

Injured workers from New Zealand and in Tasmania, and those covered by Comcare and Seacare were more likely to report that they had a previous lost time claim. Injured workers in New South Wales were less likely to report previous lost time claims.

RTW experience at time of RTW

Of those injured workers who returned to work, three in four (76%) felt ready to do so. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of Australian injured workers reporting suitable duties at RTW from seven in ten to over eight in ten (84%) injured workers, although lower among those covered by Comcare and in New Zealand. Over half (53%) returned to their previous hours, with injured workers covered by Seacare and those in New Zealand more likely to return to their previous hours, particularly when compared to workers covered by Comcare and in South Australia.

There were notable differences in the RTW experience among those with a durable RTW compared to non-durable RTW. Readiness to RTW, the perception of suitable duties at the time of RTW and a change in duties at RTW were higher among those with a durable RTW compared to non-durable RTW. This was irrespective of a similar proportion returning to their previous hours of work.

1.1.2 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 (53% in 2008/09) and three in four (76%) 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, and injured workers covered by Comcare. RTW plans were prepared less often for injured workers in New Zealand and Queensland and for those covered by Seacare.

A higher proportion of injured workers in South Australia received a plan and were involved in the development, although a similar proportion to the national rate were given help to follow the RTW plan. In contrast, those from Comcare were more likely to have received a plan, been involved in the development and found the plan helpful.

There were notable differences in the RTW plan experience between those with a durable RTW, non-durable RTW and no RTW. Injured workers who had a durable RTW were more likely to receive a RTW plan, be involved in the development of the plan, be given help to do what was recommended in the plan and to find the plan helpful compared to those with a non-durable RTW and no RTW.

1.1.3 Workplace culture

Workplace culture has been slower to have an influence on RTW. Over the course of the Monitor, there has been a steady improvement in injured worker perception of the amount spent on OH&S and clarity of RTW policies. Even so, roughly one in four injured workers disagreed with these statements.

The mean rating level of agreement was lower for injured workers from Victoria in regard to: *management will do what they can to get the injured worker back to work*; and *the employer is prepared to spend the time and money to make the workplace safe*. Injured workers from South Australia had a lower level of agreement that *the employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work*.

Three in ten (30%) injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder for them to return to work. This incidence has been consistently lower among injured workers in New Zealand and for the last two years higher among injured workers covered by Comcare. The person most often identified as making it harder to return to work was the injured worker's employer or their main supervisor. Injured workers from Queensland and New Zealand were more likely to rate their insurer as helping the RTW process – this is consistent with their rating on aspects of customer service.

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.

1.1.4 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 twelve 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, the Northern Territory and covered by Comcare were rated below the Australian national average customer service rating.

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 twelve financial years from 1997/98 through to 2008/09. 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 2008 and May 2009 waves of the National RTW Monitor. The sample consists of 2,965 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	382
TAS	Tasmania	379
NT	Northern Territory	120
COM	Comcare ³	240
SEA	Seacare	44
AUS	Total Australian National	2,965
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 ↑ or ↓ in a column means that the survey estimate noted in that column is significantly different (at the 95% confidence level) to the national average.
- “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

Please note that, in accordance with our Company's policy, we are obliged to advise that neither the Company nor any member nor employee undertakes responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person or organisation (other than the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities) in respect of information set out in this report, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

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*.

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 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 2008/09 financial year (i.e. the aggregate of the November 2008 and May 2009 waves) and represents the twelfth 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	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2008/09	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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 2008/09, just over four in five (83%)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 (93%) and from Tasmania (91%) had a higher RTW rate than the Australian national average.

The RTW rate showed steady improvement between 2002/03 (83%) and 2005/06 (87%) and has since returned to pre 2000 levels. There has been no further improvement, with the 2008/09 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?

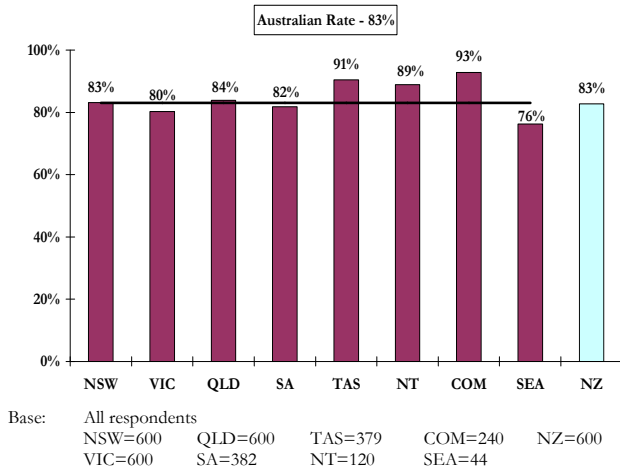
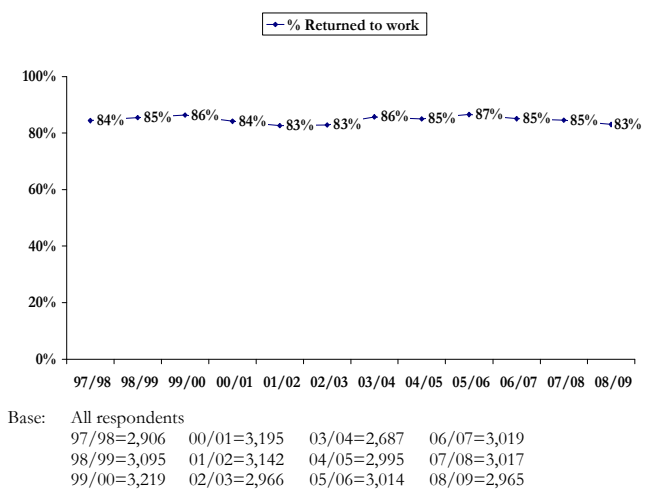


Figure 2: RTW rate (Trend)

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



In 2008/09, just over four in five injured workers had returned to work. This rate was lower than the peak in 2005/06.

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 2008/09, the durable RTW rate was eleven percentage points lower.

In 2008/09, over seven in ten (72%) 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 (88%) and in the Northern Territory (81%) and Tasmania (80%).

Injured workers covered by Comcare and in Tasmania had higher RTW and durable RTW rates.

The national Australian durable RTW rate has gradually declined over the last four years and is significantly lower than one year ago (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Durable RTW rate (Comparative)

Q8. Are you currently working in a paid job?

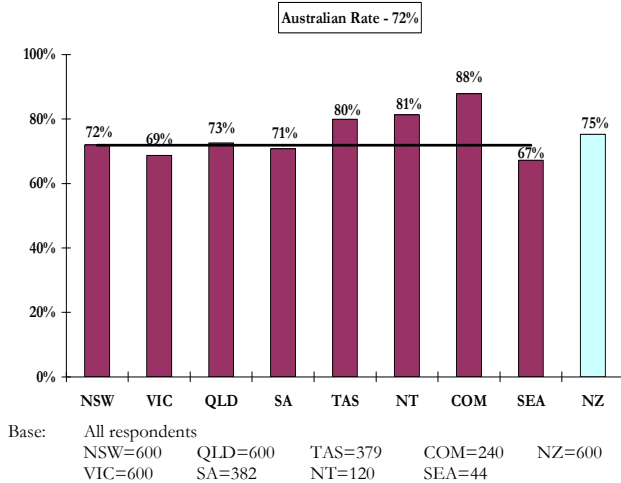
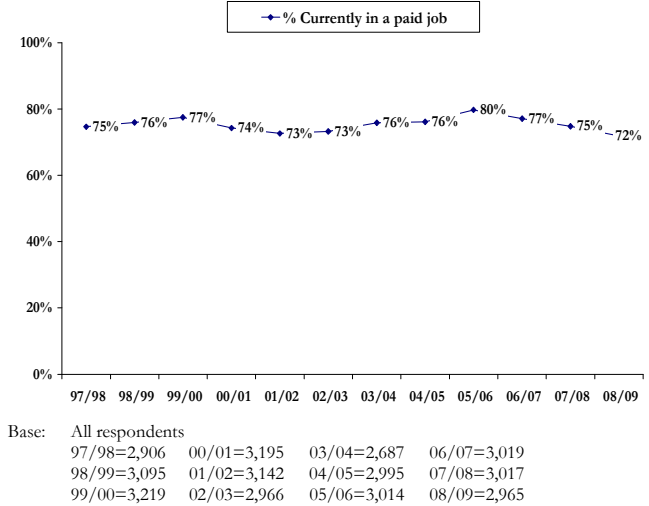


Figure 4: Durable RTW rate (Trend)

Q8. Are you currently working in a paid job?



Over one in four injured workers in Australia was not working at the time of interview. The national Australian durable RTW rate has gradually declined over the last four years and is significantly lower than one year ago.

1.3 Non-durable RTW

Over one in four (28%) Australian injured workers were not working at the time of interview (Figure 5). This comprised:

- 17% who had not returned to work; and
- 11% who had a non-durable RTW.

One in four (25%) injured workers in New Zealand were not working at the time of interview (Figure 6):

- 17% 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?

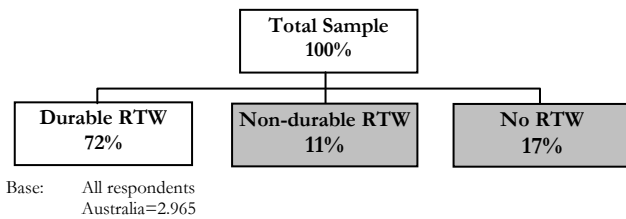
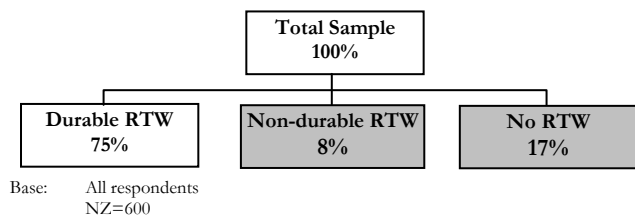


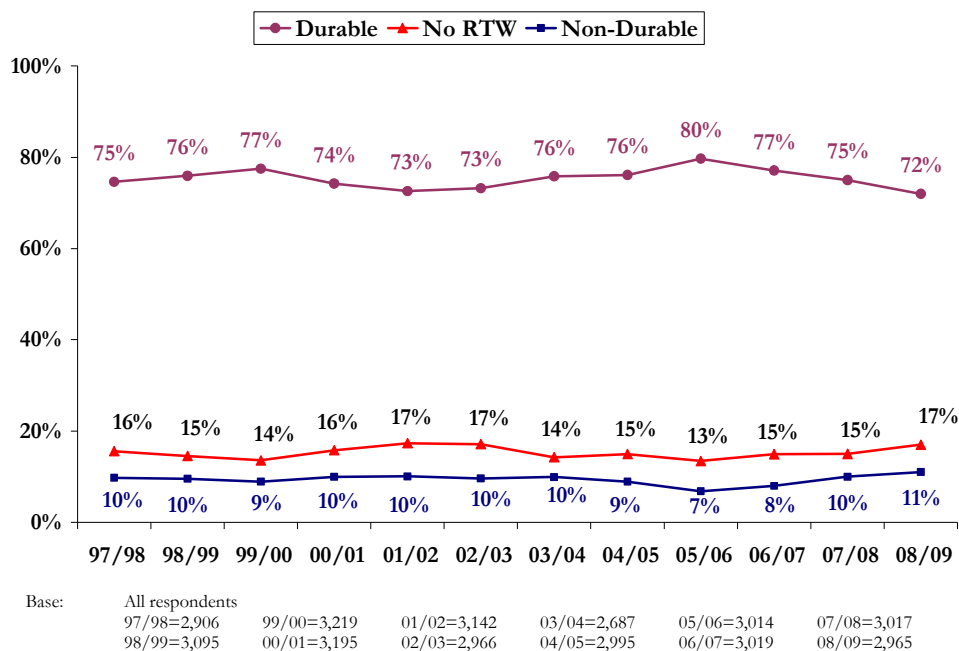
Figure 6: RTW status at interview for NZ

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 the same, although, the durable RTW rate was higher in New Zealand compared to Australia.

Figure 7: Durable, non-durable and no RTW rates



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 time.

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.

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 141 days or 20 weeks (Figure 8). The mean length of time back at work has gradually declined since the peak in 2003/04 and is the lowest it has ever been (Figure 9).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (193 days) and from Tasmania (161 days) had a longer durable RTW compared to the national average, while South Australia (127 days) was below the Australian national average.

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

Q8a. How long have you been back at work?

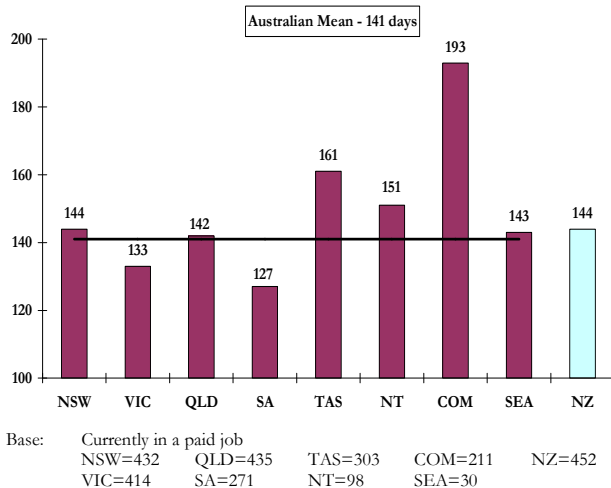
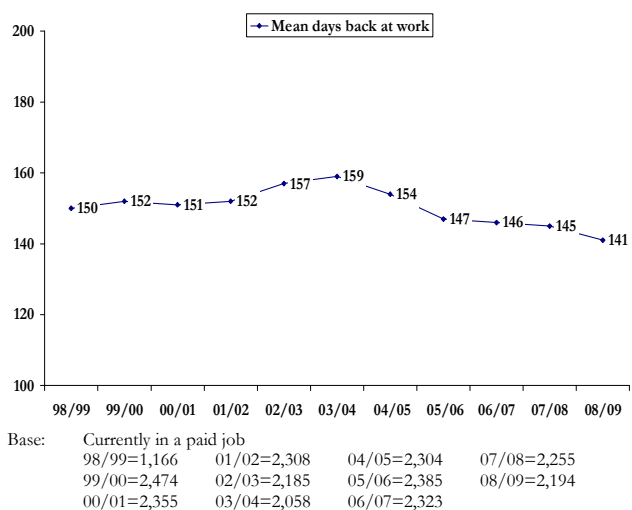


Figure 9: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Trend)

Q8a. How long have you been back at work?



Since 2003/04, the length of durable RTW has been gradually declining and is now lower than any other period.
 It is now taking injured workers with a durable RTW longer to return to work.

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 2.5.

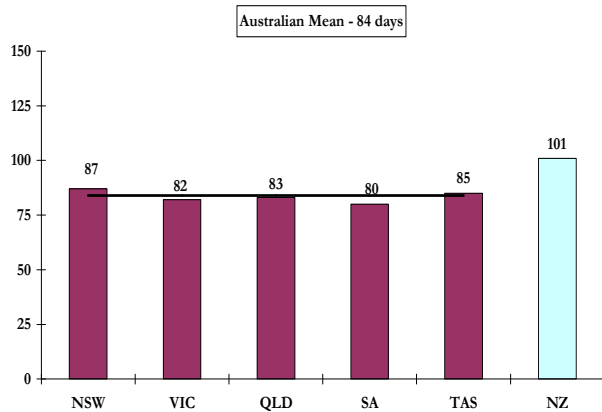
Unsuccessful attempts at RTW are substantive.

The mean estimated duration of non-durable RTW was 84 days or 12 weeks. There was no difference in the duration of non-durable RTW by jurisdiction (Figure 10).

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 11).

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

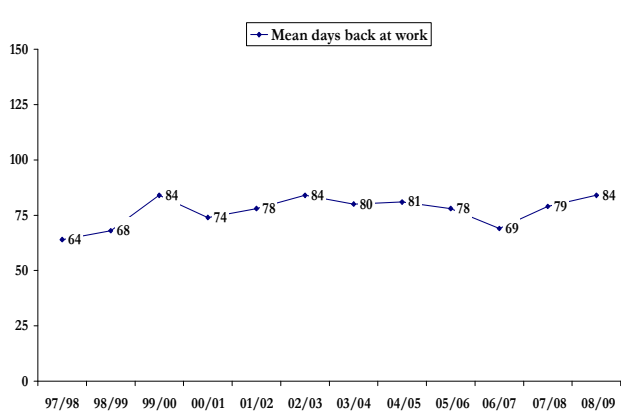
Q10. How long were you back at work before you stopped?



Base: Have returned to work but currently do not work
 NSW=67 QLD=68 TAS=40 COM=12 NZ=45
 VIC=70 SA=42 NT=9 SEA=4
 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 11: 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 08/09=312

The mean estimated duration of non-durable RTW was 12 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 2.8); and
- At time of interview (reported below).

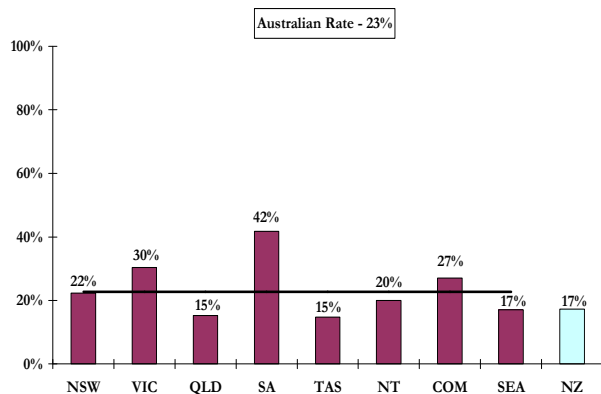
1.5.1 Current compensation status

In 2008/09, over one in five (23%) injured workers reported they were still receiving some form of weekly compensation payments at the time of the interview (Figure 12).

Queensland (15%), Tasmania (15%) and New Zealand (17%) 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 (42%) and Victoria (30%) was also above the national average.

Figure 12: Current compensation status (Comparative)

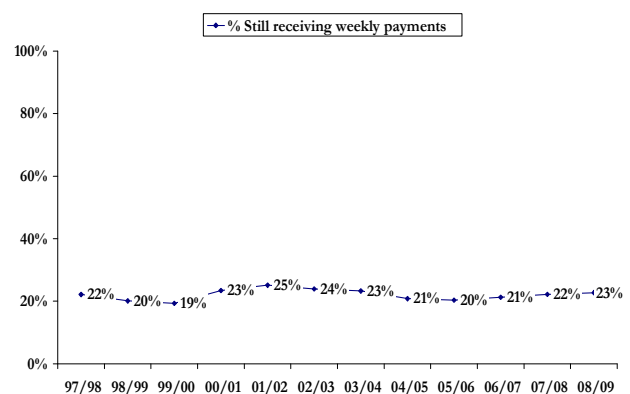
Q19. Are you still receiving weekly payments from <workers' compensation jurisdiction>?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 QLD=600 TAS=379 COM=240 NZ=600
 VIC=600 SA=382 NT=120 SEA=44

Figure 13: Current compensation status (Trend)

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



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 08/09=2,965

The proportion of injured workers receiving workers' compensation payments at the time of interview has ranged between one in four and one in five injured workers (Figure 13).

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

1.5.2 Main source of income at the time of interview

Seven in ten injured workers (71%) 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 (3%); and
- No income at all (3%).

<i>Q20a. Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?</i>										
	AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Employment	71	71	67	72	64↓	76↑	77	84↑	71	72
Workers' compensation	15	15	20↑	12↓	24↑	9↓	11	12	15	14
Social security	3	2	3	4	2	4	3	0↓	-	1↓
Partner's income	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	0↓	3	5
No income	3	3	3	4	2	1↓	-	0↓	3	2

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

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

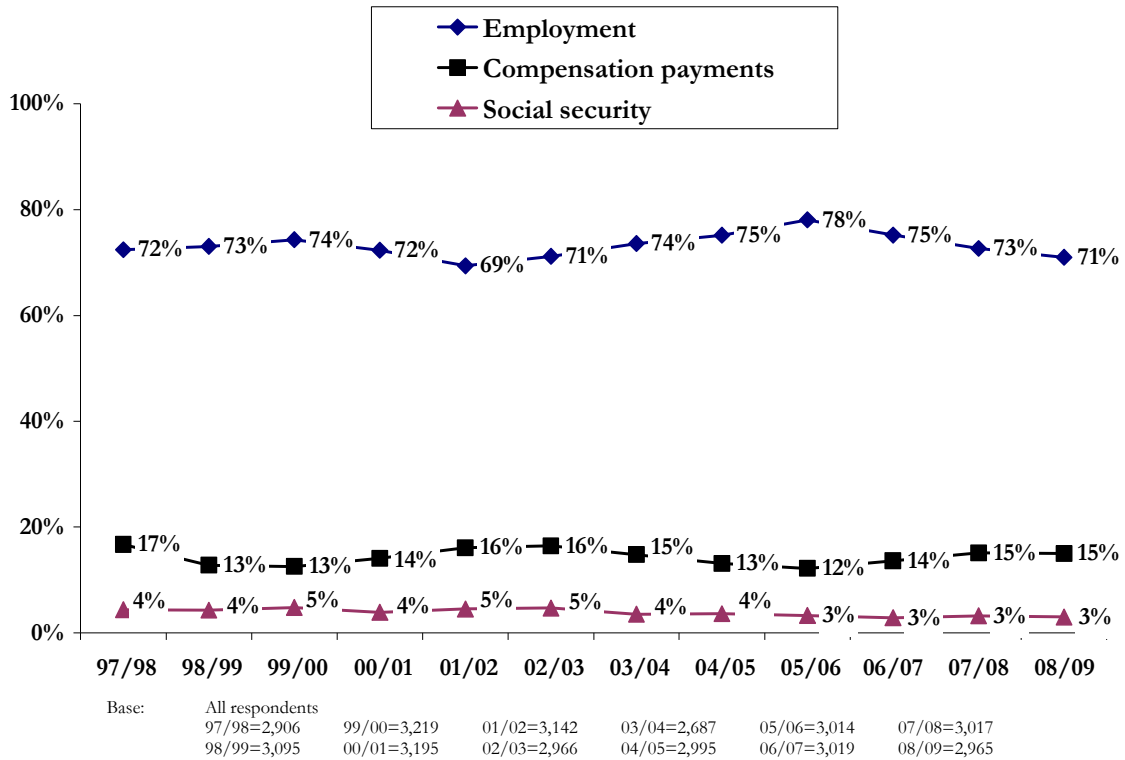
At the time of interview, RTW outcomes as measured by income sources differed by jurisdiction. Injured workers covered by Comcare (84%) and from Tasmania (76%) were more likely to report employment as their *main* source of income at the time of interview than the Australian national average, while injured workers from South Australia (64%) were less likely to report employment as their *main* source of income.

