



**Australia &
New Zealand
Return to Work
Monitor
2009/10**

Prepared for

**The Heads of Workers'
Compensation Authority**

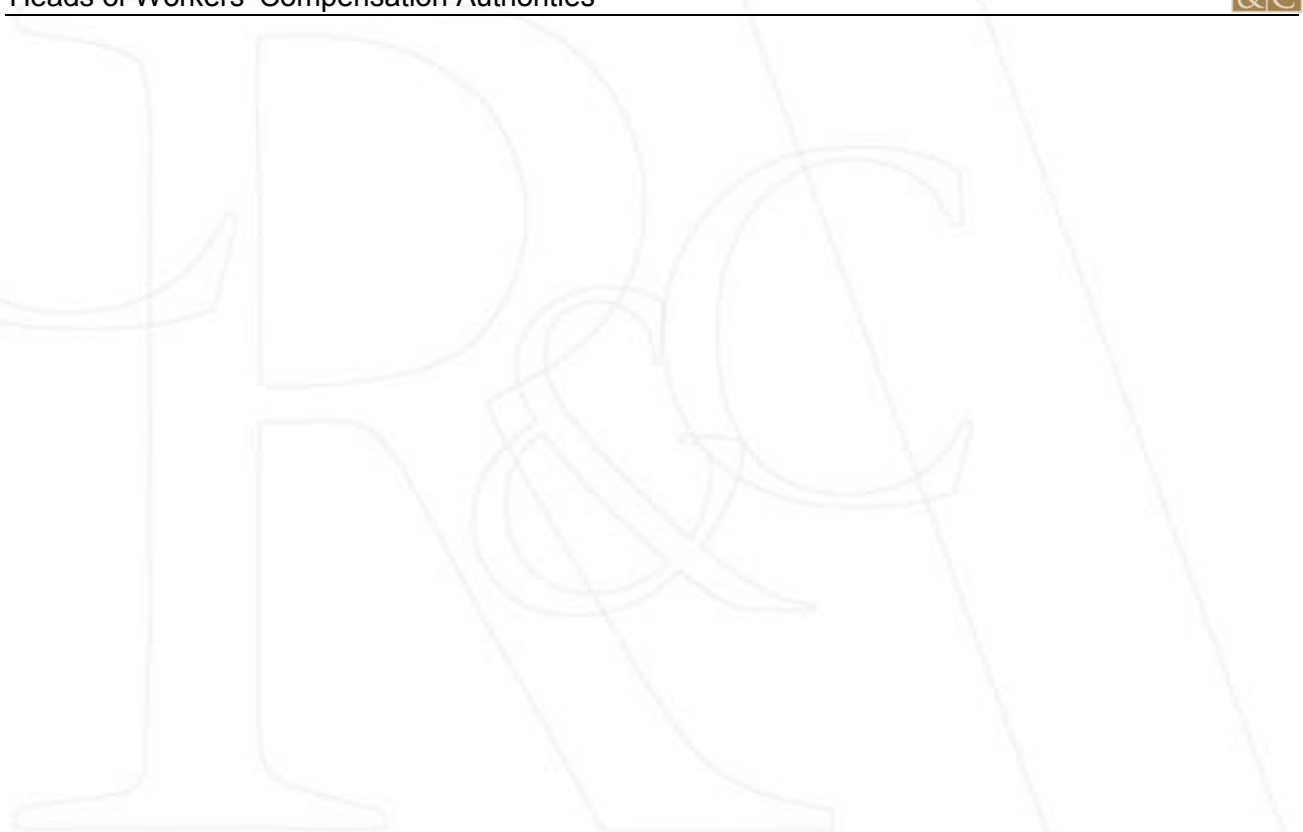
August 2010

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Executive Summary

Context

This is the thirteenth annual report of the Return to Work (RTW) Monitor which provides the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities with an indication of how participating Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions are performing on RTW over time¹.

Injured workers are eligible for participation in the RTW Monitor if they have been paid ten or more days compensation and submitted a claim seven to nine months prior to either of the two survey periods (November and May). Jurisdictional results are weighted against the eligible population of injured workers to ensure an appropriate level of representation in the calculation of national results and comparison with New Zealand. Injured workers employed by organisations which are self-insured are not included in this report.

The RTW Monitor is one of a number of Comparative Performance Indicators and should be considered within this context. It should also be noted that while the Monitor has been designed to track differences independently of effects such as claim status and scheme design, these factors may still influence the medium term RTW results obtained through the Monitor.

Highlights in 2009/10

RTW outcome measures

- The Australian national RTW rate was 85%, compared to 83% in 2008/09 (no significant difference)².
- The New Zealand RTW rate was 86%, compared to 83% in 2008/09 (no significant difference).
- The Australian national durable RTW rate was 75%, higher than the rate of 72% in 2008/09.
- The New Zealand durable RTW rate was 77%, compared to 75% in 2008/09 (no significant difference).

¹ Please refer to Appendix A for information on the history and development of workers' compensation schemes in Australia.

² Unless otherwise stated, comparisons cited in this report are significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

- 68% of Australian injured workers who returned to work who returned to work were working for the same employer and in the same duties and 19% of Australian injured workers were working for the same employer but in different duties, and an increase on the 2008/09 result of 15%.
- 80% of New Zealand injured workers who returned to work were working for the same employer and in the same duties, and an increase on the 2008/09 result of 74%.

Compensation payments

- 23% of Australian and 16% of New Zealand injured workers were receiving some form of weekly compensation payments at the time of interview.

Reasons for RTW

- 46% of Australian injured workers who had returned to work indicated that one of the reasons they had done so was because they had recovered from their injury, and a decrease on the 2008/09 result of 50%.
- 54% of New Zealand injured workers who had returned to work indicated that one of the reasons they had done so was because they had recovered from their injury, compared to 48% in 2008/09 (no significant difference).

Not working at time of interview

- 25% of Australian injured workers reported that they were not working at the time of the interview, and a decrease on the 2008/09 result of 28%.
- 23% of New Zealand injured workers reported that they were not working at the time of the survey, compared to 25% in 2008/09 (no significant difference).

Jurisdiction comparisons

In 2009/10 the following jurisdictions showed significant differences to the Australian national average on the following RTW outcome measures³:

- RTW rate
 - Comcare (91%) and Tasmania (90%) were higher than the Australian national average of 85%
 - South Australia (80%) and Seacare (72%) were below the Australian national average of 85%
- Durable RTW rate
 - Tasmania (82%) was higher than the national average of 75%
 - Seacare (62%) was below the national average of 75%
- In receipt of compensation payments
 - South Australia (35%), Comcare (29%) and New South Wales (27%) all had a higher proportion of injured workers in receipt of compensation payments at the time of the interview compared to the Australian national average of 23%
 - Queensland (15%), New Zealand (16%) and Tasmania (18%) all had a lower proportion of injured workers in receipt of compensation payments at the time of the interview compared to the Australian national average of 23%.

RTW Monitor Trends

13 Year Trends

At a national level, the RTW rate has remained relatively stable over the 13 years of the RTW Monitor, although there have been significant differences between some of the yearly results. The highest RTW rate was recorded in 2005/06 (87%), while the lowest RTW Rate (83%) was recorded in 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2008/09.

Similarly to the RTW rate, the national durable RTW rate has also remained relatively stable, although again, significant differences have been identified between some of the yearly results. The highest durable RTW rate was recorded in 2005/06 (80%) while the lowest was recorded in 2008/09 (72%).

³ Refer to Table 18: Summary of differences for a complete comparison of jurisdiction performance against the national average on all RTW outcome and process measures.

The length of durable RTW, however, has declined over time. For example, in 2003/04 the average length of durable RTW was 23 weeks, while in 2009/10 this average length of durable RTW had reduced to 20 weeks.

3 Year Trends

Between 2006/07 and 2008/09, the national RTW rate stabilised. This, coupled with a decline in the proportion of workers who had returned to work in a full time capacity, suggests that jurisdictions have dealt admirably with the global financial crisis. The results in other RTW outcome indicators, however, have been less positive, with a decrease in the durable RTW rate, and increases in the both non-durable RTW rate and the non-durable/No RTW rate (i.e. income from all sources except employment).

On a more positive note, the development of RTW plans significantly increased between 2006/07 and 2008/09, as has the availability of light or different duties and a decline in the proportion of injured workers reporting that they had no change in their duties when they returned to work. These results suggest that there has been an improvement in the level of support provided to injured workers by their employers, and perhaps an improved awareness among employers about how they can support injured workers in the workplace.

While compensation providers were considered to be amongst the least helpful in the RTW process, the service they provided was reported by injured workers to have improved in some areas. Specifically, there was a significant increase in the proportion of injured workers reporting that they had: contact with the compensation provider in the three months prior to interview; and rating of the communication by the compensation provider; and being given advice about the injured worker's rights by the provider.

Recent Trends

Recent trends identified through the RTW Monitor suggest that despite efforts at the jurisdictional level, little has changed in the outcomes for injured workers from a national perspective in the last 12 months, with the national RTW rate remaining stable in comparison to 2008/09. There was, however, a significant increase in the durable RTW rate, which suggests that when workers have returned to work over the last 12 months that it was less likely that they would cease work again than in 2008/09.

The greater proportion of workers in 2009/10 than in 2008/09 indicating that they had returned to work before they had fully recovered from their injury, coupled with a significant increase in the proportion of workers indicating that they had a RTW plan, further supports the three year trend that there has been an increase in support from employers in relation to helping an injured worker return to work. Unfortunately, there was also a significant increase in the proportion of injured workers in 2009/10, compared to 2008/09, who were reporting that they felt pressure from the compensation provider to RTW.