Injured workers in South Australia (24%) more often reported workers' compensation payments as their *main* income source at time of interview compared to all other jurisdictions. Victorian injured workers (20%) were also above the national average in reporting workers' compensation payments as the *main* source of income.

The proportion of injured workers reporting employment as their *main* source of income steadily increased between 2001/02 (69%) and 2005/06 (78%), although declined significantly to 71% in the current period (Figure 14). This decline is reflected by the decrease in the proportion who reported a durable RTW.

Figure 14: Main source of income

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



Seven in ten injured workers nationally reported their *main* source of income at the time of interview was employment. This incidence increased between 2001/02 to and 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 (59%) injured workers nationally reported that they only obtained income from employment (had a full RTW);
- Over one in ten (14%) had a partial RTW, that is, their income was derived from both employment and some other source; and
- Close to three in ten (27%) 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).

Table 4: RTW outcomes measured by income sources at interview										
<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 (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Full RTW (income from employment only)	59	59	56	61	49↓	66↑	62	65	65	61
Partial RTW (employment plus any other income source)	14	15	13	13	21↑	12	17	22↑	6	13
Non-durable RTW /No RTW (income from all sources except employment)	27	27	30	26	30	21↓	22	13↓	29	25

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

At the time of interview, RTW outcomes as measured by income sources differed by jurisdiction. South Australia (49%) had the lowest proportion of injured workers who reported that they only obtained income from employment and Tasmania the highest (66%) (Table 4).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (22%) and from South Australia (21%) had the highest proportion that derived their income from both employment and some other source (partial RTW).

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 (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Non-durable/no RTW (workers' compensation payments only)	11	11	15↑	8↓	16↑	6↓	9	7	15	11
Partial RTW (employment, workers' comp. and other)	5	4	5	3	12↑	4	7	7	-	2↓

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

At the time of interview, without prompting one in ten (11%) injured workers in Australia (Table 5) reported workers' compensation payments as their only source of income. Five percent had a partial RTW outcome where income was from both employment and workers' compensation payments.

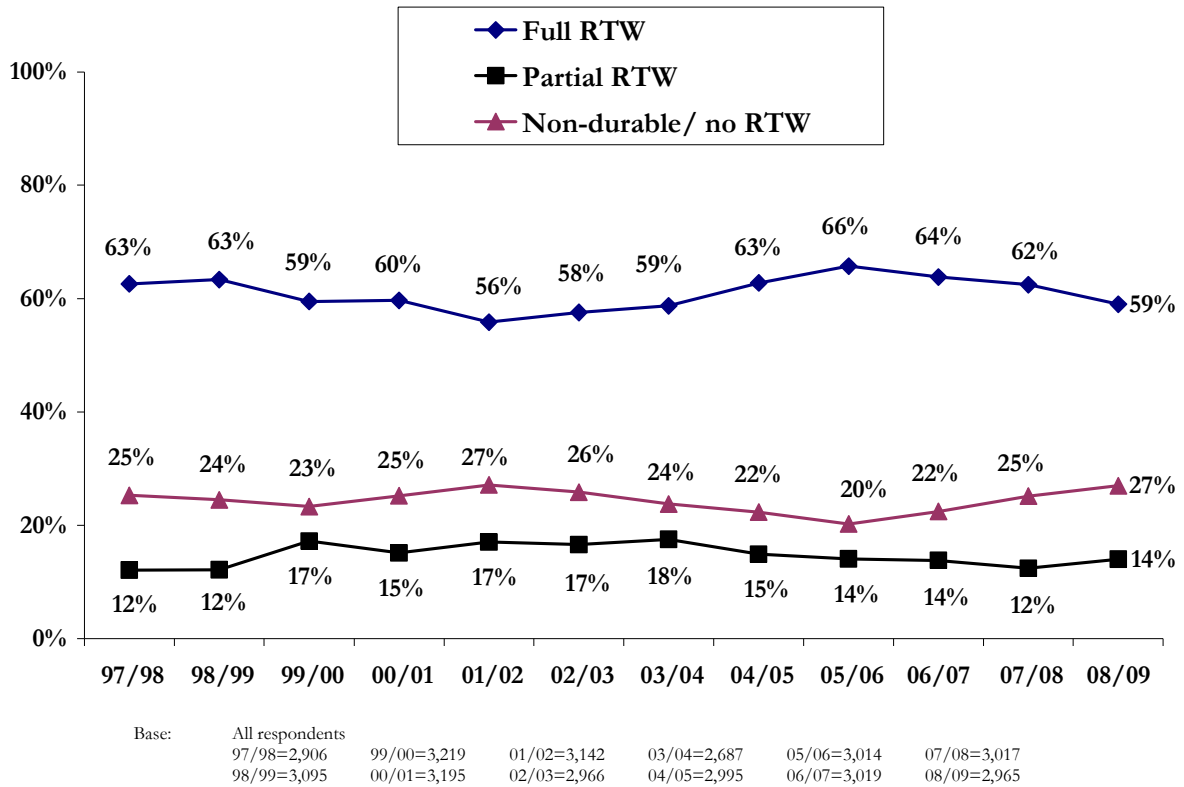
South Australia (16%) had higher proportions of injured workers with "workers' compensation only" outcomes and higher partial RTW rates where weekly compensation and employment were the only sources of income (12%). Injured workers from Victoria also had a higher proportion of "workers' compensation only" outcomes (15%).

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. Victoria had a similar incidence of "workers' compensation only" outcomes as South Australia.

The full RTW rate (59%) is lower than the four previous years (Figure 15). Conversely, the non-durable/no RTW rate (27%) is higher over the same period.

Figure 15: 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 significantly lower than the four preceding years.



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 2.7.4).

1.6.1 Employer at time of interview

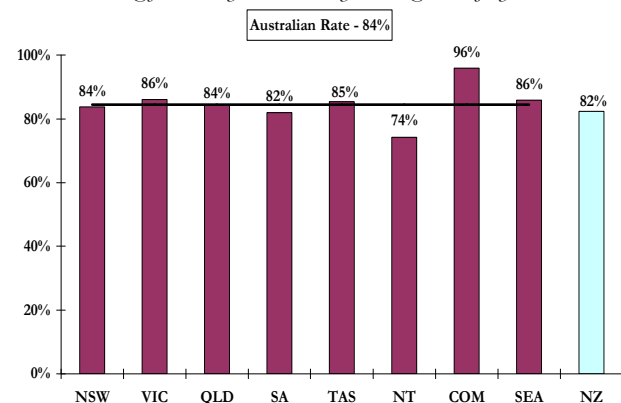
More than four in five (84%) injured workers who returned to work, returned to work with the employer they were working for when they sustained their injury – the “same” employer (Figure 16).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (96%) were most likely to RTW with their original employer. Injured workers from the Northern Territory (74%) were less likely to RTW to their original employer compared to the Australian national average.

The rate of RTW with the same employer was similar between 2002/03 and 2007/08. The two percentage point increase between 2007/08 and 2008/09 represents a significant increase (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Return to same employer (Comparative)

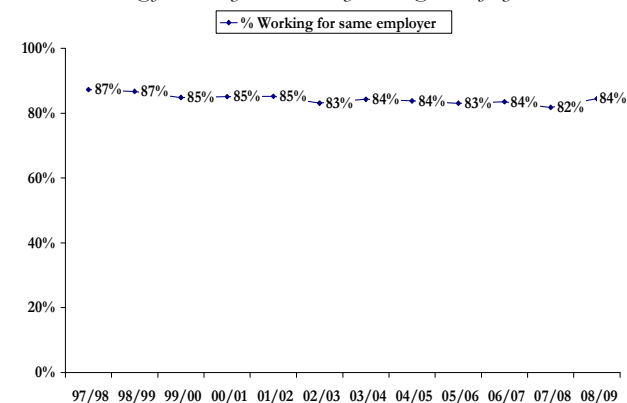
Q11. [Are/Were] you working with the same employer you were working for when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=499 QLD=503 TAS=343 COM=223 NZ=497
 VIC=484 SA=313 NT=107 SEA=34

Figure 17: 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 08/09=2,506

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

Over three in four (77%) 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 18).

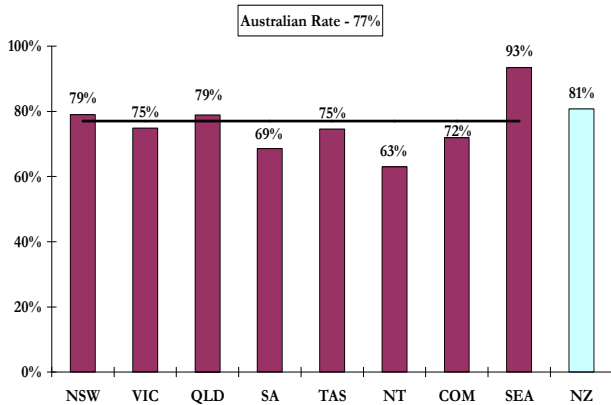
Injured workers from South Australia (69%) and the Northern Territory (63%) who had returned to work were less likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the Australian national average.

Those covered by Seacare (93%) were more likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the national average.

The declining trend between 2005/06 and 2007/08 in the proportion of injured workers who had returned to the *same* duties has been reversed in 2008/09 (Figure 19).

Figure 18: Return to same duties (Comparative)

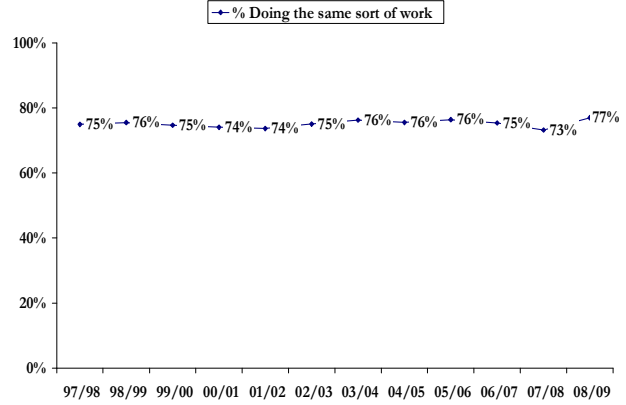
Q12. [Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?



Base: Have returned to work
 NSW=499 QLD=503 TAS=343 COM=225 NZ=497
 VIC=484 SA=313 NT=107 SEA=34

Figure 19: 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 08/09=2,506

Over 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

Seven in ten (69%) 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 South Australia (62%) and from the Northern Territory (55%) 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* (11% and 18% respectively) compared to the Australian national average (8%).

Continuity of *employer* and *duties* was more common in New Zealand (74%) compared to any other jurisdiction, while return to the *same employer* and *different duties* was most likely among injured workers covered by Comcare (27%).

Table 6: Continuity of employer and duties at interview										
Q11.	<i>[Are/Were] you working with the same employer you were working for when you incurred your original injury?</i>									
Q12.	<i>[Are/Were] you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?</i>									
	AUS (2,506) %	NSW (499) %	VIC (484) %	QLD (503) %	SA (313) %	TAS (343) %	NT (107) %	COM (223) %	SEA (34) %	NZ (497) %
Same employer/ same duties	69	70	66	72	62↓	70	55↓	69	79	74↑
Same employer/ different duties	15	14	20↑	12	20↑	15	19	27↑	7	8↓
Different employer/same duties	8	9	8	7	7	5↓	8	3↓	14	7
Different employer/different duties	8	7	6	9	11↑	10	18↑	1↓	-	11↑

Base: Have returned to work

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

Seven in ten 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)⁶;
- 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 culture⁷. 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 along with 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 3.6 to 4.5 (Figure 20).

⁶ The impact of Workplace Culture on Return to Work, Comcare Australia paper presented to WorkCongress5, Adelaide 2001.

⁷ This question was introduced in May 2000.

The importance of work (4.5 out of a maximum of 5 mean rating) and work satisfaction (4.3) had the highest levels of agreement among injured workers in the Australian jurisdictions with nine in ten in agreement (94% and 91% respectively). This was closely followed by being valued at their workplace (3.9) – 79% of 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) – 68% agreed; and
- Management was prepared to spend time and money to make the workplace safe (3.6) – 66% agreed.

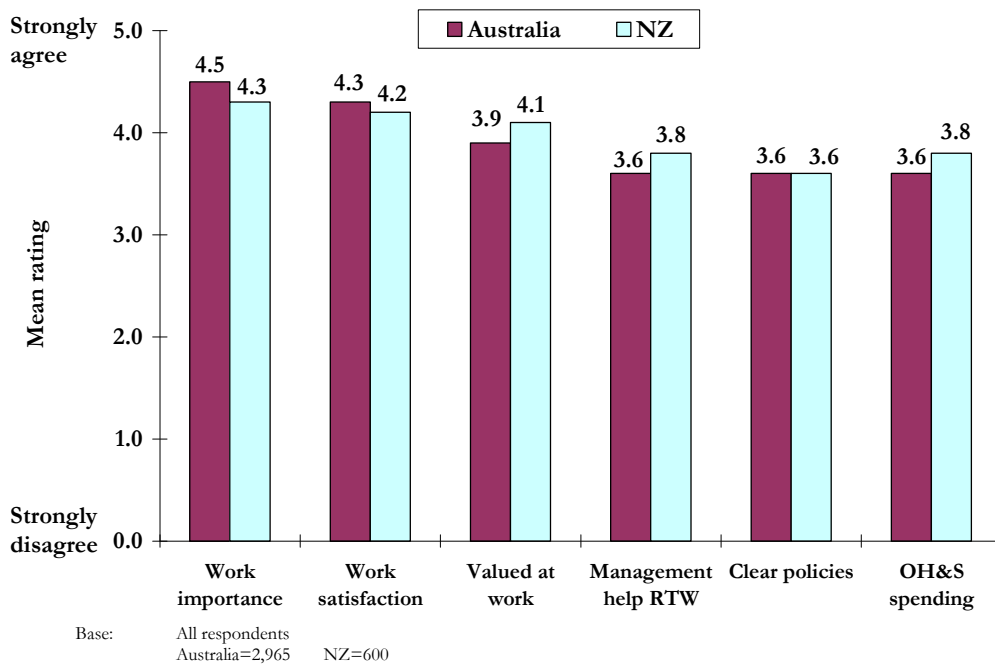
Injured workers from New Zealand were more likely than those from Australia to agree that:

- They were valued at their workplace (4.1 – 84% agreed);
- Management would do what was necessary to help them get back to work (3.8 – 73% agreed); and
- Management would spend time and money to make the workplace safe (3.8 – 74% agreed).

Figure 20: Rating level of agreement with attitude statements towards the workplace

Q34.

Level of agreement with statements



Injured workers generally feel their work is important and are satisfied with their work. While the level of agreement with attributes associated with returning to work and workplace safety were lower, they have improved over time.

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

- Injured workers covered by Comcare were more likely to agree that their employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work (3.8);
- Tasmanian injured workers were 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 Victoria recorded the lowest level of agreement in regard to their employer doing what was necessary to help them get back to work (3.5) and their employer is prepared to spend time and money on Occupational Health and Safety (3.4);
- South Australian injured workers had a lower level of agreement that their employer has clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work (3.4).

<i>Q34. Level of agreement with statements</i>										
	AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Work importance	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.3↓
Work satisfaction	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2↓	4.2↓	4.4	4.2↓
Valued at work	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.6↓	4.1↑
Management help RTW	3.6	3.7	3.5↓	3.7	3.6	3.8↑	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.8↑
Clear RTW policies and procedures	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.7	3.4↓	3.7	3.6	3.8↑	3.7	3.6
OH&S spending	3.6	3.6	3.4↓	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.8↑

Base: All respondents

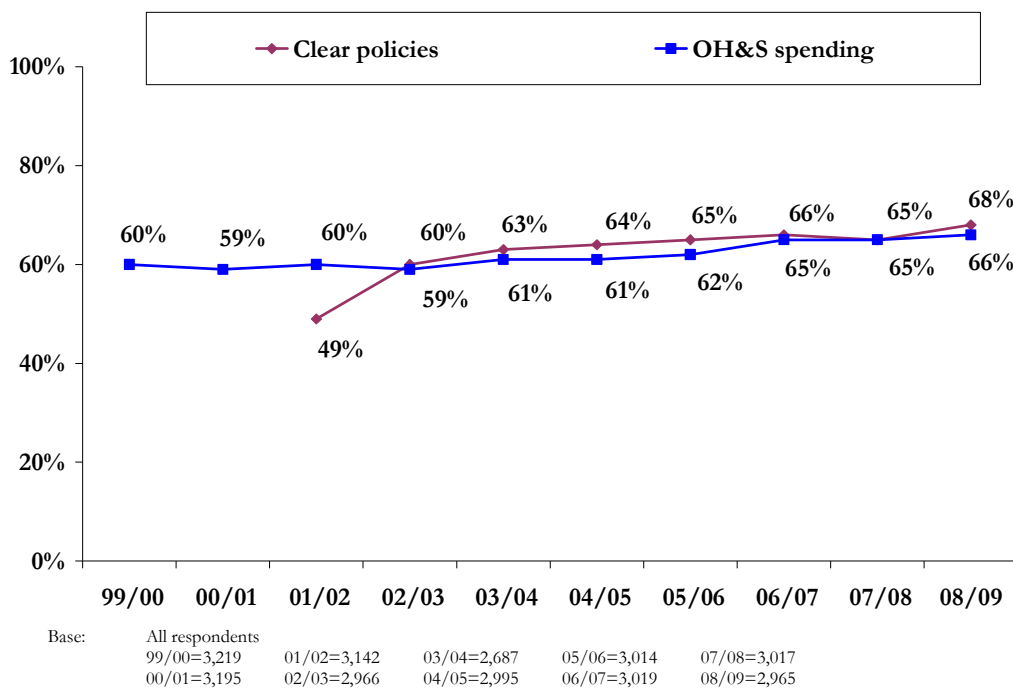
Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

Areas which can influence RTW outcomes for the injured worker include encouraging employers to help with RTW, developing clear policies and procedures for RTW and encouraging management to see value in spending time and money to make the workplace safe. Over time there has been an upwards trend in the injured worker perception of the amount spent on OH&S and the clarity of RTW policies in Australia (Figure 21):

- More injured workers than ever before agreed that their employer had clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work (to 68% in 2008/09);
- Over the last three years, a higher proportion agreed that management was prepared to spend time and money to make the workplace safe (66% in 2008/09).

Figure 21: Level of agreement with value statements towards the workplace - Australia

Q34. *Level of agreement with statements*



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

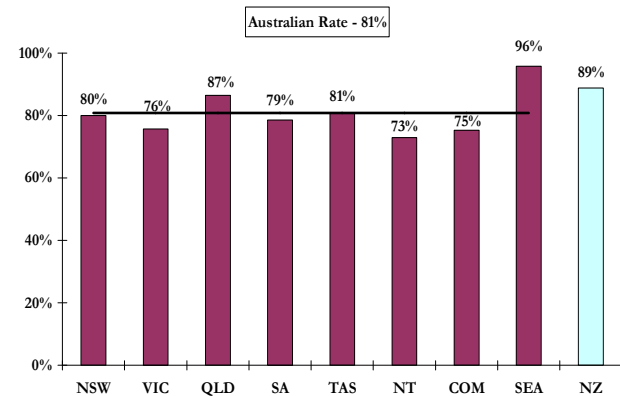
Eight in ten (81%) injured workers in Australia reported that it was easy to get the information they required for lodging a claim (Figure 22).

Injured workers from New Zealand (89%) were more likely to rate access to information as easy when compared to the Australian national average (81%) as well as those from Queensland (87%) and those covered by Seacare (96%). Fewer injured workers from the Northern Territory (73%), Victoria (76%) and covered by Comcare (75%) 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 seven years of the Monitor. Importantly this is at a higher level when compared with the 1998/99 to 2001/02 period (Figure 23).

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

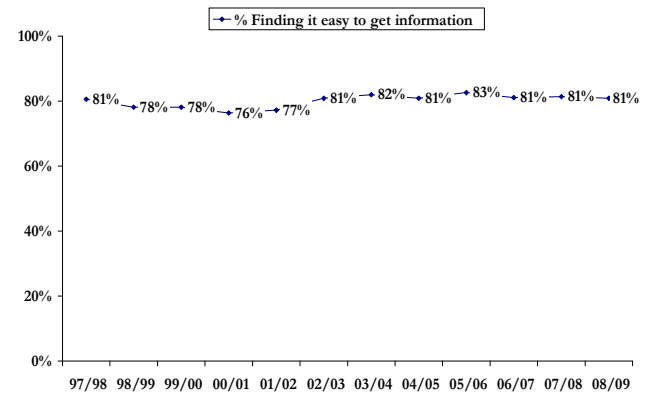
Q1. When you put in your claim under <jurisdiction>, was it easy to get the information you needed to make a claim?



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600 QLD=600 SA=382 TAS=379 NT=120 COM=240 SEA=44 NZ=600

Figure 23: 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 08/09=2,965

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 (74%) considered it *simple* to put in a claim, while two in ten (18%) considered the process *complicated* (Table 8). A small minority believed it was *very simple* (16%), while fewer (4%) considered the claim process *very complicated*. Eight percent could not say either way.

A higher proportion of injured workers covered by Comcare (47%) and in the Northern Territory (28%), South Australia (25%) and Victoria (25%) found it complicated putting in a claim compared to the Australian national average.

The proportion of injured workers who found it complicated to put in their claim has been close to two in ten over the last six years. This represents a significant decline from earlier years (a peak of 28% in 1998/99).