The significant drops in perceived importance of work and level of satisfaction injured workers indicated that that they derive from work, suggests that an injured worker's decision to RTW maybe being influenced by factors other than work. This supposition is potentially also supported by the notion that fewer injured workers in 2009/10 than in 2008/09 believed that their employer was prepared to spend time or money on occupational health and safety in their workplace, therefore suggesting that they are returning to work despite possibly being unsure of their safety at work.

Concluding Comments

The results from the RTW Monitor support the notion that there are many challenges associated with the process of returning an injured worker to work following a workplace injury. In some instances these challenges are identifiable and can be overcome with good planning and good management. Other challenges, however, may be harder to identify or perhaps even change over time. The true challenge for regulatory authorities and their representatives therefore appears to be twofold: firstly, being able to identify the level and type of support each injured worker may require to help them return to work; and secondly, how to harness the assistance of others to ensure the best outcomes possible for each individual worker.

1. Return to Work Outcome Measures

1.1 RTW rate

The RTW rate is the proportion of injured workers who had returned to work between the time of their claim and time of interview.

In 2009/10, over eight in ten (85%) Australian and New Zealand (86%) injured workers had returned to work, for some period, since the commencement of their claim seven to nine months earlier (Figure 1).⁴

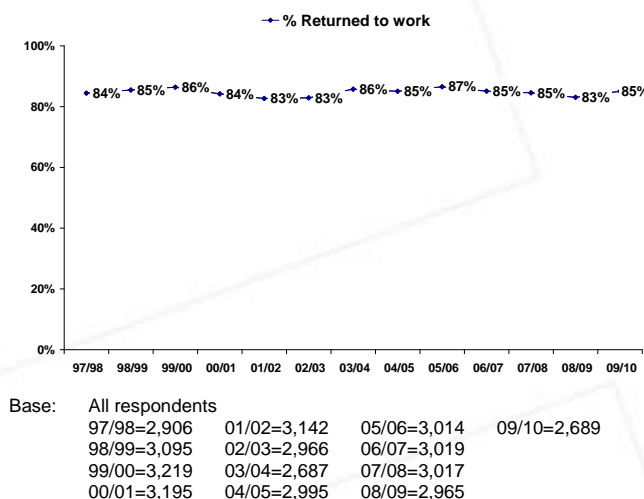
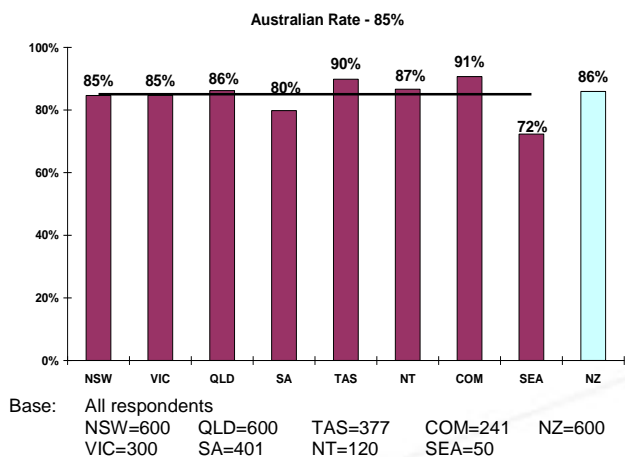
Injured workers covered by Comcare (91%) and from Tasmania (90%) had a higher RTW rate than the Australian national average, while the RTW rate was for South Australian (80%) and Seacare injured workers (72%) was lower than the Australian national average.

With the exception of a peak in 2005/06 (87%), the RTW rate has been relatively stable over the thirteen years of the Monitor (Figure 2).

Figure 1: RTW rate

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 2009/10, 85% of Australian injured workers had returned to work, for some period, after the commencement of their claim seven to nine months earlier.

⁴ Please refer to Appendix C: Reporting Conventions (page 96), for details of how to read this report.

1.2 Durable RTW

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

In 2009/10, three in four (75%) Australian and New Zealand (77%) injured workers had returned to work and were still working at the time of interview (Figure 3). The durable RTW rate follows a similar pattern to the RTW rate and has been approximately ten percentage points lower than the RTW rate over the last thirteen years.

The durable RTW rate was higher than the Australian national average among Tasmanian injured workers (82%) and lower among Seacare injured workers (62%).

While there was a decline in the Australian national durable RTW rate between 2005/06 (80%) and 2008/09 (72%), the 2009/10 result of 75% suggests that the direction of this trend has now changed with the 2009/10 durable RTW rate significantly higher than the 2008/09 rate (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Durable RTW rate

Q8. Are you currently working in a paid job?