Table 8: Ease of putting in a claim										
Q2a. Would you describe the process of putting in a claim as?										
	AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Very simple	16	16	12↓	19	13	20↑	15	7↓	22	18
Simple	58	57	55	62	54	60	51	43↓	59	65↑
Total simple	74	74	67↓	81↑	67↓	80↑	66	50↓	80	82↑
Complicated	14	13	18↑	10↓	20↑	7↓	20↑	33↑	13	11
Very complicated	4	3	7↑	3	5	4	8	14↑	3	3
Total complicated	18	16	25↑	13↓	25↑	11↓	28↑	47↑	15	14↓
Can't Say	8	10	8	7	8	8	6	3↓	5	3↓

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

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 in 2002.

Under four in ten (37%) injured workers who made a claim of ten days or more in duration reported having a previous workers' compensation claim (Figure 24). Injured workers from New Zealand (53%), covered by Comcare (49%), and from Tasmania (46%), South Australia (42%) and Queensland (41%) were more likely to have had a previous claim when compared to the Australian national average. New South Wales injured workers were least likely to have had a previous workers' compensation claim (32%).

The reported incidence of previous claims has approximated four in ten injured workers since 2002/03 (Figure 25).

Figure 24: Previous claim (Comparative)

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

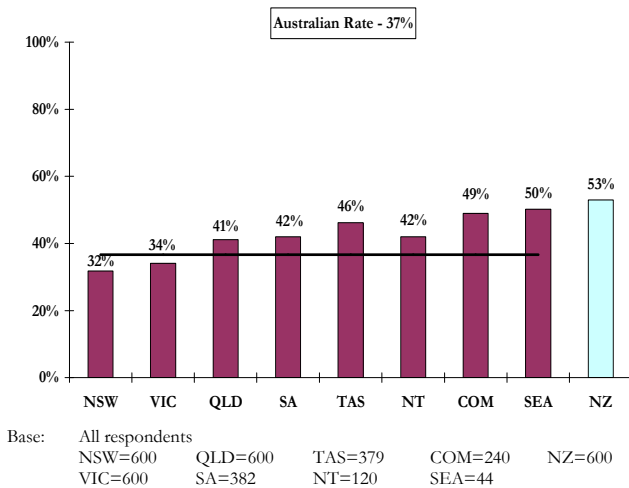
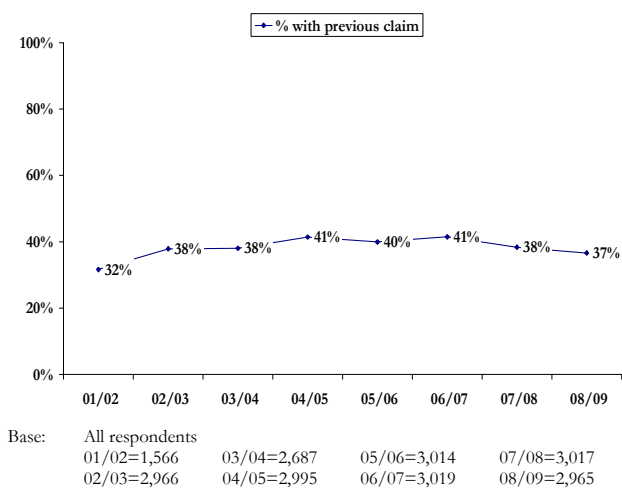


Figure 25: Previous claim (Trend)

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



Under four in ten injured workers reported having a previous claim.

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, three in ten (31%) reported that they had time of work because of an earlier claim, that is, they had a "lost time" claim (Figure 26). Injured workers in New Zealand (46%), covered by Seacare (50%) and Comcare (39%) and in Tasmania (40%) were more likely to report a previous lost time claim when compared to the Australian national average. Injured workers from New South Wales were less likely to report a previous lost time claim (27%). The differences, by jurisdiction, coincide with those noted for previous claims.

The incidence of previous "lost time" claims is the lowest it has ever been (31%) (Figure 27).

Figure 26: Previous lost time claims (Comparative)

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

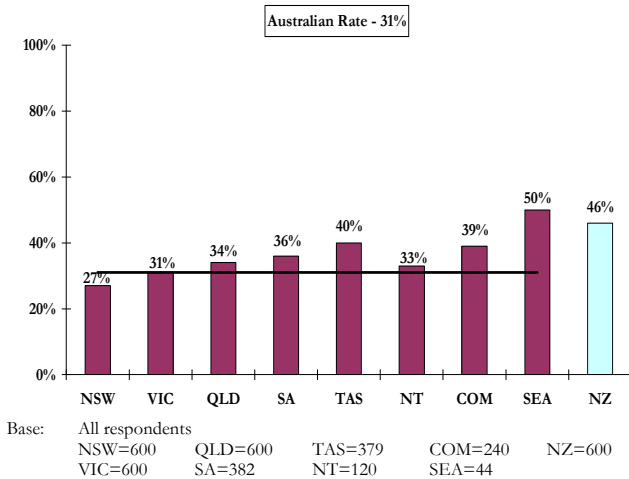
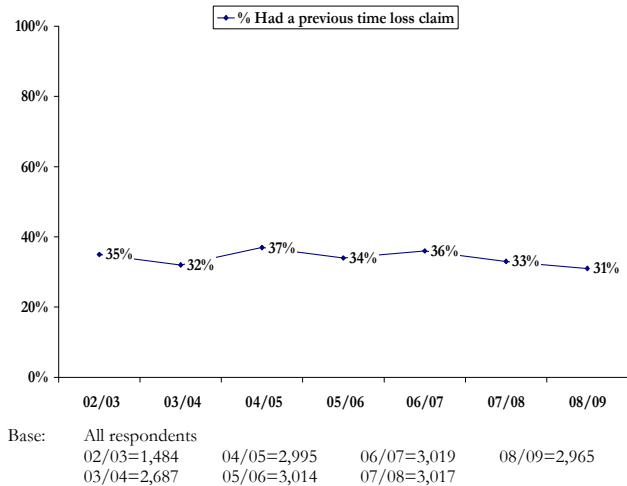


Figure 27: Previous lost time claims (Trend)

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



Three in ten injured workers had time off work because of earlier claims.

2.4 Reasons for RTW

In total, 83% 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). One in five workers mentioned that they returned because of *economic need* (19%) and over one in ten because they *wanted to RTW* (13%).

When injured workers were probed for *any other reasons* for returning to work, *recovered from injury* was mentioned by half (50%). Three in ten workers mentioned that they returned because they *wanted to RTW* (30%), or because of *economic need* (29%).

Among injured workers with a durable RTW, having *recovered from injury* (52%) and *economic need* (31%) were more often cited as reasons for having returned to work compared to those with a non-durable RTW (38% and 23% respectively). In absolute terms these also topped the list as reasons for RTW among those who had a non-durable RTW – along with *wanted to RTW* (31%). However, external influences were more often cited by those with a non-durable than durable RTW – being offered *alternative duties*, being *told to RTW by the doctor*, and *pressure from the employer and insurer*.

	Main	Total Reasons		
	National (2,506) %	National (2,506) %	Durable RTW (2,194) %	Non-durable RTW (312) %
Q4a. <i>What is the main reason you returned to work?</i>				
Q4b. <i>Were there any other reasons you returned to work?</i>				
Recovered from injury	42	50	52↑	38
Economic need/needed the money	19	30	31↑	23
I wanted to return to work	13	27	26	31
Bored at home	4	11	11	9
Offered alternative duties	6	9	8	12↑
I was told to return by doctor/doctor's advice	6	9	8	13↑
Wanted to keep job	2	6	6	7
Pressured from employer	2	3	3	6↑
Benefits stopped/too low	1	1	1	1
Pressured by insurer	1	1	1	4↑
Offered part-time work	0	1	1	1
Supportive employer	0	1	1	1
Part of RTW plan	0	0	0	-
Didn't like being on worker's compensation	0	0	0	0
Self employed/run own business/farm	0	0	0	1

Base: Have returned to work

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

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the respective column comparison.

Having recovered from injury, followed by economic need were the most common reasons cited for having returned to work among injured workers with a durable RTW. These reasons also featured among those with a non-durable RTW although to a lesser extent and they were more likely than those with a durable RTW to also cite external influences.

2.4.1 Trend in reasons for RTW by RTW outcome

Key reasons over time for RTW among injured workers with a durable RTW show that:

- Recovered from injury has consistently been mentioned by close to half of injured workers;
- Over the last few years, economic need has become a more prominent reason for RTW (32% in 2008/09);
- There has been declining trend in the proportion of injured workers who wanted to RTW; returned because of recommendations from a health provider (doctor, rehabilitation provider and other health professionals); were supported by the RTW process (offered alternative duties or part-time work); and were pressured from employer/insurer/WorkCover.

Key reasons over time for RTW among injured workers with a non-durable RTW show that:

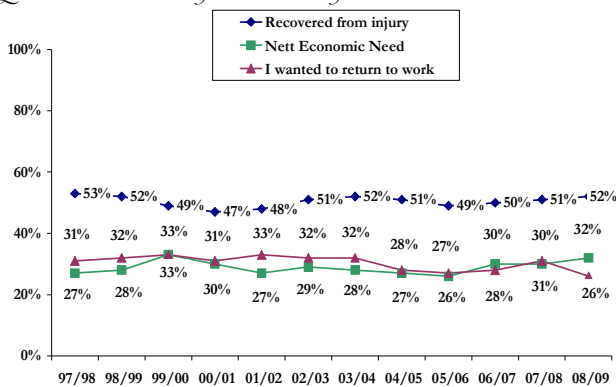
- Recovered from injury has shown an upward trend over time;
- Economic need and wanted to RTW have fluctuated as a reason for RTW;
- There has been declining trend in the proportion of injured workers who returned because of recommendations from a health provider (doctor, rehabilitation provider and other health professionals); and were supported by the RTW process (offered alternative duties or part-time work); and
- Pressure from employer/insurer/WorkCover has remained relatively stable at close to one in ten injured workers.

Durable RTW

Non-durable RTW

Figure 28: Total reasons for RTW

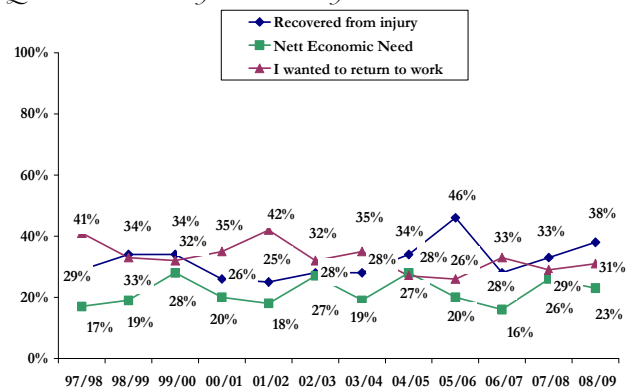
Q4a. What is the main reason you returned to work?
 Q4b. Were there any other reasons you returned to work?



Base: Durable RTW
 97/98=2,129 00/01=2,354 03/04=2,058 06/07=2,321
 98/99=2,327 01/02=2,308 04/05=2,304 07/08=2,255
 99/00=2,474 02/03=2,185 05/06=2,385 08/09=2,194

Figure 29: Total reasons for RTW

Q4a. What is the main reason you returned to work?
 Q4b. Were there any other reasons you returned to work?



Base: Non-durable RTW
 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 08/09=312



2.5 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, 28% of injured workers were not working at the time of interview. Of these, half (48%) stated (without prompting), that their *main* reason for not working was that they were *still injured* (Table 10). Another 7% 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 half (52%). 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*.

Among injured workers who had not returned to work, being *still injured* was more often cited as reasons for not having returned to work compared to those with a non-durable RTW (69% and 24% respectively). *Injury related reasons* also topped the reasons for not working with among those with a non-durable RTW. However, labour market influences figured quite prominently among those with a non-durable RTW – *retrenched* (13%) and *dismissed* (13%).

Table 10: Reasons for not currently working				
Q9a. What is the main reason you are not working now?				
Q9b. Are there any other reasons you are not working now?				
	Main	Total reasons		
	National (771) %	National (771) %	No RTW (459) %	Non-durable RTW (312) %
Still injured	48	52	69↑	24
New injury	2	4	3	6
Old injury got worse/aggravated	7	10	5	17↑
Psychological reasons	2	3	4	2
Can't work in that type job due to type of injury	1	2	3	2
Retired	1	1	1	1
Resigned	4	5	2	9↑
Studying	2	3	3	4
No work available/seasonal	6	12	11	14
Employer closed down	1	2	1	3
Retrenched	7	7	4	13↑
Dismissed by employer	7	9	6	13↑
Maternity leave	1	2	0	4↑
Work not facilitating return/ uncooperative	1	2	3	1
Other	4	6	5	7
Don't know	5	10	11	8

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 30)⁸:

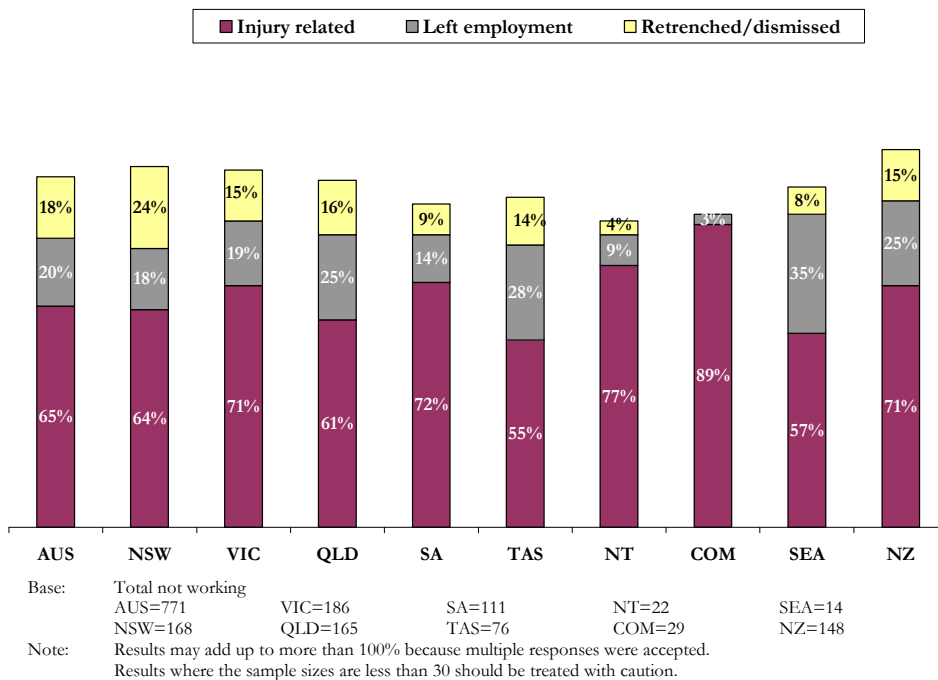
1. **Injury related**, including: still injured; new injury; old injury got worse or aggravated; psychological reasons; and can't work in that job due to type of injury.
2. **Left employment**, referring to those who indicated they had left the workforce on a permanent or temporary basis including: retired;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

In total, 28% of Australian injured workers were not working at the time of interview. Of these, two in three (65%) mentioned injury related reasons as a reason for not working (Figure 30) – *still injured* by five in ten (52%), *aggravated injury* by one in ten (10%), while *new injury* accounted for one in twenty (4%). Injury related reasons were cited by a similar proportion of injured workers in each jurisdiction.

Two in ten (20%) injured workers indicated that they had left employment either on a permanent or temporary basis. Two in ten (18%) injured workers indicated that they had been retrenched or dismissed by their employer. This was less often cited as a reason for not working by injured workers in the South Australia (9%). No injured workers covered by Comcare mentioned this as a reason for not working.

Figure 30: 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 issues were the primary reason for not working at the time of interview.

⁸ The net categories were amended in the 2007/08 RTW Monitor report. The results will differ slightly to previous reports.

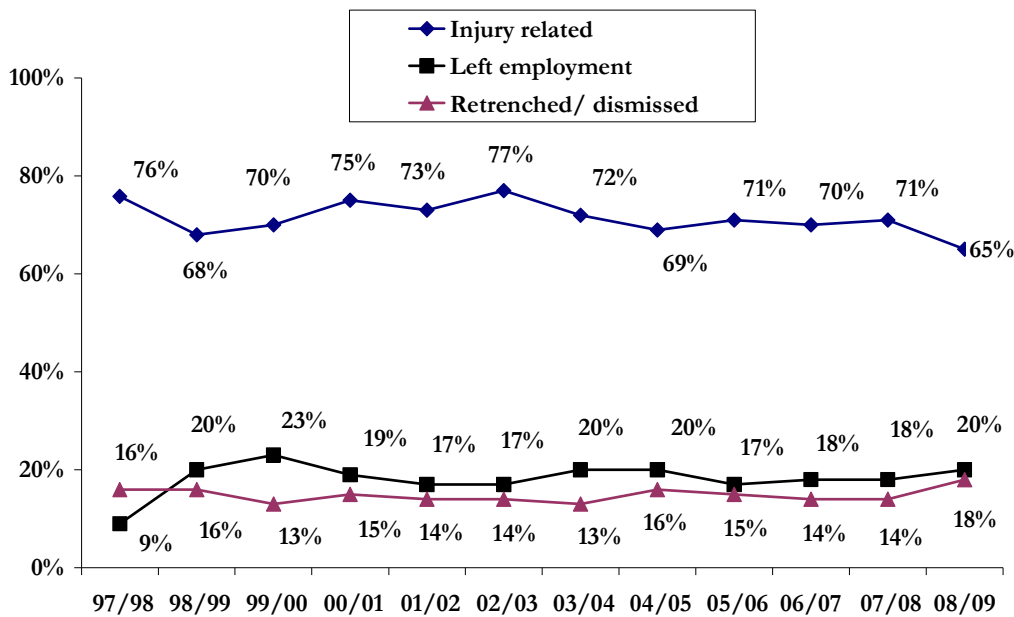
Injury related reasons are the lowest they have ever been having declined from a high of 77% in 2002/03 to a low of 65% in 2008/09.

The incidence of *leaving the workforce voluntarily* has remained consistent since 2000/01 – 20% in 2008/09.

The incidence of injured workers being *retrenched or dismissed* is the highest it has ever been over the course of the Monitor and accounted for one in five mentions (18%) by those not working.

Figure 31: 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 08/09=771

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

Labour market influences on RTW have increased in prominence as a reason for injured workers not working at the time of interview.

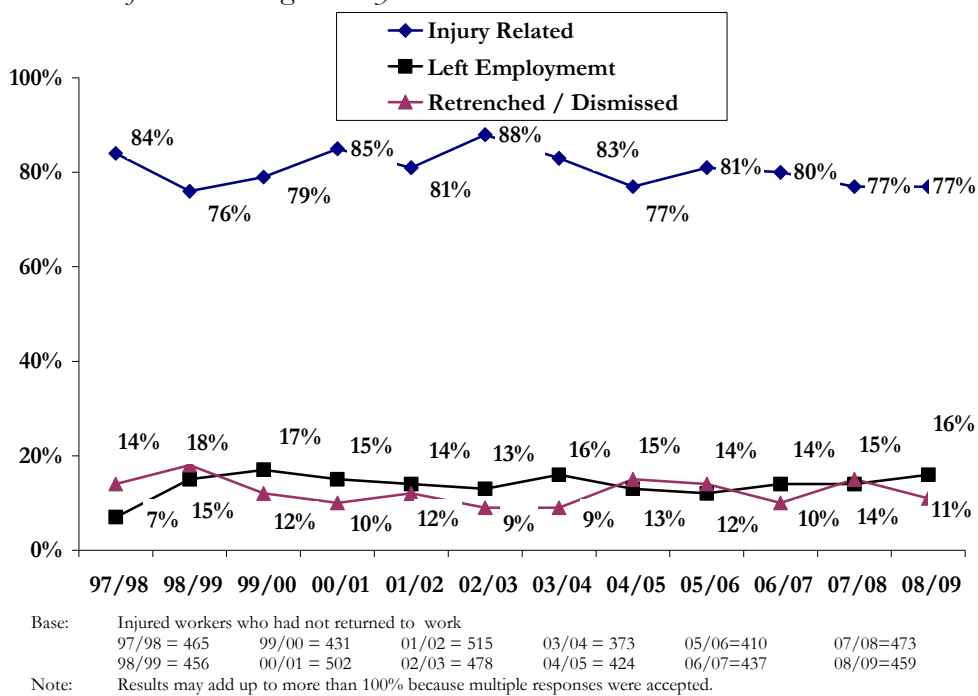
2.5.1 Reasons for not working trend – No RTW

In 2008/09, by the time of interview, 17% of Australian injured workers had not returned to work. The total reasons for these injured workers not working has essentially remained stable throughout the course of the Monitor (Figure 32):

- Close to eight in ten (77%) of those who had not returned to work mentioned *injury related* reasons;
- Over one in ten (16%) *left employment voluntarily*;
- One in ten (11%) were *retrenched or dismissed*.

Figure 32: Total reasons for not working – No RTW

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently



Among those who had not returned to work, the reasons for not working have remained relatively stable throughout the course of the Monitor.

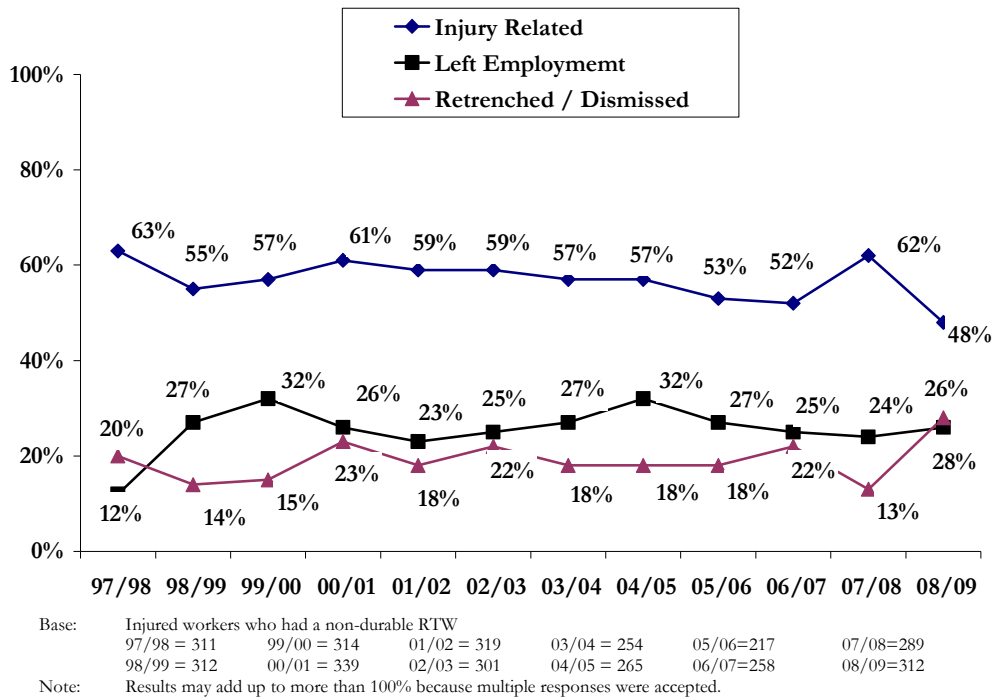
2.5.2 Reasons for not working trend – Non-durable RTW

In 2008/09, by the time of interview, 11% of Australian injured workers had a non-durable RTW. The total reasons for these injured workers not working has changed throughout the course of the Monitor (Figure 321):

- Injury related reasons were the lowest recorded (48%) falling significantly from 2007/08 (62%);
- Being *retrenched or dismissed* was mentioned more often in 2008/09 (26%) compared to all earlier years, including 2007/08 (13%);
- Those who *left employment voluntarily* have approximated one in four of those with a non-durable RTW (26% in 2008/09).