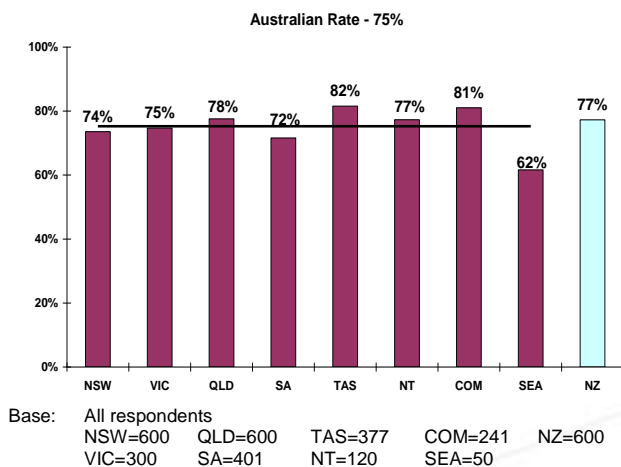
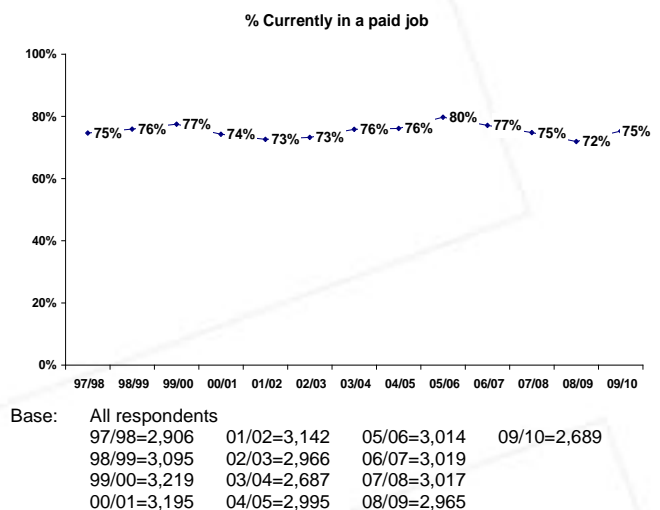


Figure 4: Durable RTW rate (Trend)



In 2009/10, 75% of Australian injured workers had a durable RTW. The three year decline in the durable RTW rate has changed with the 2009/10 durable RTW rate significantly higher than the 2008/09 rate.

1.3 Non-durable RTW and No RTW

The non-durable RTW rate is the proportion of injured workers who had returned to work, but were not working at the time of interview. The “no RTW rate” is the proportion of injured workers who had not returned to work at all seven to nine months after the commencement of their claim.

In 2009/10, one in four (25%) Australian injured workers were not working at the time of interview (Figure 5):

- 15% who had not returned to work since their injury
- 10% who had a non-durable RTW.

Just under one in four (23%) New Zealand injured workers were not working at the time of interview (Figure 6):

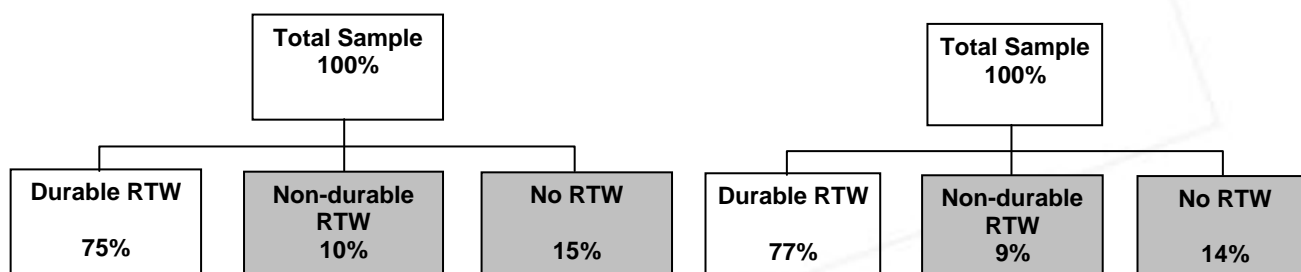
- 14% who had not returned to work since their injury
- 9% who had a non-durable RTW.