Figure 33: Total reasons for not working – Non-durable RTW

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently



Among those who had a non-durable RTW, between 2007/08 and 2008/09 there has been a decline in mention of injury related reasons for not working and an increase in those who had been retrenched or dismissed.

2.6 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.

2.6.1 Development of and involvement in RTW plan

Over half (53%) of injured workers nationally reported they had a RTW plan developed for them (Figure 34). Injured workers who had a durable RTW (56%) were more likely to have a RTW plan developed compared to those with a non-durable RTW (48%) and no RTW (44%).

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

RTW plans were more frequently reported among injured workers in South Australia (65%), Tasmania (59%) and by injured workers covered by Comcare (68%) when compared to the Australian national average. A below average incidence of RTW plans were prepared for those in Queensland (46%) and New Zealand⁹ (36%) and for those covered by Seacare (34%).

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 34: 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.

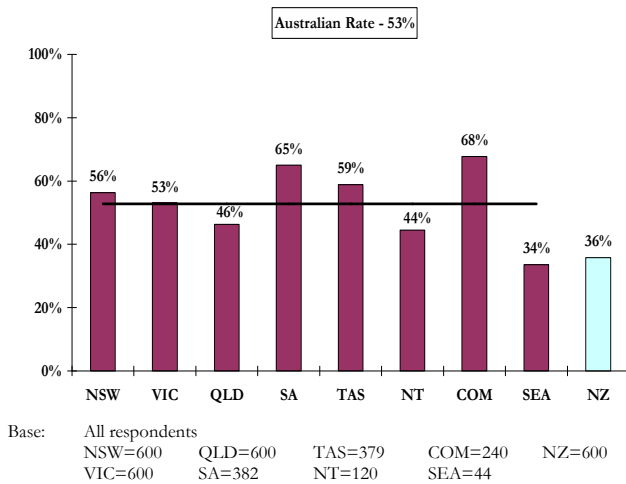
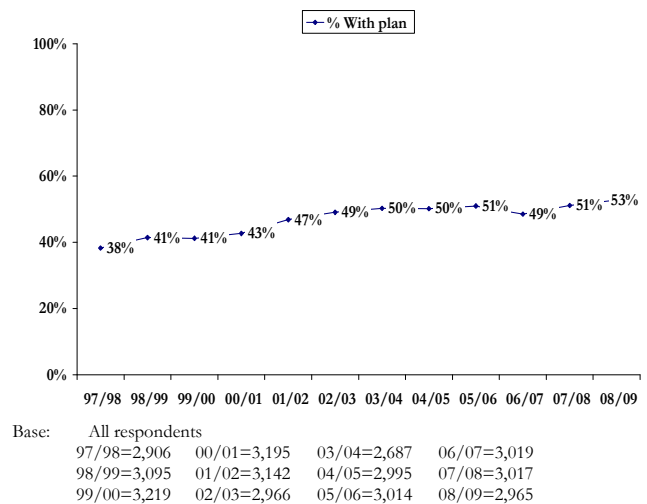


Figure 35: Development of RTW plan (Trend)

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.

⁹ In New Zealand RTW plans are not a requirement for claims under 13 weeks.

Injured workers with a RTW plan were also asked if they had been involved in the development of that plan.¹⁰

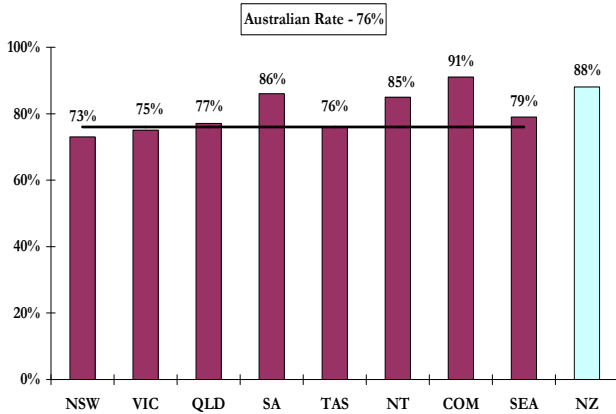
Three in four (76%) injured workers with a RTW plan were involved in development of that plan. Involvement in the development of the plan was higher for those with a durable RTW (80%) compared to non-durable RTW (70%) and no RTW (62%).

Injured workers in New Zealand (88%), South Australia (86%) and covered by Comcare (91%) were more likely to be involved in the development of a RTW plan compared to the Australian average (Figure 36).

Since November 2000, all jurisdictions have been asked about injured worker involvement in RTW plans. The incidence is slightly lower in 2008/09 than some earlier years (Figure 37).

Figure 36: Involvement in RTW plan (Comparative)

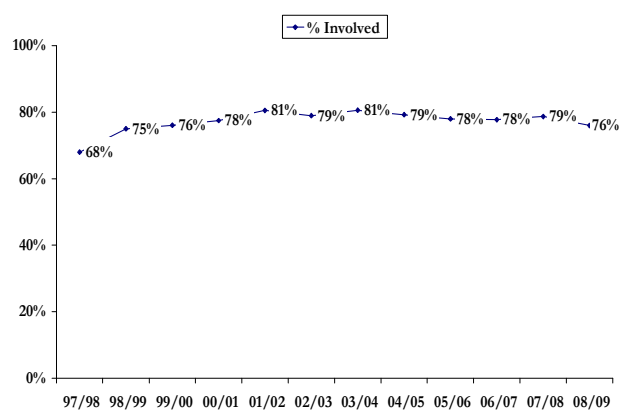
Q13a. Were you involved in development of the return to work plan or a rehabilitation plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=338 QLD=278 TAS=223 COM=163 NZ=215
 VIC=321 SA=248 NT=53 SEA=15
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 37: 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 08/09=1,639

Three in four injured workers with a RTW plan were involved in the development of the plan.

¹⁰ Prior to November 2001, this question was only asked in Victoria, ACT and Comcare.



2.6.2 Helpfulness of RTW plan

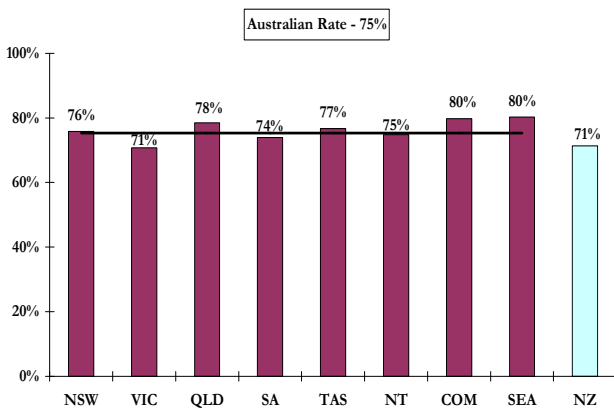
Three in four (75%) injured workers who received a RTW plan considered the plan to be helpful (Figure 38). Injured workers who had a durable RTW (81%) were more likely to consider the plan helpful compared to those with a non-durable RTW (67%) and no RTW (51%).

There was no difference in perceived helpfulness of the RTW plan by jurisdiction compared to the Australian average.

Injured workers involved in the development of the RTW plan were more likely to rate the plan helpful (83%) than those who had no involvement in the development of the plan (51%).

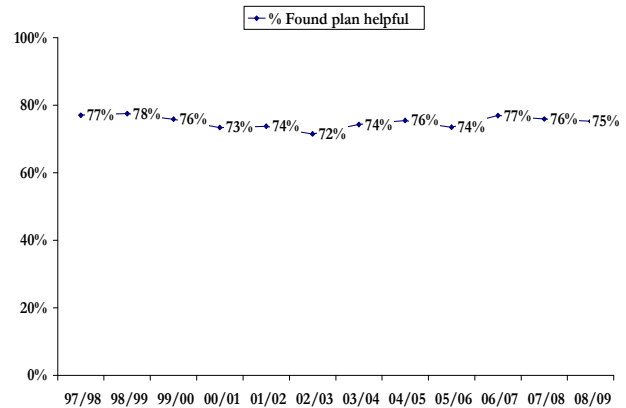
There had been a declining trend from 1997/98 (77%) to 2002/03 (72%) in the proportion of injured workers who received RTW plans and agreed that they were helpful. This has since been turned around (75% in 2008/09).

Figure 38: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Comparative)
 Q15. Was the plan helpful?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=338 QLD=278 TAS=223 COM=163 NZ=215
 VIC=321 SA=248 NT=53 SEA=15
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 39: 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 08/09=1,639

Three in four injured workers who received a RTW plan considered it helpful. The perceived helpfulness was greater among those who had been involved in the development of the RTW plan.

2.6.3 Given help to follow RTW plan

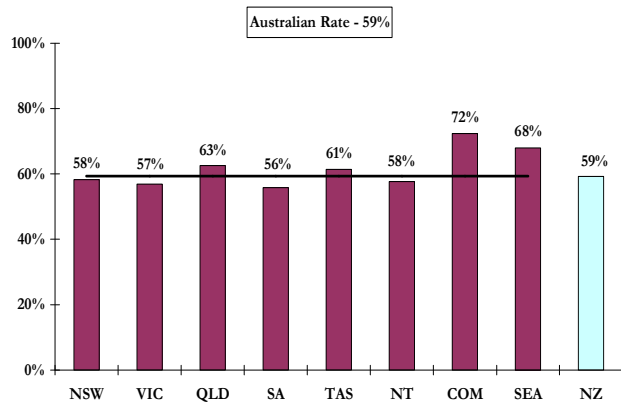
Six in ten (59%) injured workers in Australia who received a RTW plan reported they were given help to do what was recommended in their RTW plan (Figure 40). Injured workers who had a durable RTW (64%) were more likely to report being given help to follow the RTW plan compared to those with a non-durable RTW (50%) and no RTW (39%).

Assistance with following the RTW plan was highest among injured workers covered by Comcare (72%).

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 59% in 2008/09 – the last six years have remained stable (Figure 41).

Figure 40: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Comparative)

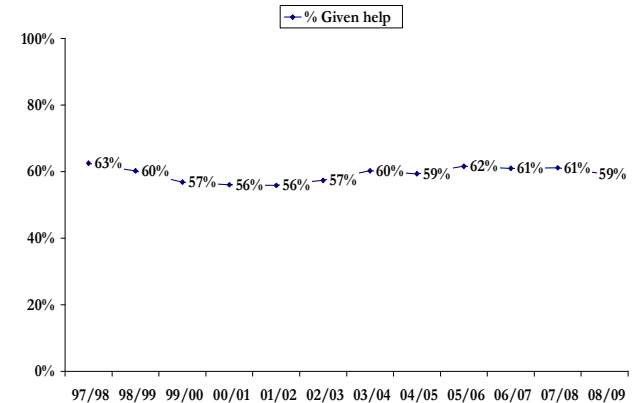
Q16. Were you given help to follow RTW plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=338 QLD=278 TAS=223 COM=163 NZ=215
 VIC=321 SA=248 NT=53 SEA=15
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 41: 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 08/09=1,639

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 (33% net someone within the workplace). More specifically, the person at work who helped the injured worker was mainly either the employer (15%) or a workplace supervisor (13%), followed by the workplace rehabilitation coordinator (9%). Injured workers from New Zealand (21%) and South Australia (22%) were less likely to mention a person from work helping with the RTW plan.

- Injured workers covered by Comcare were more likely to mention the main supervisor at work (21%);
- The workplace rehabilitation coordinator was more likely to be mentioned by those from Queensland (14%), while few from South Australia (5%), New South Wales (6%) and no one from New Zealand indicated they received help from the coordinator.

Help from outside the workplace generally came from the rehabilitation provider (15%). Injured workers covered by Comcare (47%) and from 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 (17%) – in New Zealand the ACC is the equivalent of the insurer in Australian jurisdictions.

<i>Q16b. Who gave you that help? Did anyone else help?</i>										
	AUS (1,639) %	NSW (338) %	VIC (321) %	QLD (278) %	SA (248) %	TAS (223) %	NT (53) %	COM (163) %	SEA (15)* %	NZ (215) %
Someone from work (net)	33	29	36	39	22↓	35	28	40	26	21↓
Rehab provider (outside work)	15	17	9↓	12	23↑	20	20	47↑	35	17
Employer	15	16	13	17	10↓	13	17	14	0	13
Main supervisor at work	13	11	15	13	11	13	8	21↑	6	9
Workplace rehab coordinator (at work)	9	6↓	10	14↑	5↓	11	4	13	20	↓
Someone else	11	9	10	13	11	9	11	26↑	32	9
Doctor	9	12	7	7	9	9	9	17↑	12	7
Insurer	4	4	2	3	4	6↑	6	1	-	17↑
Myself	1	0	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-

Base: Received RTW / rehabilitation plan

* Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

2.6.4 Summary of RTW plans by RTW outcomes

Injured workers with a durable RTW were more likely than those with a non-durable RTW and no RTW to (Table 12):

- Have a RTW plan developed for them;
- Be involved in the development of the plan;
- Consider the RTW plan helpful;
- Be given help to do what was recommended in the plan;
- Have someone from work help to do what was recommended in the plan.

Table 12: Summary of RTW plans by RTW outcomes				
	AUS	Durable RTW	Non-durable RTW	No RTW
	(2,965)	(2,194)	(312)	(459)
	%	%	%	%
Development of RTW plan	53	56↑	48↓	44↓
	(1,639)	(1,257)	(161)	(221)
	%	%	%	%
Involvement in RTW plan	76	80↑	70↓	62↓
Helpfulness of RTW plan	75	81↑	67↓	51↓
Given assistance to follow RTW plan	59	64↑	50↓	39↓
Someone from work helped with RTW plan	33	40↑	22↓	5↓

Base: All respondents; Received RTW/rehabilitation plan

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the respective column comparison.

2.7 RTW timing and duties

2.7.1 Readiness to RTW

In 2008/09, three in four (76%) Australian injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so (Figure 42). Readiness to RTW was higher among those with a durable RTW (79%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (56%).

A higher proportion of injured workers from New South Wales (80%) felt ready to RTW compared to other jurisdictions.

Over the twelve 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 four years have been stable (Figure 43).

Figure 42: Readiness to RTW (Comparative)

Q7. Did you feel ready to return to work?

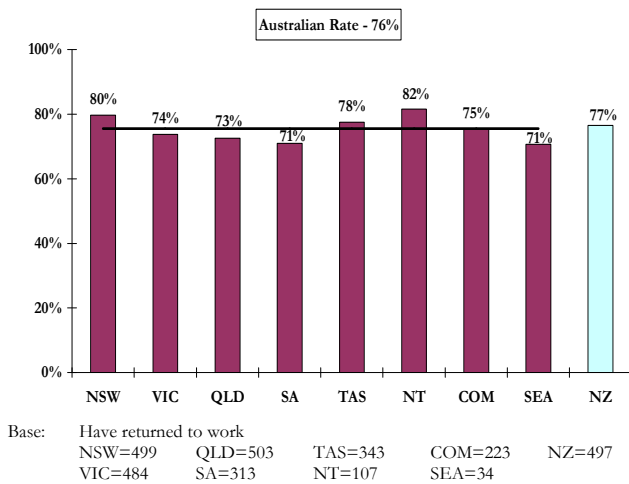
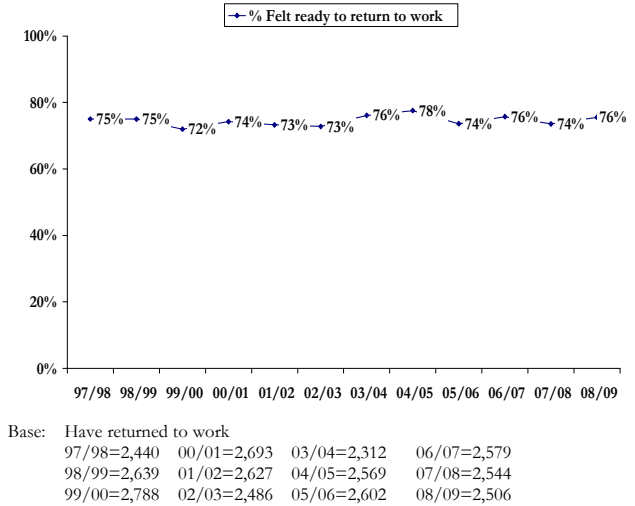


Figure 43: Readiness to RTW (Trend)

Q7. Did you feel ready to return to work?



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

2.7.2 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 (81%) 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 seven years of the Monitor for which this question has been asked. To express this another way, one in five (18%) injured workers who had returned to work did not feel ready as they were *still injured or in pain*.

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 (9%) 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* (4%).

Q7a. What was the reason you did not feel ready to return to work?									
	AUS (547) %	NSW (84) %	VIC (115) %	QLD (127) %	SA (80) %	TAS (68) %	NT (18) %	COM (47) %	NZ (99) %
Still injured/in pain	81	74	79	87	86	91↑	67	73	88
Employer/insurer/ doctor pressure	11	18	10	8	6	7	-	11	3↓
Duties/hours were not appropriate	9	11	11	6	9	3	16	2	6
Mentally unprepared	4	5	3	5	1	1	6	7	-↓
Did not want to jeopardise position/lose job	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Employer promised but did not give alternative duties/ reduced hours	2	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	1
Had to RTW against doctor's advice	1	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Felt it was necessary to aid recovery	3	2	2	4	1	-	6	-	1

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=8).

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

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*.

2.7.3 Suitable duties at RTW

Over four in five (84%) Australian injured workers reported suitable duties at RTW (Figure 44). Conversely, under one in five (15%) considered the duties they were given at RTW *not* suitable. The perception of suitable duties was higher among those with a durable RTW (85%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (74%).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (77%) and from New Zealand (77%) were less likely than the Australian national average to report their duties at RTW were suitable (Figure 44). In 2008/09, a higher proportion of injured workers than ever before reported that their RTW duties were suitable at the time of RTW (Figure 45).

Figure 44: Suitable duties at RTW (Comparative)

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

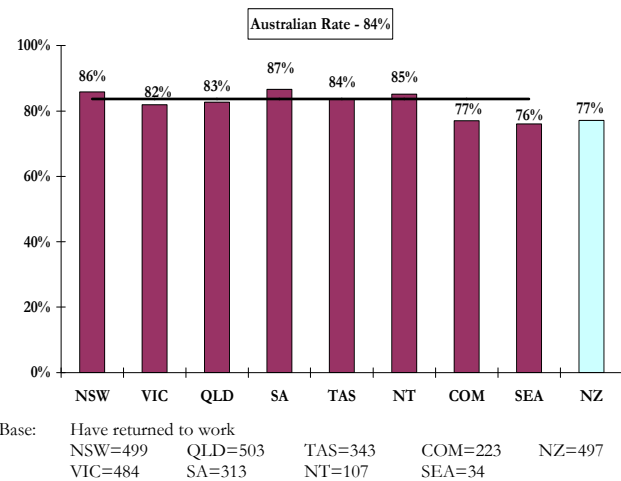
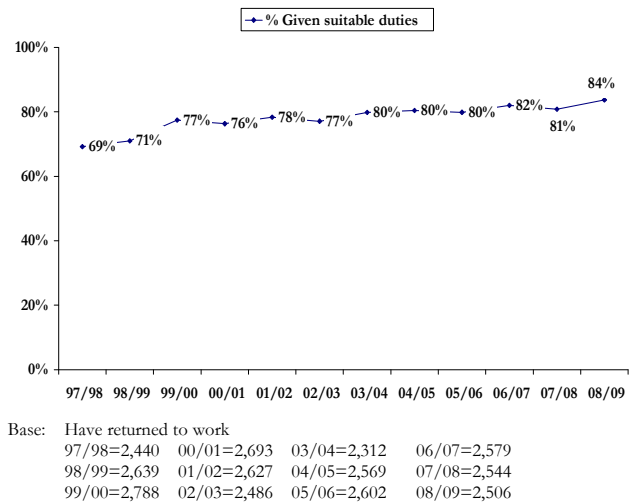


Figure 45: Suitable duties at RTW (Trend)

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



Over four in five injured workers reported suitable duties at the time of RTW. This is higher than previous years.



2.7.4 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.

Seven in ten (72% 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 (Figure 46). This predominantly included lighter duties and no heavy lifting. An increasing proportion in 2008/09 reported a change in duties at RTW (Figure 47).

A change in duties was less common among those injured workers covered by Seacare (27%) and Comcare (61%) and those in New Zealand (55%) compared to the Australian national average (Figure 46). 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.

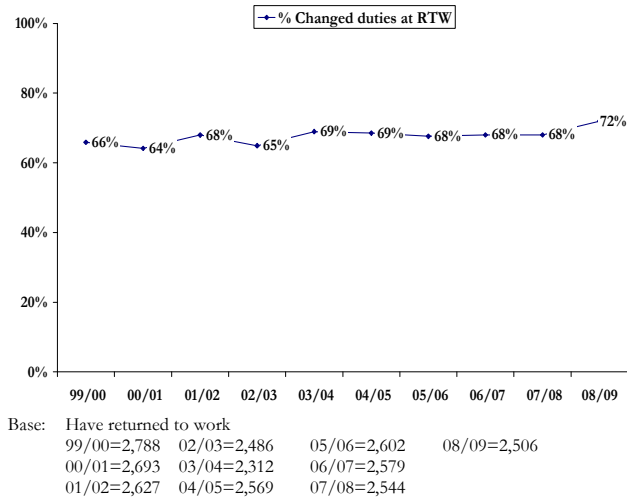
Figure 46: Changed duties at RTW (Comparative)

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



Figure 47: Changed duties at RTW (Trend)

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



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

Three in five (63%) Australian injured workers reported they were given lighter duties at RTW (Figure 48) 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 (44%) and injured workers covered by Comcare (47%) and Seacare (21%) were less likely to report lighter duties.