Figure 5: RTW status at interview for Australia

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?*



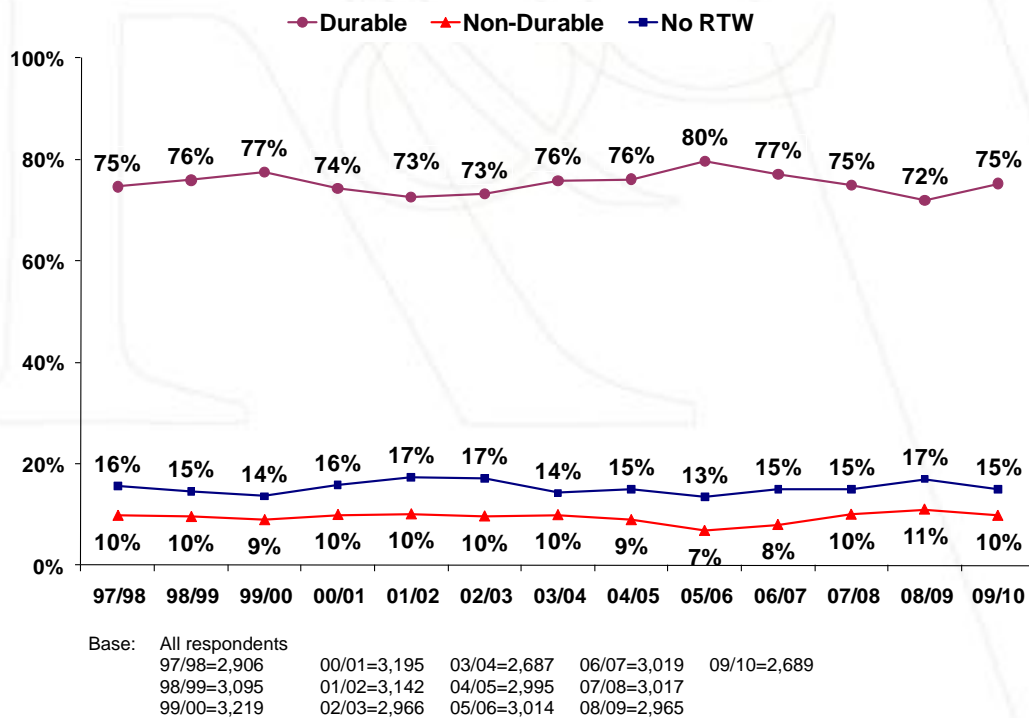
Base: All respondents
 Australia=2,689

Base: All respondents
 NZ=600

In 2009/10, there was no difference in the non-durable and no RTW rates of Australia and New Zealand.

The non-durable RTW and no RTW rates have been relatively stable over the course of the RTW Monitor (Figure 7).

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



1.4 Length of time back at work

This section of the report examines the length of time injured workers reported that they had been back at work. These results can be compared with Scheme based data such as the number of day's compensation paid (claim closure rates) and claim cost. It should be noted, however, that these types of measures are different to those contained within the RTW Monitor. For example, the Scheme based data provides estimates of the time away from work, while the RTW Monitor provides estimates of the amount of time *at* work.

It should also be noted that injured workers are able to report their length of time back at work in days, weeks or months. Weeks and months are converted to days to facilitate consistency in reporting. Length of time back at work indicates how substantive an injured worker's RTW has been. RTW is considered to be substantive when an injured worker has been back at work for at least two months. Results obtained through the RTW Monitor suggest that even when a RTW outcome is unsuccessful, the RTW attempt is usually substantive.

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). The longer an injured worker has been back at work at the time of interview 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 (Figure 8). The mean length of time back at work has gradually declined since the peak in 2003/04 (159 days), with the 2009/10 result the same as it was in 2008/09 (Figure 9).

Comcare (192 days), Tasmanian (160 days) and New Zealand (154 days) injured workers had a longer durable RTW compared to the Australian national average, while South Australian (129 days) injured workers had a shorter durable RTW.

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

Q8a. How long have you been back at work?

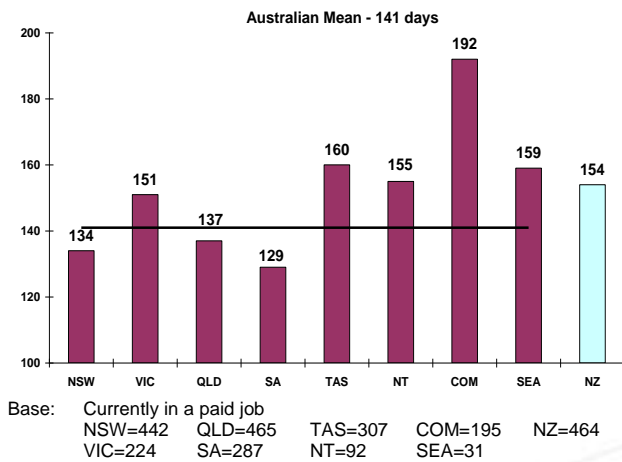
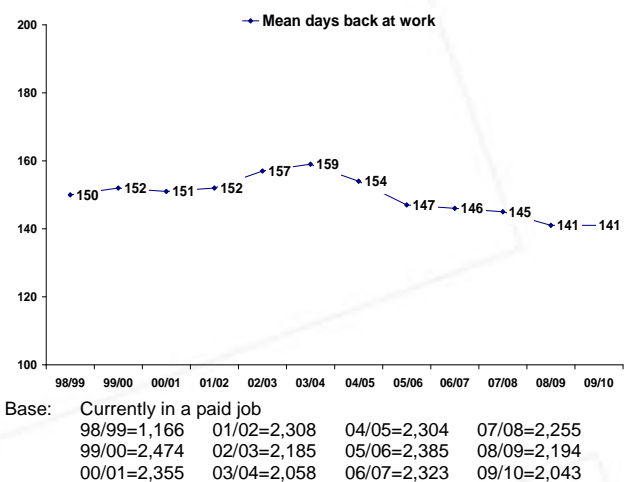


Figure 9: Length of time back at work for durable RTW (Trend)



Since 2003/04, the length of durable RTW has gradually declined to 141 days. This suggests that injured workers with a durable RTW are now taking longer to return to work than in the past.

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).

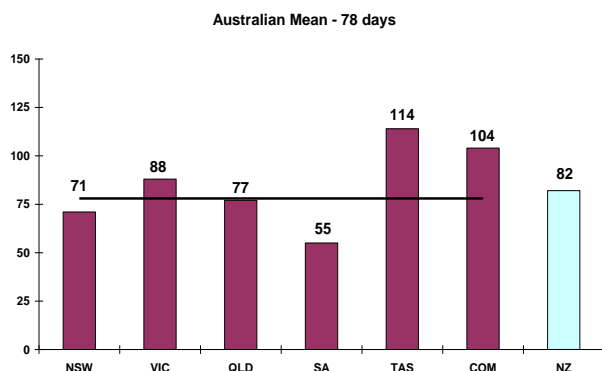
The mean estimated duration of non-durable RTW was 78 days. Given low sample sizes, there was no statistical difference in the duration of non-durable RTW by jurisdiction (Figure 10).

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 thirteen years of the RTW Monitor. These changes do not represent a significant change (Figure 11).

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

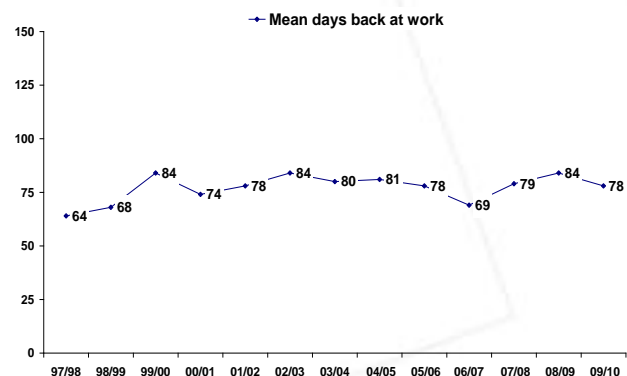
Figure 11: Length of time back at work for non-durable RTW (Trend)

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



Base: Have returned to work but currently do not work
 NSW=66 QLD=52 TAS=31 COM=23 NZ=52
 VIC=30 SA=33 NT=11 SEA=5

Note: Northern Territory 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.



Base: Have returned to work but currently do not work
 97/98=311 01/02=319 05/06=217 09/10=251
 98/99=312 02/03=301 06/07=258
 99/00=314 03/04=254 07/08=289
 00/01=339 04/05=265 08/09=312

In 2009/10, the length of non-durable RTW was 78 days.

1.5 Income sources

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

Sources of income are identified at two points:

- At time of RTW (reported as a process measure (in Section 2.8))
- At time of interview (reported below).

1.5.1 Current compensation status

In 2009/10, over one in five (23%) Australian injured workers reported they were still receiving some form of weekly compensation payments at the time of the interview (Figure 12).

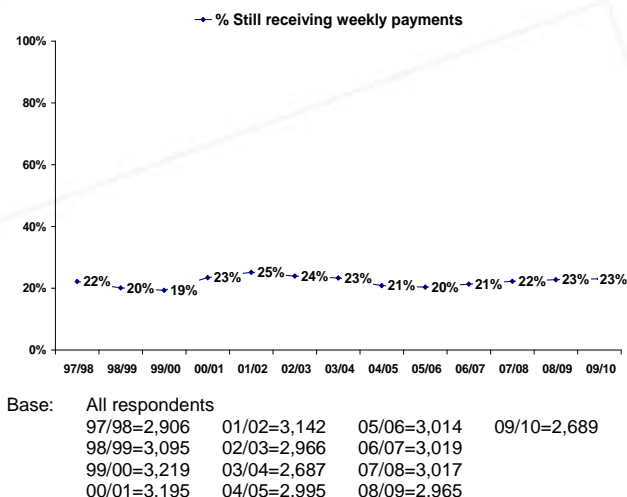
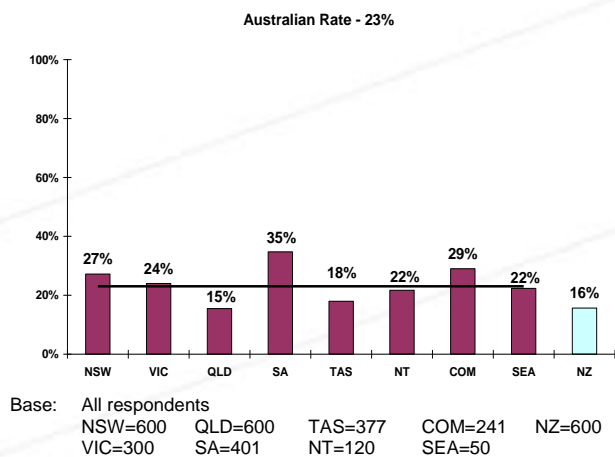
Queensland (15%), New Zealand (16%) and Tasmania (18%) had the lowest rates of injured workers receiving compensation at the time of interview when compared with the Australian national average. South Australia (35%), Comcare (29%) and NSW (27%) had the highest rates.