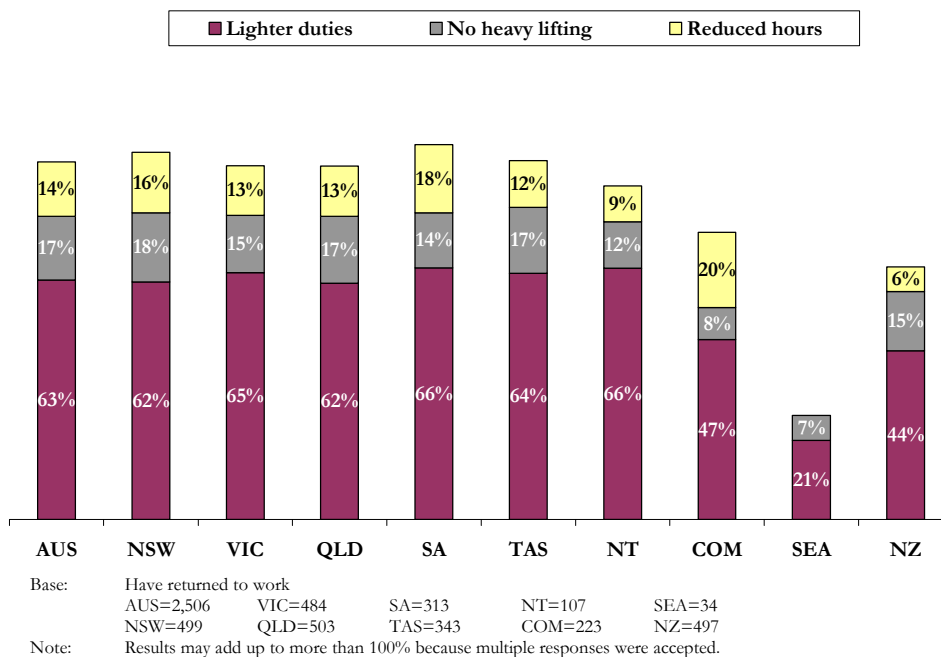
One in five (17%) injured workers in Australia reported being given duties that did not require heavy lifting, with a lower incidence among those workers covered by Comcare (8%) and Seacare (7%).

Reduced hours (which was not included in the “net change in duties at RTW”) was mentioned by over one in ten (14%); and one in five (20%) injured workers covered by Comcare.

Overall, one in five (22%) 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 (67%) and in New Zealand (42%) were more likely to report that their duties had not changed.

Figure 48: Type of change in duties at RTW (Comparative)¹¹

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

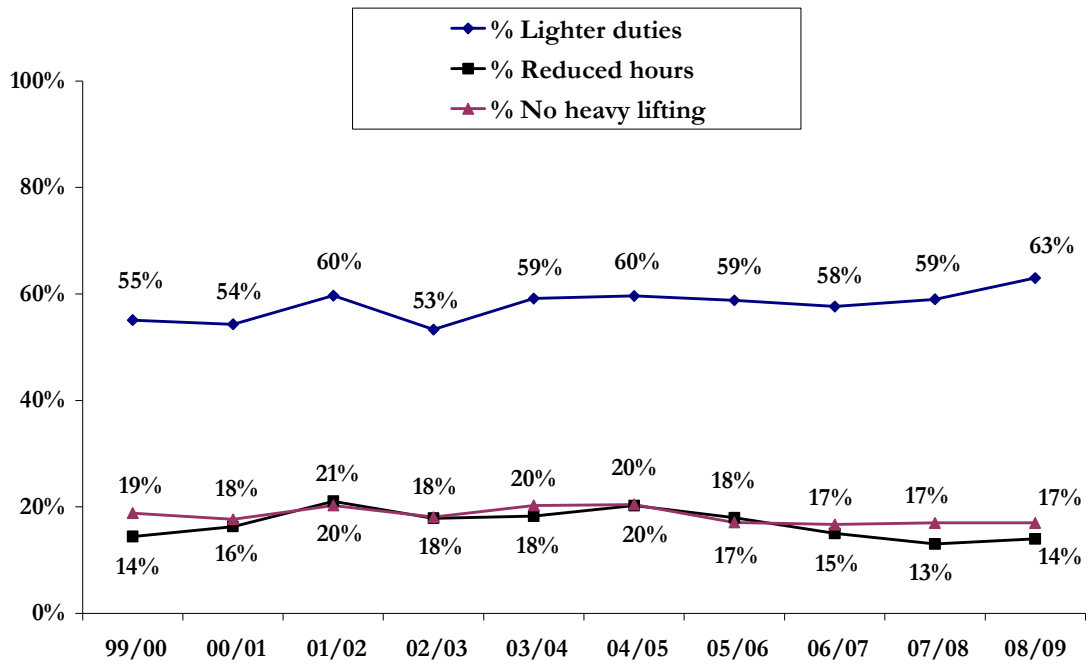


¹¹ This question was introduced in May 1999.

Over a period of stability in the proportion of injured workers who reported lighter duties at the time of RTW, there has been a significant increase in 2008/09 (63% from 59% in 2007/08) (Figure 49). Since 2003/04, there has been a declining trend in the proportion of injured workers reporting reduced hours and no heavy lifting.

Figure 49: 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 08/09=2,506

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

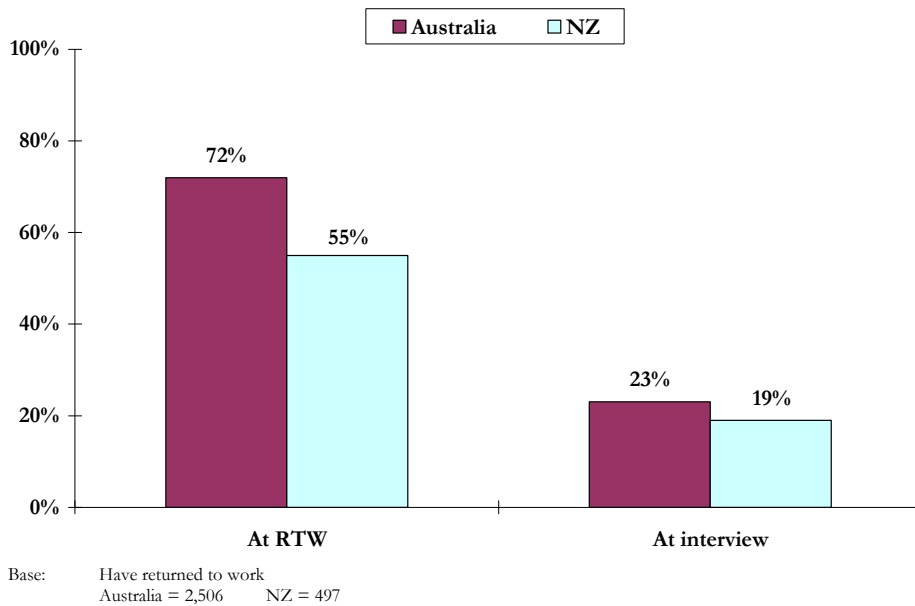


Changes in duties at RTW were generally temporary. Among Australian injured workers, seven in ten (72%) reported a change in duties at the time of RTW, however, at the time of interview (or leaving work for those with a non-durable RTW) this had declined to one in four (23%) (Figure 50). This relativity also applied to injured workers in New Zealand, with 55% reporting a change in duties at return to work (lower when compared to the Australian national average) and declining to 19% at the time of interview.

Figure 50: 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)*



2.8 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 77).

One in four (25%) of all injured workers (or 30% of those who had returned to work) returned to work on a partial basis at the time of RTW (Figure 51). There was no difference between those with a durable RTW (30%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (32%). 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 (0%) and in the Northern Territory (16%) and New Zealand (18%) when compared to the Australian national average.

The partial RTW rate has been stable over the last eight years of the Monitor (Figure 52).

Figure 51: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Comparative)¹²

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

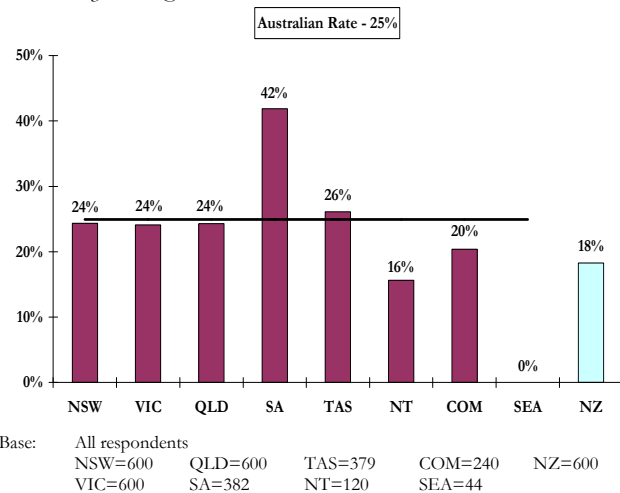
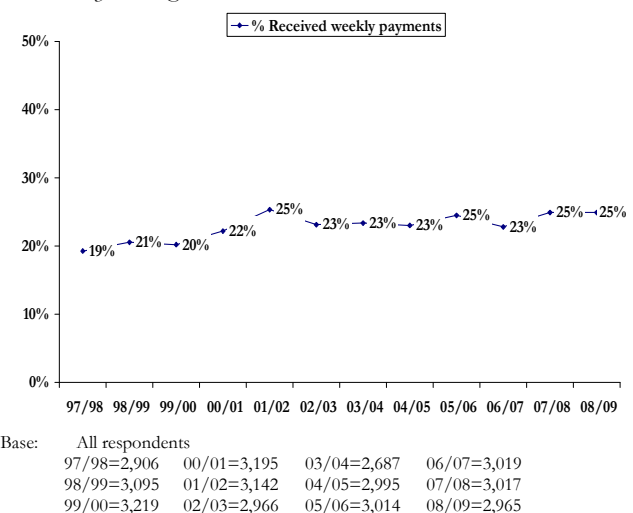


Figure 52: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Trend)

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. This rate has been stable for the last eight years.

¹² Previously reported on the base of “have returned to work”.



2.8.1 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 (53%) returned to their previous hours (Figure 53). There was no difference between those with a durable RTW (53%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (49%).

There was a higher rate of return to previous hours for injured workers in New Zealand (67%) and covered by Seacare (91%), particularly when compared to workers covered by Comcare (41%) and in South Australia (43%).

The proportion of injured workers returning to their pre-injury hours has been stable over the last nine years of the Monitor (Figure 54).

Figure 53: Returned to previous hours (Comparative)

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

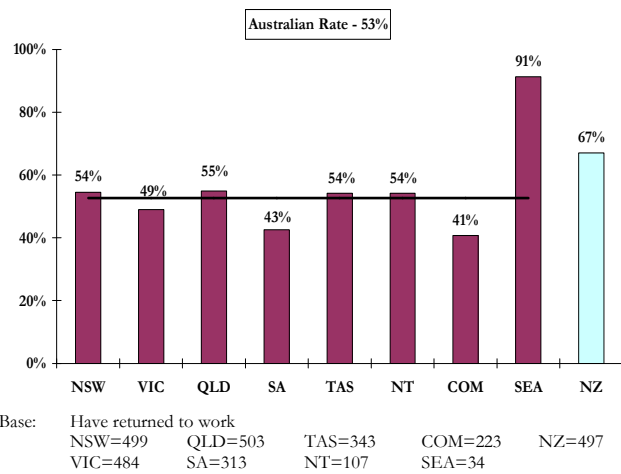
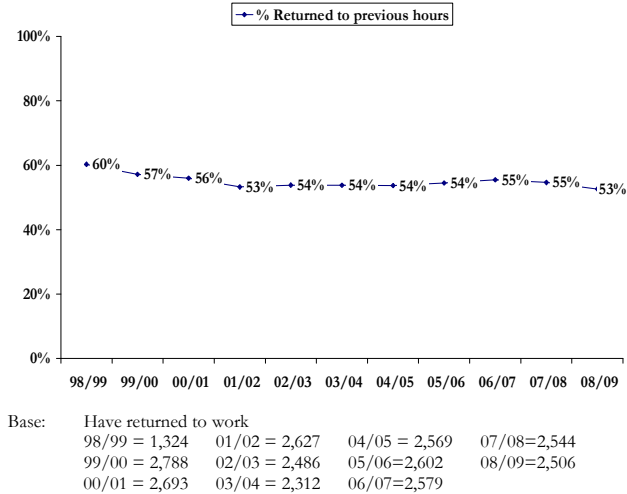


Figure 54: Returned to previous hours (Trend)

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 nine years.

2.9 Summary of RTW process measures at time of RTW by RTW outcome

At the time of RTW, there were notable differences in the experience of those who had a durable RTW compared to a non-durable RTW (Table 14).

Readiness to RTW, the perception of suitable duties at the time of RTW and a change in duties at RTW were higher among those with a durable RTW compared to non-durable RTW. This was irrespective of a similar proportion returning to their previous hours of work (and those who were still receiving weekly payments from the compensation authority in addition to their wages).

	AUS (2,965) %	Durable RTW (2,194) %	Non- durable RTW (312) %
Partial RTW rate at RTW	25	30	32
	(2,506) %	(2,194) %	(312) %
Readiness to RTW	76	79↑	56↓
Suitable duties at RTW	84	85↑	74↓
Changed duties at RTW	72	73↑	66↓
Returned to previous hours	53	53	49

Base: All respondents; have returned to work

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the respective column comparison.

2.10 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.

2.10.1 Who helped injured workers RTW the most?

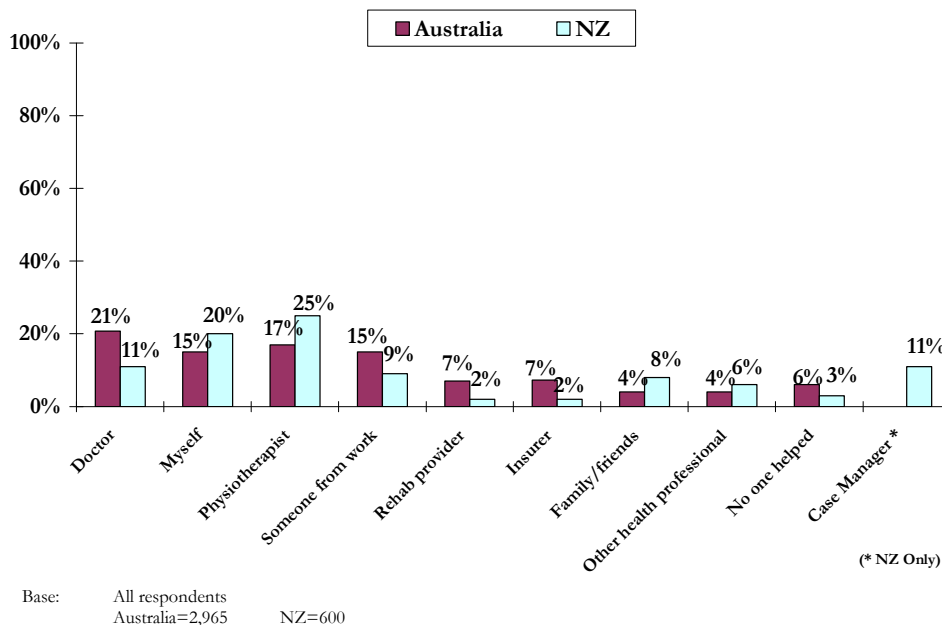
Injured workers were asked who helped them RTW the most (Figure 55).

Doctors were most frequently mentioned by Australian injured workers with one in four injured workers (21%) indicating they *helped the most*. This incidence was higher in New South Wales (25%) and for injured workers covered by Comcare (27%) and lower among those in New Zealand (11%) and Queensland (16%) (Table 15). 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 2.6.3).

In New Zealand, of the professionals, physiotherapists (25%) were most frequently identified as the most help, and more so than for Australian injured workers (17%).

Figure 55: 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?



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.

Under one in five (15%) Australian injured workers identified *themselves* as the person who was most helpful in the RTW process. Injured workers covered by Comcare (8%) were least likely to consider themselves to be the person who helped the most to RTW.

Fifteen percent of Australian injured workers reported *someone from work* helping the most to get them back to work. A lower proportion of injured workers from New Zealand (9%) identified someone from work helping them RTW.

Less than one in ten (7%) Australian injured workers identified *rehabilitation providers* as being the most help in RTW. Injured workers covered by Comcare (14%) were more likely to mention rehabilitation providers as were those in South Australia (17%), Tasmania (14%) and the Northern Territory (14%). Few New Zealand injured workers mentioned rehabilitation providers (2%).

Less than one in ten (7%) injured workers reported their *insurer* or the Workers' Compensation Scheme as being the most help. This was higher in Queensland where 11% identified Q-COMP.

Table 15: 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 (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Doctor	21	25↑	23	16↓	21	22	16	27↑	27	11↓
Physiotherapist	17	19	14	18	11↓	12↓	15	8↓	15	25↑
Myself	15	15	15	15	16	18	18	8↓	18	20↑
Someone from work	15	13	17	14	15	15	14	23↑	16	9↓
Rehabilitation provider	7	7	6	5	17↑	14↑	14↑	14↑	9	2↓
Insurer	7	6	5	11↑	5	3↓	5	5	-	2↓
Family/wife/ husband/friend	4	3	5	4	4	5	5	2	8	8↑
Other health professional	4	3	6↑	5	2	2	6	6	0	6↑
No one helped	6	5	5	8↑	5	6	2	4	5	3↓

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

2.10.2 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 (15%), four in ten (40%) identified their employer. The supervisor was the next most frequently mentioned person (31%), followed by the OH&S officer (12%), a workmate (6%), the HR Department (4%) and a RTW coordinator or rehabilitation officer (4%).

2.10.3 Who helped injured workers RTW the least?

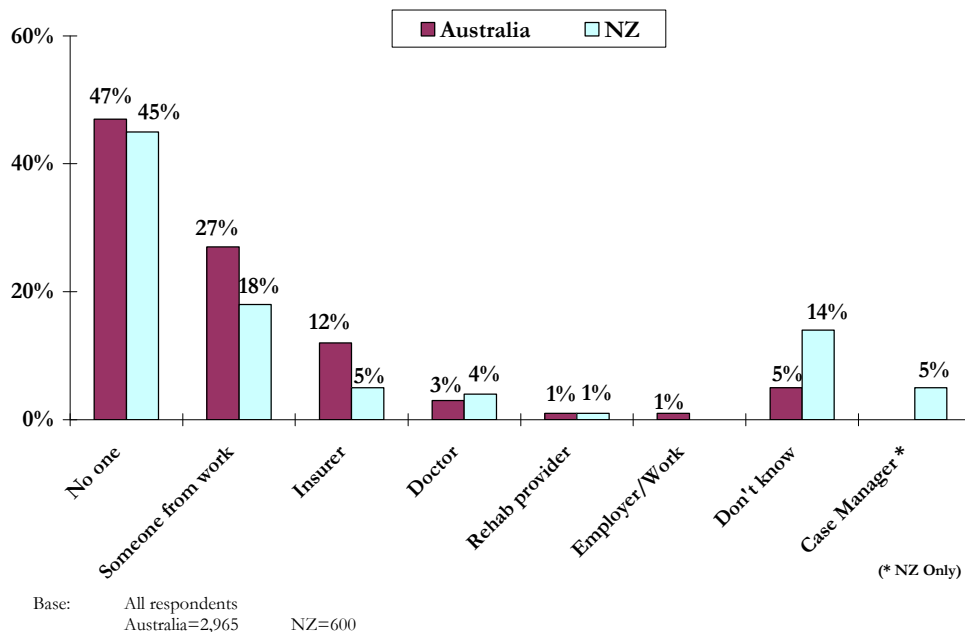
Injured workers had difficulty in identifying a person as being the least helpful, that is, who hindered them in returning to work. When asked who was the least help, five in ten (47%) injured workers in Australia and five in ten (45%) in New Zealand could not identify anybody (Figure 56). When they 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 (18% and 5% respectively).

Figure 56: 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.

2.10.4 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%), two in three (64%) identified their employer. Supervisors were the next most frequently mentioned person (23%). A workmate (4%), OH&S officer (3%) and the HR Department (1%) were seldom mentioned.

Injured workers covered by Comcare who mentioned that someone from work helped the least more often mentioned their supervisor (53%) than their employer (36%).

2.10.5 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.

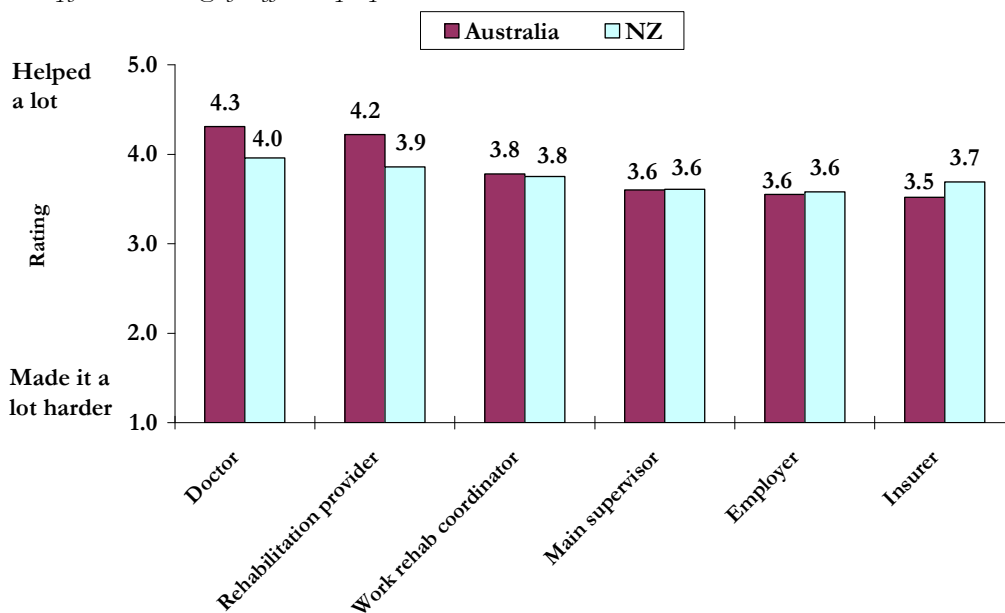
To obtain the prompted rating, injured workers were asked to rate a range of different people who may have helped or hindered getting them back to work. The ratings are reported on a scale of one to five where one is “made it a lot harder” and five is “helped a lot”. A score of three indicates “neither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

On average, all categories of people were rated as helpful by injured workers (Figure 57). 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 (3.5) were rated as less helpful.