The proportion of injured workers receiving workers' compensation payments at the time of interview has ranged between 19% and 25% of injured workers over the course of the Monitor (Figure 13).

Figure 12: Current compensation status

Figure 13: Current compensation status (Trend)

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



In 2009/10, 23% of injured workers reported they were still receiving workers' compensation payments at the time of interview.

1.5.2 Main source of income at the time of interview

Seven in ten injured workers (72%) reported employment as their *main* source of income at the time of interview, while one in seven (14%) reported workers' compensation payments as their *main* source of income compared to 71% and 14% respectively in 2008/09 (Table 1).

A smaller proportion of injured workers reported other *main* sources of income including social security (3%) and their partner's income (3%), while 3% reported no income at all.

Table 1: Main source of income

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

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Employment	72	70	71	76	68	78↑	72	86↑	72	76
Workers' Compensation	14	16	17	10↓	22↑	9↓	13	12	18	13
Social security	3	4	2	3	3	6↑	2	0↓	-	1↓
Partner's income	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	-	2
No income	3	3	3	4	2	2	4	0↓	4	3

Base: All respondents

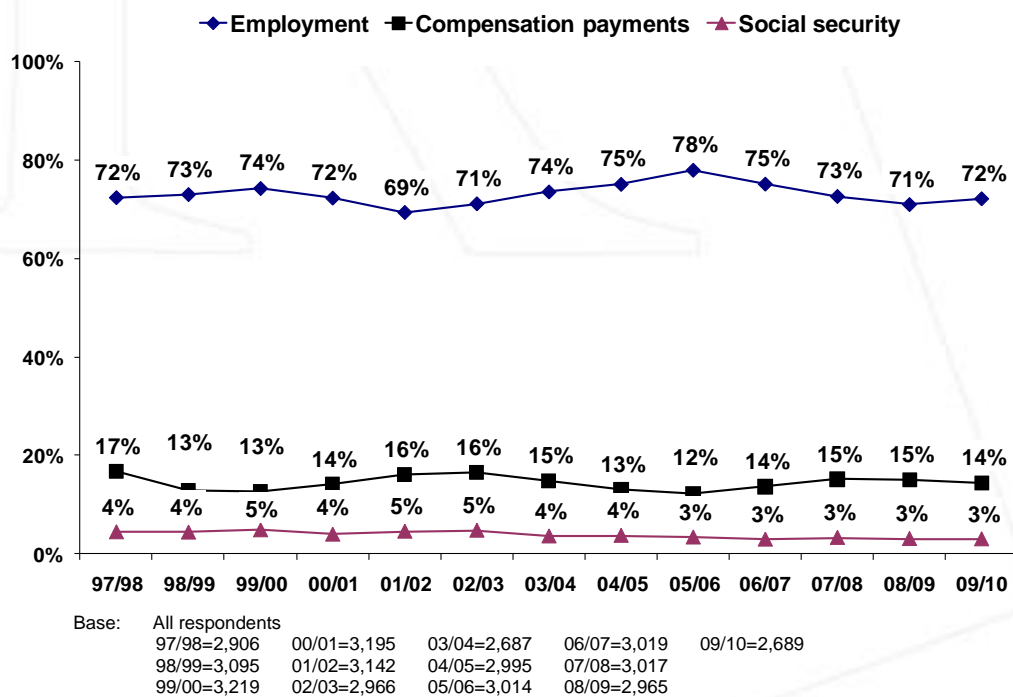
Note: ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

In 2009/10, at the time of interview, 72% of Australian injured workers were deriving their main income from employment.

Employment being the *main* source of income follows a similar trend as the durable RTW rate. The peak in 2005/06 in the durable RTW rate was also shown in employment as the main source of income (78%). Both measures have declined since with 72% of Australian injured workers in 2009/10 mainly receiving income from employment (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Main source of income

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



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 provide a more detailed perspective. In particular, identifying combinations of income can estimate full, partial and non-durable/no RTW at the time of the interview.