Compared to Australian injured workers, New Zealanders gave a lower rating to doctors (4.0) and rehabilitation providers (3.9), but were more favourable in their rating of the insurer (3.7).

Figure 57: Rating of helpfulness to RTW

Q21. Helpfulness rating of different people



Base: All respondents
 Australia=2,965 NZ=600



Injured workers covered by Comcare gave the highest rating for the helpfulness of the doctor (4.5) (Table 16).

In Tasmania, the workplace rehabilitation coordinator (4.0) and the employer (3.7) were rated above the national average.

The insurer was rated below the national average by those in Victoria (3.4) and the Northern Territory (3.3) and above average by those in Queensland (3.7).

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

Table 16: Mean rating of people who helped RTW										
<i>Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people</i>										
	AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Doctor	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2↓	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5↑	4.0	4.0↓
Rehab provider	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0↓	4.2	4.3	3.9↓
Work rehab coordinator	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0↑	3.8	3.9	4.2↑	3.8
Main supervisor	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.6
Insurer	3.5	3.5	3.4↓	3.7↑	3.5	3.5	3.3↓	3.5	3.2	3.7↑
Employer	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7↑	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

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 three in four (77%) injured workers in Australia, while half rated their employer (50%), main supervisor (49%), and insurer (46%) as helpful. Over one in seven injured workers rated their employer (18%) 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 2.10.3).

More specifically:

- 77% 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 covered by Comcare (88%) and fewer from New Zealand (62%) rated the doctor as having helped (Table 17);
- 74% of injured workers rated their **rehabilitation provider** as having helped and 5% thought that they made it harder for them to RTW – fewer from New Zealand (55%) and the Northern Territory (63%) rated the rehabilitation provider as helping the RTW process;
- 57% 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 Tasmania (65%) thought that they had helped;
- 49% 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 (59%) considered that their supervisor had helped them RTW, and fewer from Seacare (31%) thought that supervisor had helped their RTW;
- 50% of injured workers rated their **employer** as having helped and 18% thought that they made it harder for them to RTW – more injured workers covered by Comcare (60%) rated the employer as helping the RTW process;
- 46% of injured workers rated their **insurer** as having helped and 12% considered that the insurer had made it harder for them to RTW – more injured workers from Queensland (52%) and New Zealand (52%) and fewer from Victoria (40%), Northern Territory (33%) and Seacare (27%) thought that the insurer had helped them in the RTW process.

<i>Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people</i>											
Indicative base for jurisdictions		AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Doctor (n=2,880)	Helped	77	81	75	74	78	79	75	88↑	71	62↓
	Made it harder	3	4	2	5	2	3	3	5	13↑	4
Rehab provider (n=2,158)	Helped	74	78	72	73	72	71	63↓	79	75	55↓
	Made it harder	5	4	6	4	4	4	6	7	3	1↓
Work rehab coordinator (n=1,909)	Helped	57	56	56	59	60	65↑	56	64	71	56
	Made it harder	8	8	8	8	7	6	6	9	6	8
Main supervisor (n=2,616)	Helped	49	47	48	51	47	53	55	59↑	31↓	45
	Made it harder	14	14	16	14	16	11	9	17	10	9↓
Employer (n=2,786)	Helped	50	51	47	49	52	54	51	60↑	51	48
	Made it harder	18	19	19	15	17	15	16	16	13	11↓
Insurer (n=2,720)	Helped	46	45	40↓	52↑	43	42	33↓	42	27↓	52↑
	Made it harder	12	12	14	11	10	9	16	13	15	9

Base: All respondents who provided a rating

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

2.10.6 Rating of helpfulness of compensation provider involved in RTW process

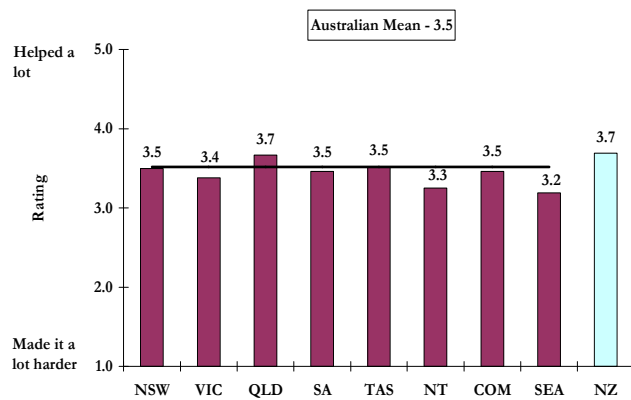
The following section of the report provides a more detailed analysis of injured workers' satisfaction with the services provided by the compensation provider.

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 (3.7) 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 (3.3) and those covered by Seacare (3.2) rated their compensation provider below the national average (Figure 58).

Figure 58: Rating of compensation provider helpfulness (Comparative)

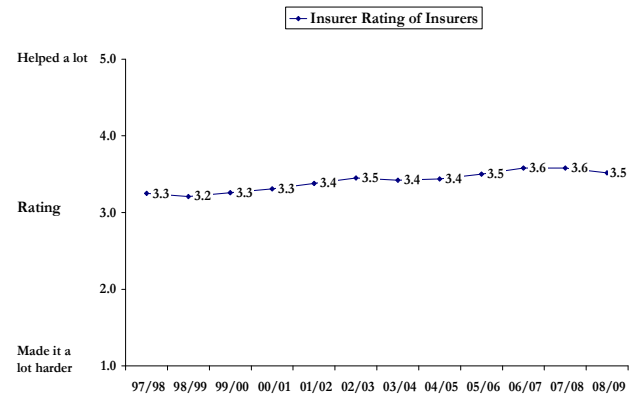
Q21c. Helpfulness rating of compensation provider



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 QLD=600 TAS=379 COM=240 NZ=600
 VIC=600 SA=382 NT=120 SEA=44

Figure 59: 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 08/09=2,965

The helpfulness of Australian compensation providers has improved over the course of the Monitor.

2.10.7 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 including health professionals, those in the workplace and compensation providers (Section 2.10.5):

“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.”

Three in ten (30%) injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder (*a lot or a little*) for them to RTW (Figure 60) – 70% 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 (24%), while a higher proportion of injured workers from Comcare identified someone who made the process harder (36%) 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 (34%) compared to those who had not (26%);
- Did not consider their duties suitable at RTW (46%) compared to those who thought their duties to be suitable (23%);
- Still be receiving weekly compensation benefits at the time of interview (36%) compared to those who were not (28%); and
- Had not returned to work (43%) or had a non-durable RTW (47%) compared to those who had a durable RTW (24%).

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

Figure 60: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Comparative)

Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people

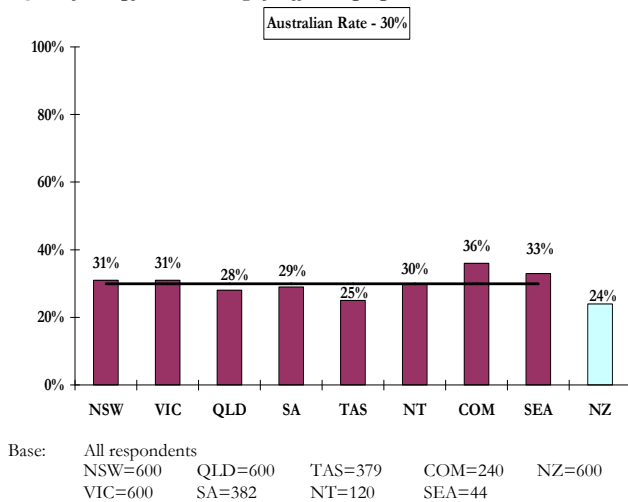
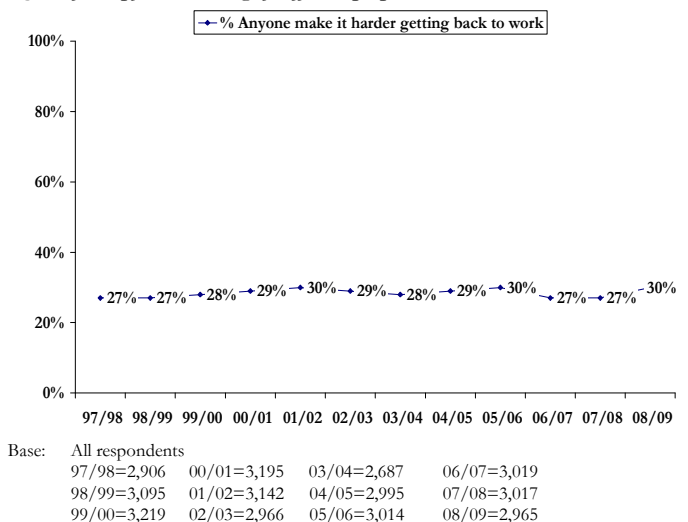


Figure 61: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Trend)

Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people



Three in ten 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 reanalysed 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.

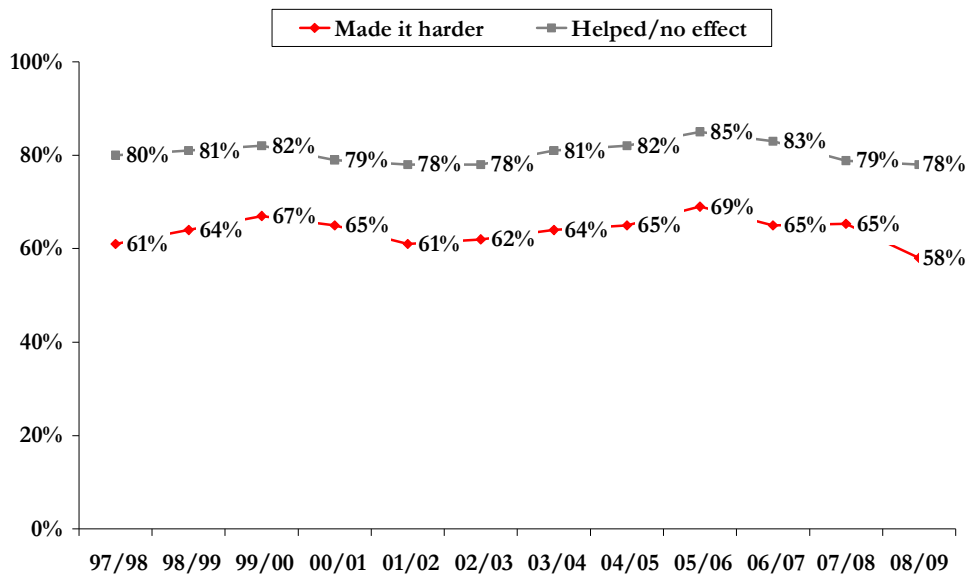
The results indicate a relationship which has been consistent over the twelve years of the Monitor. This provides evidence of the importance of an injury management program for successful RTW.

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were less likely to have a durable RTW (58% in 2008/09) compared to those who either rated those in the RTW process as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (78%) (Figure 62).

Figure 62: 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	08/09=881

People who helped or have no effect on RTW

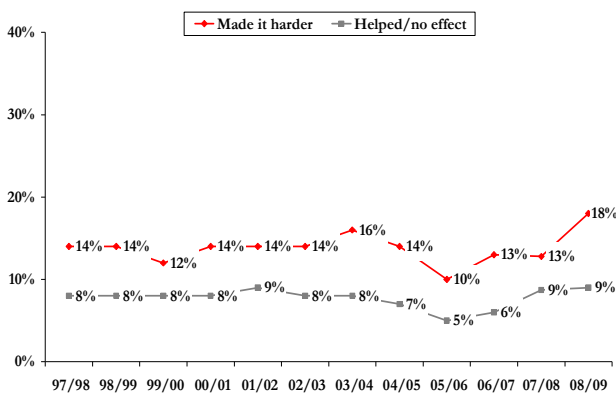
97/98=2,100	99/00=2,257	01/02=2,177	03/04=1,895	05/06=2,111	07/08=2,170
98/99=2,214	00/01=2,235	02/03=2,055	04/05=2,102	06/07=2,183	08/09=2,065

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were more likely to have a non-durable RTW (18%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (9%) (Figure 63).

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder to RTW were more likely to have not returned to work at all (24%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (13%) (Figure 64).

Figure 63: 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

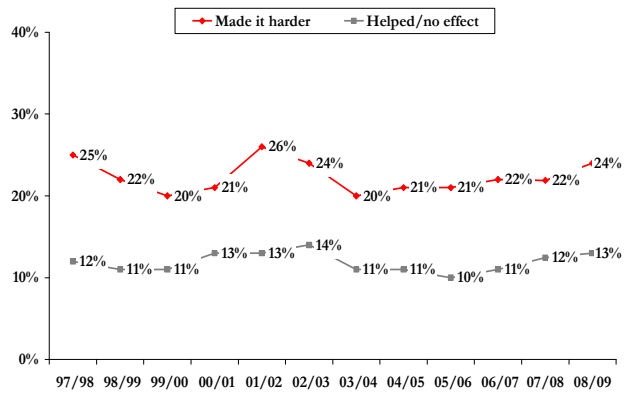


Base: All respondents who provided a rating
 People who made it harder to RTW
 97/98=788 00/01=932 03/04=776 06/07=812
 98/99=865 01/02=939 04/05=872 07/08=827
 99/00=948 02/03=890 05/06=889 08/09=881

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 08/09=2065

Figure 64: 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 08/09=881

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 08/09=2065

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.

2.11 Rating of customer service by insurer/ Scheme

2.11.1 Communication with insurer

Half (48%) of the injured workers had contact with their insurer in the three months prior to the interview (Figure 65). Contact about the RTW Monitor was specifically excluded from the question.

Contact with the insurer was more likely for injured workers in South Australia (56%) and covered by Comcare (61%). Conversely, injured workers covered by Seacare (12%) and those in New Zealand (29%), Tasmania (22%) and Queensland (41%) 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 five in ten injured workers (Figure 66). There has been a significant increase in contact levels between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Figure 65: Contact with insurer in last three months (Comparative)

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

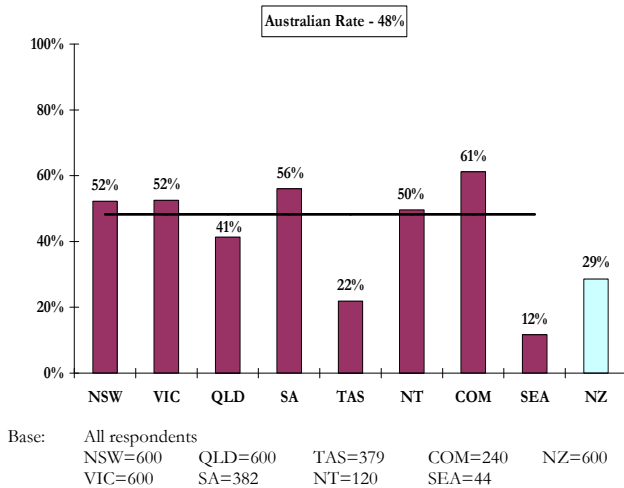
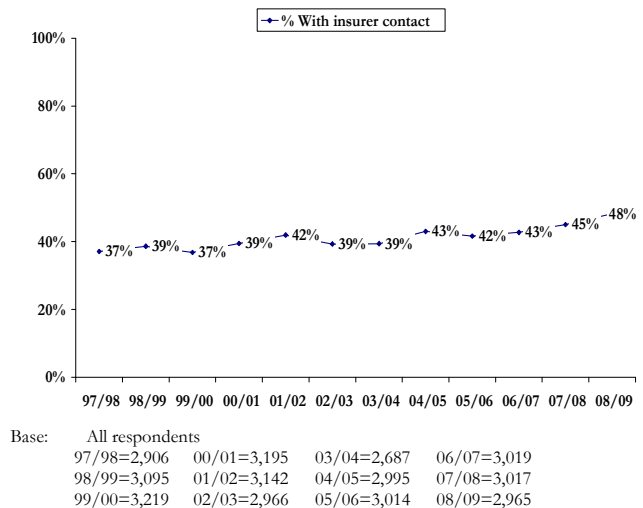


Figure 66: Contact with insurer in last three months (Trend)

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 five in ten injured workers in 2008/09.

2.11.2 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:

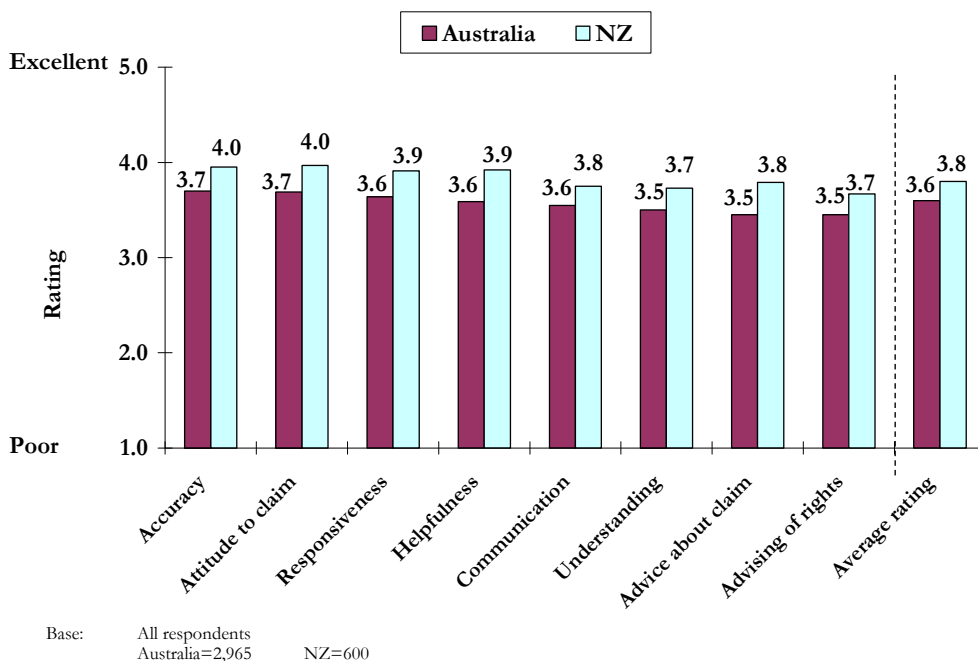
- Attitude of the insurer to claim;
- The way in which the insurer responded to enquiries;
- Providing accurate information;
- Helpfulness;
- Understanding the worker's situation;
- Communicating with worker;
- Giving advice about claim; and
- Giving advice about rights.

All measures of customer service have improved over the course of the Monitor. Injured workers rated their insurers above average (3.0 mean rating) on all dimensions (Figure 67) and were most favourable regarding the attitude to the claim (3.7 – 60% top two box) and the provision of accurate information (3.7 - 59% top two box) and least favourable in terms of giving advice about their rights (3.5 – 52% top two box).

The gains made between 2006/07 and 2007/08 in four of the eight measures have been consolidated in 2008/09: helpfulness (3.7 in 2007/08 and 3.6 in 2008/09); communicating with worker (3.6 in 2007/08 and 3.6 in 2008/09); giving advice about claim (3.5 in 2007/08 and 3.5 in 2008/09); and giving advice about rights (3.5 in 2007/08 and 3.5 in 2008/09). The way in which the insurer responded to enquiries declined between 2007/08 and 2008/09 (3.7 in 2006/07 to 3.8 in 2007/08 and 3.6 in 2008/09).

Figure 67: 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.



The Accident Compensation Corporation in New Zealand (3.8) and WorkCover in Queensland (3.8) were rated, on average, higher than all other jurisdictions across the range of customer service measures (Table 18). Insurers in the Northern Territory (3.2), Victoria (3.4) and injured workers covered by Comcare (3.4) rated their insurer below average for at least four of the eight services.

Table 18: Mean 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										
	AUS (2,965) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (600) %	QLD (600) %	SA (382) %	TAS (379) %	NT (120) %	COM (240) %	SEA (44) %	NZ (600) %
Provision of accurate info	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8↑	3.6	3.8	3.3↓	3.6	3.6	4.0↑
Attitude to claim	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8↑	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.5↓	3.5	4.0↑
Response to enquiries	3.6	3.5	3.5↓	3.9↑	3.6	3.7	3.3↓	3.4↓	3.4	3.9↑
Helpfulness	3.6	3.6	3.4↓	3.8↑	3.5	3.5	3.2↓	3.4↓	3.5	3.9↑
Communication	3.6	3.5	3.3↓	3.8↑	3.4	3.4	2.9↓	3.1↓	3.3	3.8↑
Understanding situation	3.5	3.5	3.3↓	3.7↑	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.3↓	3.5	3.7↑
Advice about claim	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.6↑	3.4	3.4	2.9↓	3.2↓	3.2	3.8↑
Advice about rights	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.9↓	3.6	3.0	3.7↑
Average customer service rating	3.6	3.6	3.4↓	3.8↑	3.5	3.6	3.2↓	3.4↓	3.4	3.8↑

Base: All respondents

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

On average, the ACC in New Zealand and WorkCover Queensland were rated consistently higher on customer service provided by the insurer/Scheme. The insurers in the Northern Territory, Victoria and Comcare were rated, on average, lower across the dimensions of customer service.

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 2008/09 (Figure 69). On average in 2008/09, a more favourable rating was given by injured workers in Queensland (3.8) and New Zealand (3.8) and less favourable by injured workers in the Northern Territory (3.2), Victoria (3.4) and covered by Comcare (3.4) when compared to the Australian national average.

Figure 68: Average service rating for insurer type services (Comparative)

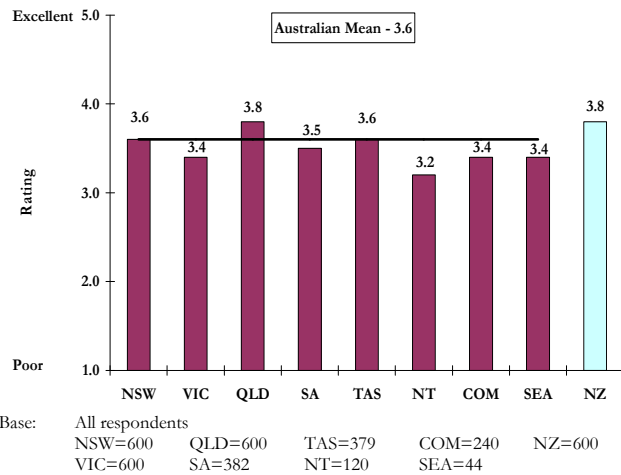
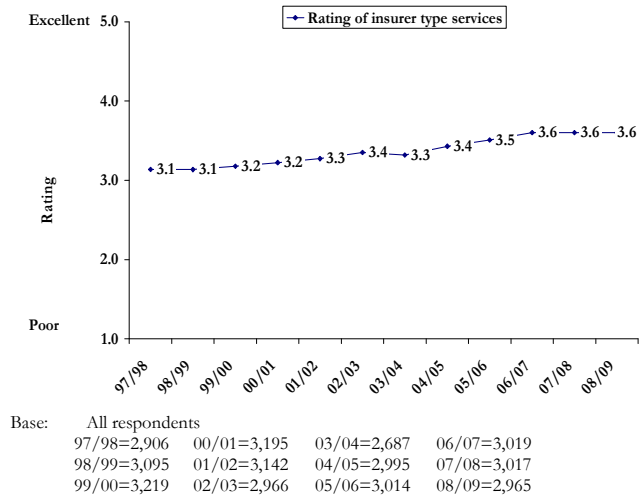


Figure 69: Average service rating for insurer type services (Trend)



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

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

Two in three (64%) injured workers in Australia were male (Figure 70). Pre 2000 closer to seven in ten injured workers were male (Figure 71).

Almost all (96%) injured workers covered by Seacare were male. There was a below average incidence of male injured workers covered by Comcare (32%) and in South Australia (58%).

Figure 70: Proportion of males (Comparative)

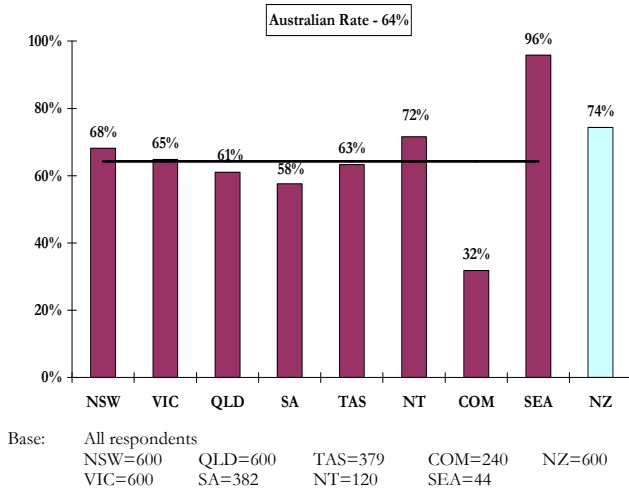
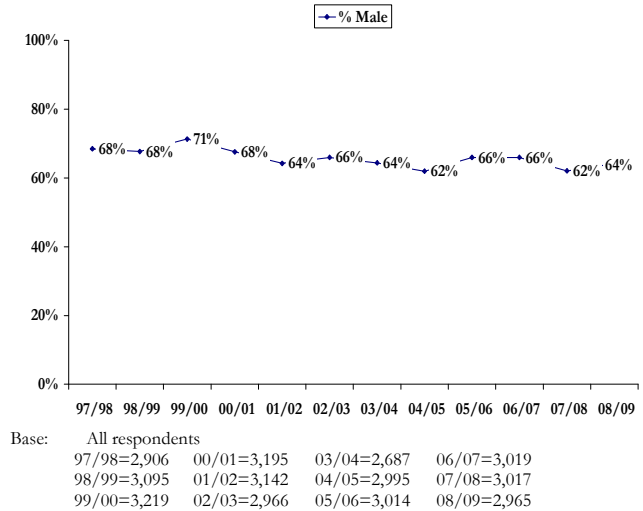


Figure 71: Proportion of males (Trend)



3.1.2 Age

In 2008/09, the average age of injured workers was 42 years of age (Figure 72). On average, injured workers covered by Comcare (46 years) and Seacare (47 years) and in South Australia (44 years) were older.

The average age of injured workers has remained relatively stable since the commencement of the Monitor (Figure 73).

Figure 72: Mean age of injured workers (Comparative)

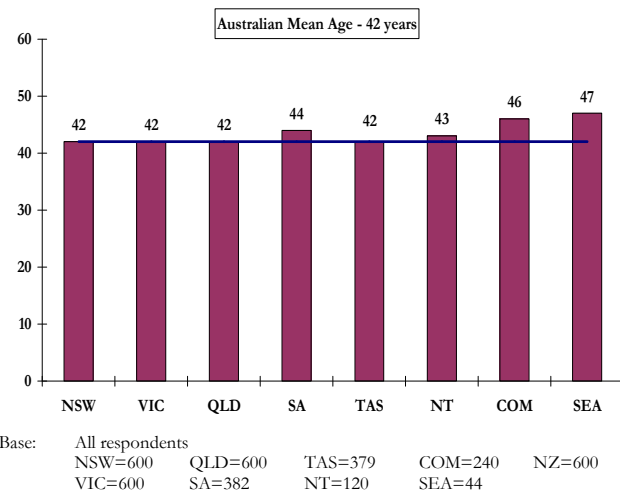
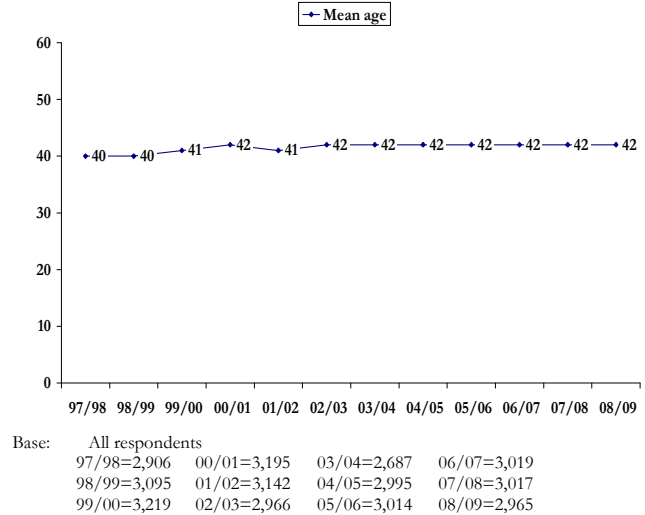


Figure 73: Mean age of injured workers (Trend)



3.1.3 Language spoken at home

Less than one in ten (7%) 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 – 2%) and Asian (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian – 3%).

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

One in ten Victorians (10%) who spoke a language other than English needed the assistance of 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 wave¹³). In 2008/09, an average of 55 days compensation was paid to injured workers (Figure 74). Injured workers covered by Seacare (99 days), followed by injured workers in South Australia (68 days) and Victoria (66 days) had the highest average number of paid compensation days. Injured workers in Tasmania (37 days) and New South Wales (51 days) had the lowest average number of paid compensation days.

The national average number of days compensation paid has varied over the twelve years of the Monitor although was the same as the previous year (Figure 75).

Figure 74: Mean number of days compensation paid (Comparative)

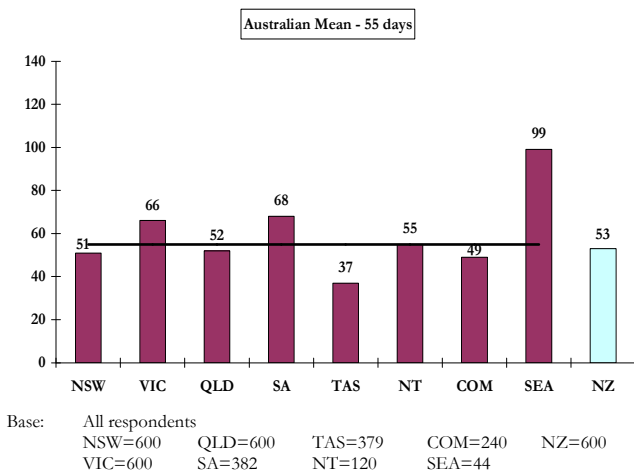
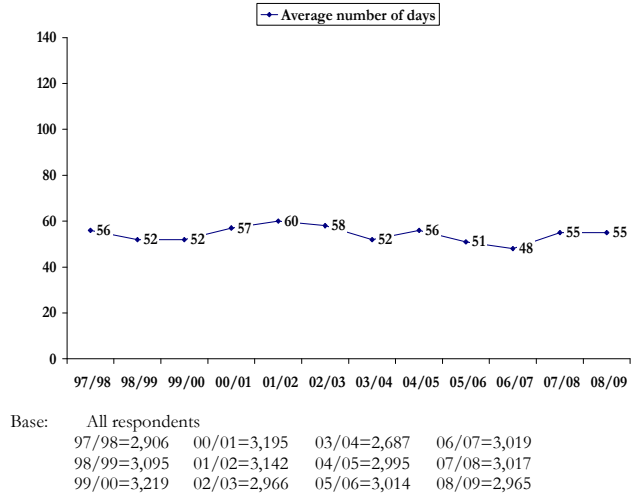


Figure 75: Mean number of days compensation paid (Trend)



In 2008/09 the average claim cost paid for Australian injured workers for the first six to eight months of their claim was \$13,336 (Figure 76). The average claim cost was highest among injured workers covered by Seacare (\$23,783), Comcare (\$19,397) and the Northern Territory (\$18,559). The average claim cost has continued to increase since the start of the Monitor and has increased significantly since 2007/08 (Figure 77).

Figure 76: Mean claim cost (Comparative)

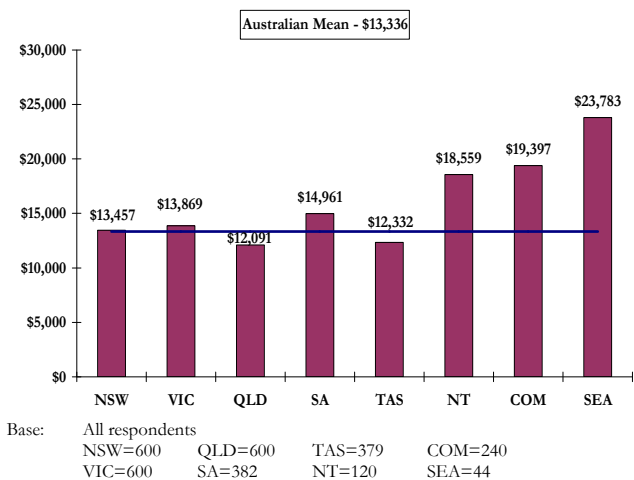
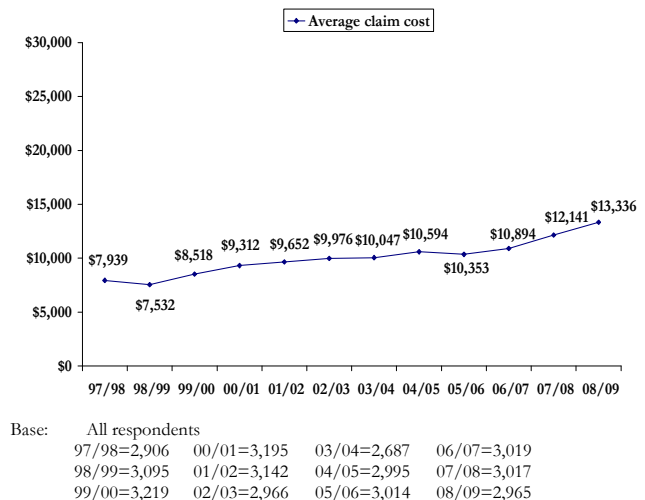


Figure 77: Mean claim cost (Trend)



¹³ New South Wales extended data for the May wave is as at 28 February 2008

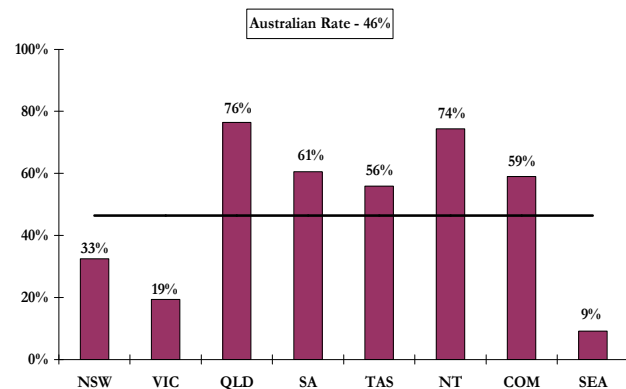


3.3 Rehabilitation participation and cost

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 2008/09, half of injured workers (46%) participated in rehabilitation. There were substantial differences in the rate of rehabilitation participation between jurisdictions (Figure 78). Highest rates of rehabilitation participation were in the Northern Territory (74%), Queensland (76%) and South Australia (61%). The lowest rates of rehabilitation participation were for injured workers in Victoria (19%) and covered by Seacare (9%).

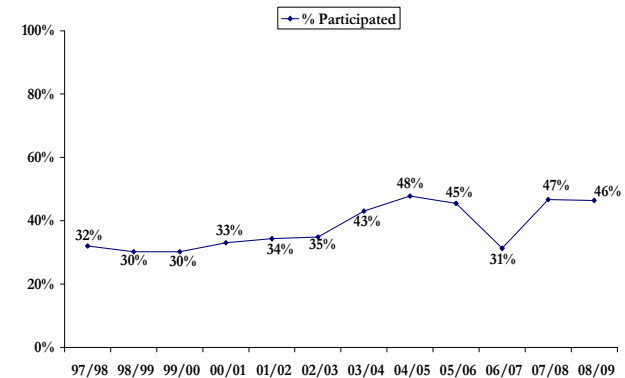
With the exception of a decline in 2006/07, over the last five years, close to half of injured workers had participated in rehabilitation (Figure 79).

Figure 78: Participation in rehabilitation (Comparative)



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=600 QLD=600 SA=382 TAS=379 NT=120 COM=240 SEA=44

Figure 79: Participation in rehabilitation (Trend)

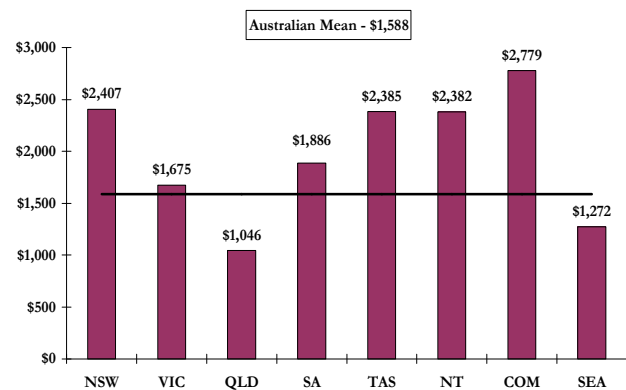


Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 98/99=3,095 99/00=3,219 00/01=3,195 01/02=3,142 02/03=2,966 03/04=2,687 04/05=2,995 05/06=3,014 06/07=3,019 07/08=3,017 08/09=2,965

The average cost of rehabilitation¹⁴ in 2007/08 was \$1,588 – 46% reported a rehabilitation cost. There was variation in the average cost of rehabilitation across jurisdictions. The highest costs were for Comcare (\$2,779) and in New South Wales (\$2,407) and the lowest cost was in Queensland (\$1,046).

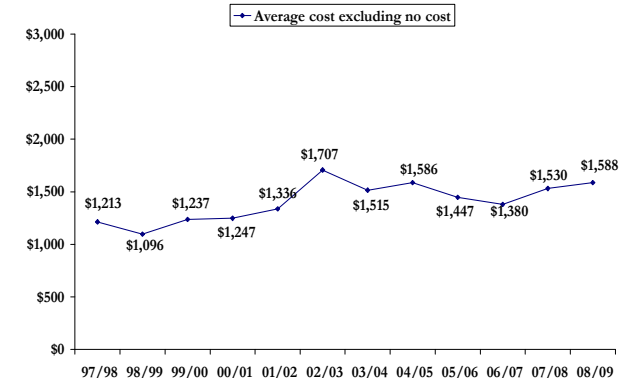
The average cost of rehabilitation declined from 2002/03 to 2006/07, increased significantly in 2007/08 and was similar in 2008/09 (Figure 81).

Figure 80: Mean rehabilitation costs (Comparative)



Base: Participated in rehabilitation
 NSW=198 VIC=114 QLD=456 SA=233 TAS=212 NT=89 COM=142 SEA=4
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 81: 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 08/09=1,450

¹⁴ This measure is calculated only from cases where there was a rehabilitation cost claim.

3.4 Enterprise size

Three in five (59%) Australian injured workers were employed in large enterprises (where remuneration was over \$2,000,000) – over one quarter (28%) in enterprises where remuneration was \$20,000,000 and over. One in four (24%) 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 (28%) and New South Wales (24%) came from smaller enterprises compared to the Australian average. New Zealand (40%) and New South Wales (46%) were also under represented among large sized enterprises when compared to the national incidence (59%) and also South Australia (53%).

A higher proportion of injured workers in Victoria (65%), Queensland (67%) and covered by Comcare (100%) and Seacare (100%) came from large enterprises when compared to the national average.

Enterprise size	AUS (2,740) %	NSW (498) %	VIC (592) %	QLD (587) %	SA (381) %	TAS (379) %	NT (26) %	COM (240) %	SEA (37) %	NZ (570) %
Small (less than \$350,000 remuneration)	17	24↑	15	13↓	19	18	8	0↓	0↓	28↑
Medium (\$350,000 - \$2,000,000 remuneration)	24	31↑	20	20	28	28	38	0↓	0↓	32↑
Large (over \$2,000,000 remuneration)	59	46↓	65↑	67↑	53↓	54	54	100↑	100↑	40↓
\$20,000,000 and over	28	16↓	35↑	34↑	12↓	13↓	23	100↑	100↑	6↓

Base: Information supplied

Note: A ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

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 2007/08 are included.

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

Table 20: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2008/09	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2007/08	
RTW Outcomes						
Q3. RTW rate	1	83%	TAS, COM	-	-	
Q3/8. Durable RTW	2	72%	TAS, NT, COM	-	Decrease	
Q3/8. Non-durable RTW	3	11%	-	COM, NZ	-	
Q8a. Mean length of durable RTW	4	141 days	TAS, COM	SA	-	
Q10. Mean length of non-durable RTW	5	84 days	-	-	-	
Q19. Compensation payment status at time of interview	6	23%	VIC, SA	QLD, TAS, NZ	-	
Q20a/b. Full RTW (employment as the only source of income at time of interview)	9	59%	TAS	SA	Decrease	
Q20a/b. Partial RTW (employment plus any other source of income at time of interview)	9	14%	SA, COM	-	-	
Q20a/b. Non-durable RTW / no RTW (income from all sources except employment)	9	27%	-	TAS, COM	-	
Q11. Continuity of employer	12	84%	COM	NT	Increase	
Q12. Returning to same duties at time of interview	13	77%	SEA	SA, NT	Increase	
RTW Process Measures						
Workplace Culture						
Q34c. Work importance (mean rating)	15	4.5	-	NZ	Increase	
Q34d. Work satisfaction (mean rating)	15	4.3	-	NT, COM, NZ	Increase	
Q34e. Valued at work (mean rating)	15	3.9	NZ	SEA	Increase	
Q34a. Management help RTW (mean rating)	15	3.6	TAS, NZ	VIC	-	

Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2008/09	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2007/08
Q34f. Clear RTW policies and procedures (mean rating)	15	3.6	COM	SA	-
Q34b. OH&S spending (mean rating)	15	3.6	NZ	VIC	-
Making a claim					
Q1. Ease of getting information to put in a claim	19	81%	QLD, SEA, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	-
Q2a. Ease of putting in a claim (simple)	20	74%	QLD, TAS, NZ	VIC, SA, COM	-
Q1a. Previous claim experience	21	37%	QLD, SA, TAS, COM, NZ	NSW	-
Q1b. Previous lost time claim	22	31%	TAS, COM, SEA, NZ	NSW	-
Reasons for RTW & not working					
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Recovered from injury	23	50%	-	SA	-
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Wanted to RTW	23	27%	VIC, COM	-	Decrease
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net economic need	23	31%	NZ	COM	-
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net assisted by RTW process	23	10%	-	NZ	-
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net health provider influence	23	9%	NT	NZ	-
Q4a/b. Total reasons for RTW: Net WorkCover/employer pressure	23	6%	SEA	-	-
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net injury related	25	65%	-	-	Decrease
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net left employment	25	20%	-	-	-
Q9a/b. Total reasons for not working: Net retrenched/dismissed	25	18%	-	SA	-
RTW plan					
Q13. Development of a RTW plan	30	53%	SA, TAS, COM	QLD, SEA, NZ	-
Q13a. Involvement in the development of RTW plan	30	76%	SA, COM, NZ	-	-
Q15. Helpfulness of the RTW plan	32	75%	-	-	-

Table 20: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2008/09	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2007/08	
Q16. Assistance given to follow the RTW plan	33	59%	COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Rehab provider	33	15%	SA, COM	VIC	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Employer	15	15%	-	SA	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Main supervisor	33	13%	COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Workplace rehab coordinator	33	9%	QLD	NSW, SA, NZ	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Someone else	33	11%	COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Doctor	33	9%	COM	-	-	
Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan: Insurer	33	4%	TAS, NZ	-	-	
RTW						
Q7. Readiness to RTW	36	76%	NSW	-	-	
Q5. Suitable duties at RTW	38	84%	-	COM, NZ	Increase	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: Lighter duties	39	63%	-	COM, SEA, NZ	Increase	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: Reduced hours	39	14%	COM	SEA, NZ	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: No heavy lifting	39	17%	-	COM, SEA	-	
Q5a. Change in duties at RTW: No change	39	22%	SEA, NZ	SA	-	
Q5a. Changed duties at RTW	39	72%	-	COM, SEA, NZ	Increase	
Q6. Partial RTW at RTW	43	25%	SA	NT, SEA, NZ	-	
Q6a. Return to previous hours	44	53%	SEA, NZ	SA, COM	-	
Rating of help to RTW						
Q28. Most assistance: Doctor	46	21%	NSW, COM	QLD, NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Myself	46	15%	NZ	COM	Increase	
Q28. Most assistance: Someone from work	46	15%	COM	NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Physiotherapist	46	17%	NZ	SA, TAS, COM	-	

Table 20: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2008/09	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2007/08	
Q28. Most assistance: Rehab provider	46	7%	SA, TAS, NT, COM	NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: No one	46	6%	QLD	NZ	-	
Q28. Most assistance: Insurer	46	7%	QLD	TAS, NZ	-	
Q29. Least assistance: No one	48	47%	TAS	COM	Increase	
Q29. Least assistance: Someone from work	48	27%	VIC, COM	NZ	-	
Q29. Least assistance: Insurer	48	12%	-	TAS, SEA, NZ	-	
Q29. Least assistance: Doctor	48	3%	-	-	-	
Q29. Least assistance: Rehab provider	48	1%	SA, TAS, COM, SEA	-	-	
Rating of helpfulness of people in RTW						
Q21. Doctor (mean rating)	49	4.3	COM	QLD, NZ	-	
Q21. Rehabilitation provider (mean rating)	49	4.2	-	NT, NZ	-	
Q21. Work rehabilitation coordinator (mean rating)	49	3.8	TAS, SEA	-	-	
Q21. Main supervisor (mean rating)	49	3.6	-	-	-	
Q21. Employer (mean rating)	49	3.6	TAS	-	-	
Q21. Insurer (mean rating)	49	3.5	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT	-	
Rating of insurer's customer service						
Q26. Contact with insurer in the last three months	57	48%	SA, COM	QLD, TAS, SEA, NZ	Increase	
Q27. Attitude to claim (mean rating)	58	3.7	QLD, NZ	COM	-	
Q27. Accuracy of information (mean rating)	58	3.7	QLD, NZ	NT	-	
Q27. Response to enquiries (mean rating)	58	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	Decrease	
Q27. Helpfulness (mean rating)	58	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	-	
Q27. Understanding of worker's situation (mean rating)	58	3.5	QLD, NZ	VIC, COM	-	
Q27. Communicating with worker (mean rating)	58	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	-	

Table 20: Summary of differences						
Indicator	Page ref.	AUS result 2008/09	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	Comparison with 2007/08	
Q27. Giving advice about claim (mean rating)	58	3.5	QLD, NZ	NT, COM	-	
Q27. Giving advice about rights (mean rating)	58	3.5	NZ	NT	-	
Q27. Average customer service (mean rating)	58	3.6	QLD, NZ	VIC, NT, COM	-	
Demographics						
Gender: proportion of males	61	64%	SEA	SA, COM	-	
Mean age	62	42 years	SA, COM, SEA	-	-	
Language other than English spoken at home	62	7%	NSW, VIC	QLD, SA, TAS	-	
Mean number of days compensation paid	63	55 days	VIC, SA, SEA	NSW, TAS	-	
Mean claim cost	63	\$13,336	NT, COM, SEA	-	Increase	
Participation in rehabilitation	64	46%	QLD, SA, TAS, NT, COM	NSW, VIC, SEA	-	
Mean cost of rehabilitation (excluding no cost)	64	\$1,588	NSW, SA	QLD	-	

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 2008 (February to April 2008 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the November 2008 survey wave;
- Had submitted a claim between September and October 2008 (August to October 2008 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the May 2009 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 21 and Table 22.

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	3,649	2	10,947	301	36.37
VIC	2,408	2	7,224	300	24.08
QLD	3,488	2	10,464	301	34.76
SA	516	2	1,548	200	7.74
TAS	396	3	792	182	4.35
NT	249	3	498	61	8.16
COM	199	3	398	102	3.90
SEA	38	6	38	23	1.65
NZ	1,804	2	5,412	300	18.04

	Population	Data collection period (months)	Estimated population over a 6 month period	Interview Sample size	Recommended weights
NSW	3,583	2	10,749	299	35.95
VIC	2,716	2	8,148	300	27.16
QLD	3,386	2	10,158	299	33.97
SA	506	2	1,518	182	8.34
TAS	428	3	856	197	4.35
NT	289	3	578	59	9.80
COM	236	3	472	138	3.42
SEA	42	6	42	21	2.00
NZ	1,935	2	5,805	300	19.35

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

For example, if 50% of the 2008/09 sample of 2,965 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
2,965	± 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 2008/09. 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 not 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 2008 and May 2009 wave samples were drawn for each of the jurisdictions are included in Table 24 and Table 25.

	NSW (3,646) Mean	VIC (2,408) Mean	QLD (3,488) Mean	SA (516) Mean	TAS (396) Mean	NT (249) Mean	COM (165)** Mean	SEA (38) Mean	NZ (1,804) Mean
Age	40	43	40	41	39	39	45	46	40
Days compensation	48	62	48	66	39	49	46	132	66
Cost per claim	\$12,546	\$11,669	\$10,694	\$15,727	\$13,815	\$14,683	\$17,436	\$15,055	\$14,321
Rehab. cost	\$2,509*	\$1,764*	\$702	\$1,870*	\$2,410*	\$1,972*	\$2,552*	\$1,638*	\$1,185*

* Excludes no cost

** Population excluding refusals (Actual population was 199)

	NSW (3,583) Mean	VIC (2,716) Mean	QLD (3,386) Mean	SA (506) Mean	TAS (428) Mean	NT (289) Mean	COM (200)** Mean	SEA (40)*** Mean	NZ (1,935) Mean
Age	40	43	40	41	39	40	45	46	40
Days compensation	44	61	51	68	40	46	46	56	68
Cost per claim	\$11,715	\$11,626	\$12,204	\$16,525	\$12,278	\$17,330	\$18,903	\$21,922	\$15,306
Rehab. cost	\$2,006*	\$1,769*	\$770	\$1,796*	\$2,234*	\$2,770*	\$2,856*	\$703*	\$1,151*

* Excludes no cost

** Population excluding refusals (Actual population was 236)

*** Population excluding refusals (Actual population was 42)

Appendix B: Field Report (2008/09)¹⁵

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 26). The response rate where contacts were made was 73%.

	AUS (4,072) %	NSW (828) %	VIC (855) %	QLD (790) %	SA (571) %	TAS (523) %	NT (175) %	COM (362) %	SEA (49) %	NZ (781) %
Response rates	73	72	70	76	67	72	69	85	90	77

Base: Total contacts made

The response rate for the national sample was 47% (Table 27). Of the total sample, one in four (18%) refused to participate in the interview. Inactive or invalid telephone numbers accounted for over one in eight numbers supplied (13%). One in five (22%) injured workers were not interviewed because the quotas were filled (that is, the target number of interviews for the jurisdiction was reached).

	n	%
Interviews	2,965	47
Refusals	1,107	18
Total contacts made	4,072	64
Remaining "active" telephone numbers	1,410	22
Unused telephone numbers	9	0
"Inactive" telephone numbers	841	13
Total sample provided	6,323	

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).

¹⁵ The field report for November 2008 is included in the mid (financial) year report to jurisdictions.

Table 28: Field report for 2008/09 (Comparative)									
	NSW (1,350) %	VIC (1,187) %	QLD (1,362) %	SA (795) %	TAS (729) %	NT (464) %	COM (362) %	SEA (74) %	NZ (1,383) %
Interviews	44	51	44	48	52	26	66	59	43
Refusals	17	21	14	24	20	12	11	7	13
Total contacts made	61	72	58	72	72	38	78	66	56
Remaining "active" numbers	24	18	30	17	11	41	15	18	27
Unused numbers	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
"Inactive" numbers	15	10	13	11	17	21	8	16	17

Base: Total sample provided

Appendix C: Terms and Definitions

Table 29: 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 2008/09 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 2008/09. The Australian Capital Territory has not participated since 2003/04.

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.

4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 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”¹⁶.

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 2.7.4).
 - Responses to this question were coded into three broad categories including “lighter duties”, “no heavy lifting” or “reduced hours”.

¹⁶ In previous reports the wording “*alternative duties*” has been used.

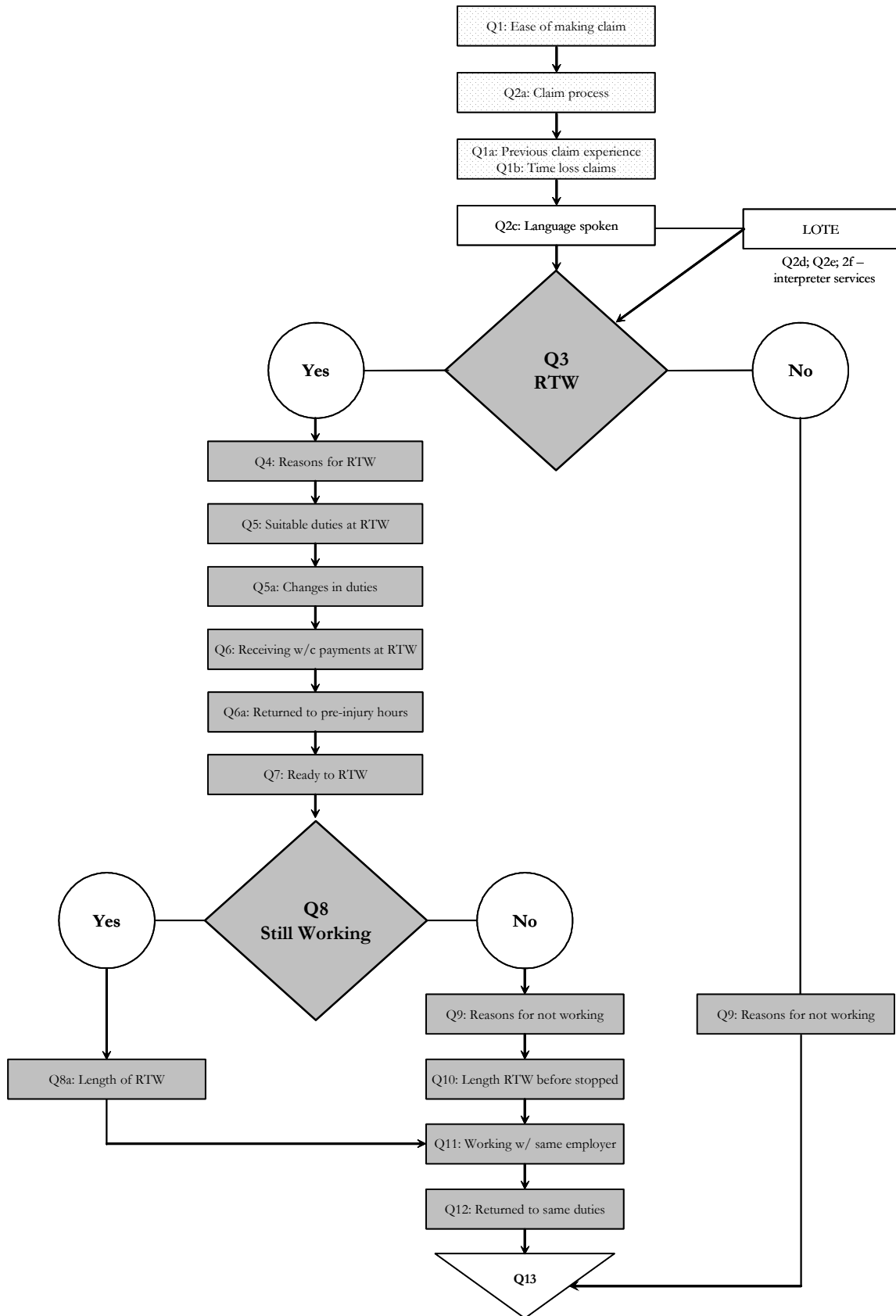
- “Nothing – did the same type of duties” identifies workers who returned to their original duties.
- Change in the **number of hours worked** at the time a worker first returned to work was further explored in Question 6a: “*Still thinking about when you first returned to work, did you return to your previous hours?*” (Section 2.8.1).
 - 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.

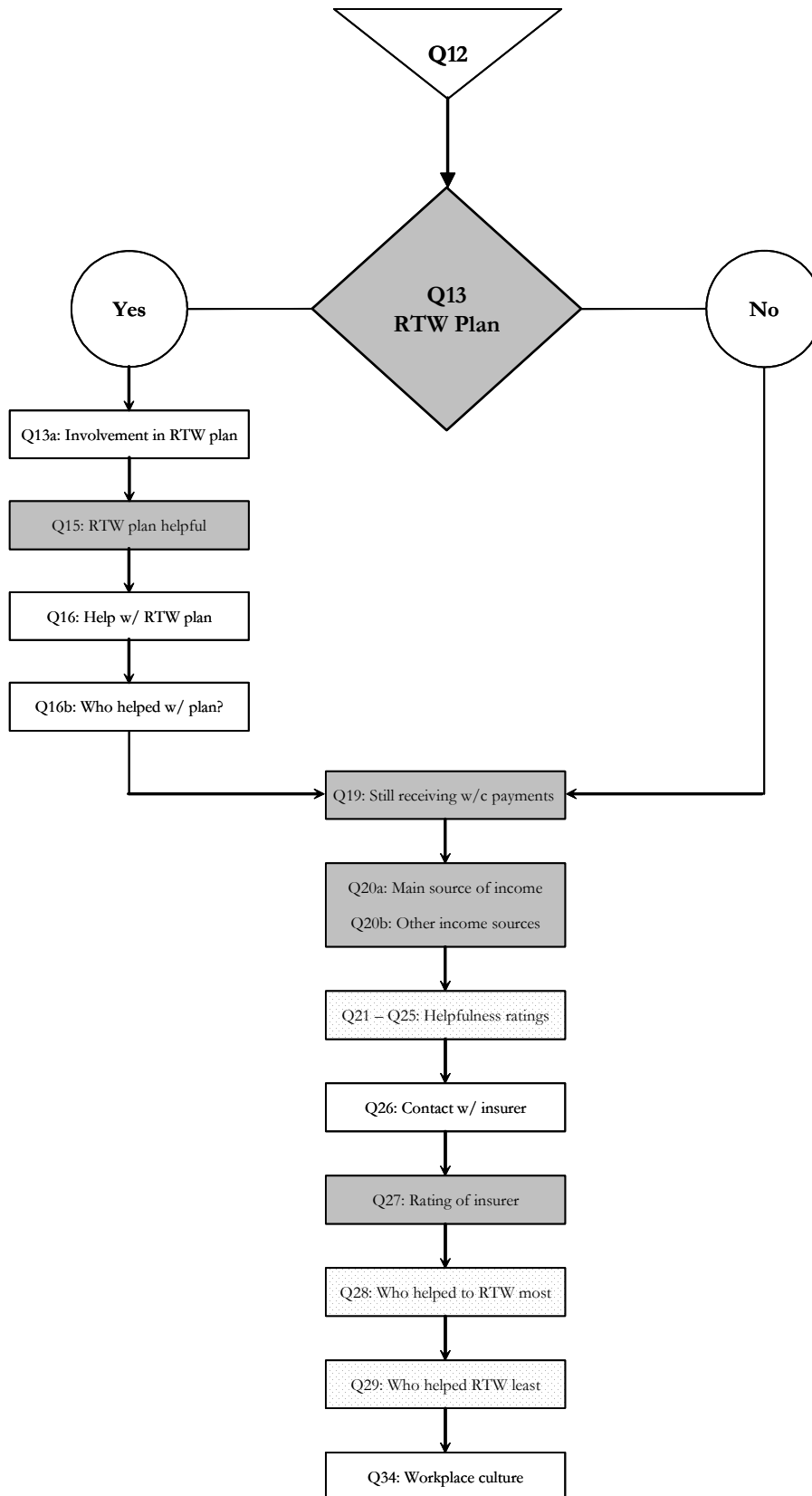
4.1.3 Interpretation of results for the Seacare Authority

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)





Appendix E: Index of Tables

Table 1:	Participants of the November 2008 and May 2009 RTW Monitor.....	v
Table 2:	Australia and New Zealand RTW Monitor Summary of Participation.....	xi
Table 3:	Main source of income.....	7
Table 4:	RTW outcomes measured by income sources at interview.....	9
Table 5:	RTW outcomes involving workers' compensation payments.....	10
Table 6:	Continuity of employer and duties at interview.....	14
Table 7:	Mean rating level of agreement with attitude statements towards the workplace.....	17
Table 8:	Ease of putting in a claim.....	20
Table 9:	Reasons for RTW.....	23
Table 10:	Reasons for not currently working.....	25
Table 11:	Person that helped with RTW plan.....	34
Table 12:	Summary of RTW plans by RTW outcomes.....	35
Table 13:	Reasons for not feeling ready to RTW.....	37
Table 14:	Summary of RTW process measure at time of RTW by RTW outcomes.....	45
Table 15:	People who were the most help.....	47
Table 16:	Mean rating of people who helped RTW.....	50
Table 17:	Rating of people who helped/make it harder to RTW.....	52
Table 18:	Mean rating of insurer type services.....	59
Table 19:	Enterprise size.....	65
Table 20:	Summary of differences.....	66
Table 21:	National - November 2008 interview weighting calculations.....	72
Table 22:	National - May 2009 interview weighting calculations.....	73
Table 23:	Survey estimates of 50% & 80% at 95% confidence interval (CI).....	73
Table 24:	Population characteristics by jurisdiction for November 2008.....	74
Table 25:	Population characteristics by jurisdiction for May 2009.....	74
Table 26:	Interviews as a percentage of contacts made for 2007/08.....	75
Table 27:	Field report for 2008/09 National RTW survey.....	75
Table 28:	Field report for 2008/09 (Comparative).....	76
Table 29:	Terms used in this report.....	77

Appendix F: Index of Figures

Figure 1: RTW rate (Comparative).....	1
Figure 2: RTW rate (Trend).....	1
Figure 3: Durable RTW rate (Comparative)	2
Figure 4: Durable RTW rate (Trend)	2
Figure 5: RTW status at interview for Australia.....	3
Figure 6: RTW status at interview for NZ.....	3
Figure 7: Durable, non-durable and no RTW rates.....	3
Figure 8: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Comparative)	4
Figure 9: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Trend)	4
Figure 10: Length of time back at work for non-durable RTW (Comparative).....	5
Figure 11: Length of time back at work for non-durable RTW (Trend).....	5
Figure 12: Current compensation status (Comparative)	6
Figure 13: Current compensation status (Trend)	6
Figure 14: Main source of income.....	8
Figure 15: RTW outcomes measured by income sources at interview	11
Figure 16: Return to same employer (Comparative).....	12
Figure 17: Return to same employer (Trend)	12
Figure 18: Return to same duties (Comparative).....	13
Figure 19: Return to same duties (Trend)	13
Figure 20: Rating level of agreement with attitude statements towards the workplace	16
Figure 21: Level of agreement with value statements towards the workplace - Australia	18
Figure 22: Easy to get information for a claim (Comparative)	19
Figure 23: Easy to get information for a claim (Trend)	19
Figure 24: Previous claim (Comparative)	21
Figure 25: Previous claim (Trend)	21
Figure 26: Previous lost time claims (Comparative)	22
Figure 27: Previous lost time claims (Trend)	22
Figure 28: Total reasons for RTW.....	24
Figure 29: Total reasons for RTW.....	24
Figure 30: Select total reasons for not working.....	26
Figure 31: Total reasons for not working.....	27
Figure 32: Total reasons for not working – No RTW.....	28

Figure 33: Total reasons for not working – Non-durable RTW	29
Figure 34: Development of RTW plan (Comparative)	30
Figure 35: Development of RTW plan (Trend)	30
Figure 36: Involvement in RTW plan (Comparative).....	31
Figure 37: Involvement in RTW plan (Trend)	31
Figure 38: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Comparative).....	32
Figure 39: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Trend).....	32
Figure 40: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Comparative)	33
Figure 41: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Trend).....	33
Figure 42: Readiness to RTW (Comparative).....	36
Figure 43: Readiness to RTW (Trend).....	36
Figure 44: Suitable duties at RTW (Comparative)	38
Figure 45: Suitable duties at RTW (Trend)	38
Figure 46: Changed duties at RTW (Comparative).....	39
Figure 47: Changed duties at RTW (Trend).....	39
Figure 48: Type of change in duties at RTW (Comparative).....	40
Figure 49: Type of change in duties at RTW (Trend)	41
Figure 50: Different duties at RTW and at interview	42
Figure 51: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Comparative).....	43
Figure 52: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Trend).....	43
Figure 53: Returned to previous hours (Comparative).....	44
Figure 54: Returned to previous hours (Trend).....	44
Figure 55: People who were the most help to RTW	46
Figure 56: People who were the least help to RTW	48
Figure 57: Rating of helpfulness to RTW.....	49
Figure 58: Rating of compensation provider helpfulness (Comparative).....	53
Figure 59: Rating of compensation provider helpfulness (Trend).....	53
Figure 60: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Comparative).....	54
Figure 61: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Trend).....	54
Figure 62: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on durable RTW.....	55
Figure 63: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on non-durable RTW	56
Figure 64: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on no RTW	56
Figure 65: Contact with insurer in last three months (Comparative).....	57
Figure 66: Contact with insurer in last three months (Trend).....	57
Figure 67: Rating of insurer type services	58

Figure 68: Average service rating for insurer type services (Comparative)	60
Figure 69: Average service rating for insurer type services (Trend)	60
Figure 70: Proportion of males (Comparative).....	61
Figure 71: Proportion of males (Trend)	61
Figure 72: Mean age of injured workers (Comparative).....	62
Figure 73: Mean age of injured workers (Trend).....	62
Figure 74: Mean number of days compensation paid (Comparative)	63
Figure 75: Mean number of days compensation paid (Trend).....	63
Figure 76: Mean claim cost (Comparative)	63
Figure 77: Mean claim cost (Trend)	63
Figure 78: Participation in rehabilitation (Comparative).....	64
Figure 79: Participation in rehabilitation (Trend).....	64
Figure 80: Mean rehabilitation costs (Comparative).....	64
Figure 81: Mean rehabilitation costs (Trend).....	64