Income sources have been categorised into three types:

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

As injured workers can have a combination of these types of income, different combinations have been used to identify RTW outcomes:

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

Without prompting, at the time of interview:

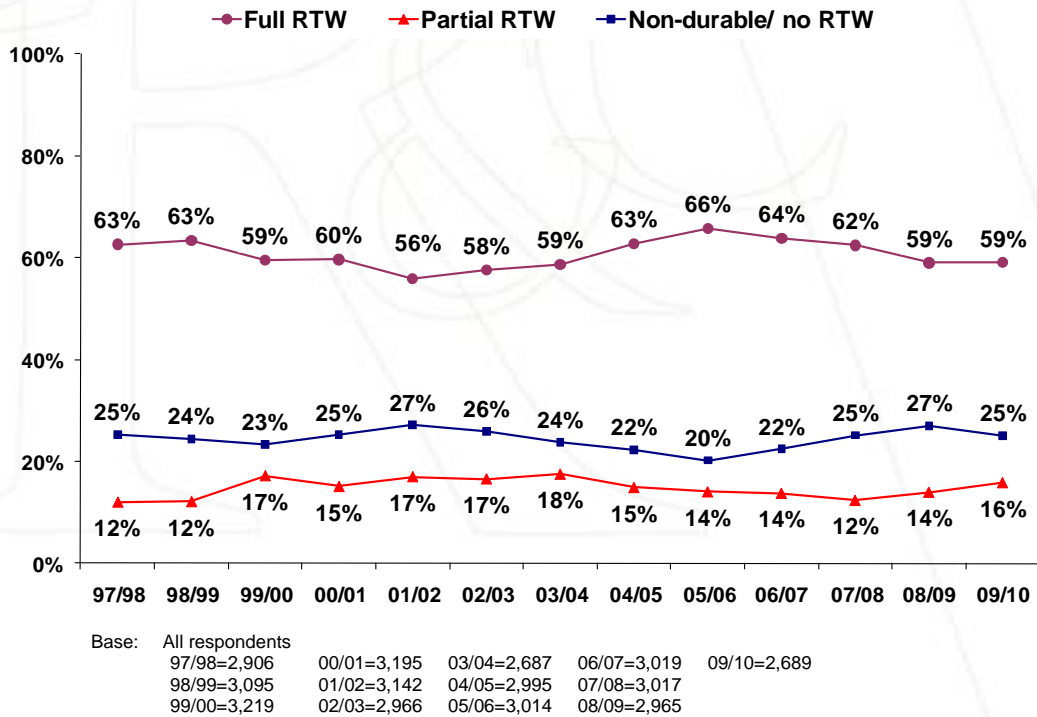
- 59% of injured workers nationally reported that they only obtained income from employment (had a full RTW)
- Another 16% had a partial RTW, that is, their income was derived from both employment and some other source
- 25% of injured workers in Australia reported they were not deriving any income from employment at the time of interview (had either not returned to work or had a non-durable RTW).

The full RTW rate (59%), measured by income sources, was the same in 2009/10 as in 2008/09 and was lower than the four previous years. Conversely, the non-durable/no RTW rate (25%) was 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 of 59% in 2009/10, was the same as 2008/09, although remains significantly lower than the three preceding years.

At the time of interview, RTW outcomes as measured by income sources differed by jurisdiction (Table 2). Injured workers covered by Comcare (69%) and from New Zealand (67%) had the highest proportion of injured workers who only obtained income from employment.

South Australia had the highest proportion of injured workers who did not obtain any income from employment (30%), while Comcare (11%) and Tasmania (19%) had a lower proportion of injured workers who did not obtain any income from employment.

Table 2: RTW outcomes measured by income sources at interview

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Q20a. <i>Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?</i>										
Q20b. <i>What other sources of income do you have?</i>										
Full RTW (income from employment only)	59	55	59	63	55	64	62	69↑	60	67↑
Partial RTW (employment plus any other income source)	16	18	15	14	15	17	12	20	12	11↓
Non-durable RTW/No RTW (income from all sources except employment)	25	27	26	23	30↑	19↓	26	11↓	28	23

Base: All respondents

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

At the time of interview, South Australia had 30% of injured workers who, at the time of interview, were not deriving any income from employment.

Partial and no/non-durable RTW have been further analysed by identifying workers' compensation as the only "other" income source (Table 3). At the time of interview, without prompting, one in ten (10%) injured workers in Australia reported workers' compensation payments as their only source of income, while 5% had a partial RTW outcome, where income was from both employment and workers' compensation payments.

South Australia (16%) had a higher proportion of injured workers with "workers' compensation only" payments at the time of interview compared to the Australian national average, while Queensland had a lower proportion (7%). Identification of employment, workers' compensation and possibly other income sources was more common for injured workers covered by Comcare (11%) compared to the Australian national average, while less common in New Zealand (1%) and Queensland (3%).

Table 3: RTW outcomes involving workers' compensation payments

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Q20a. <i>Would you please tell me what is your main source of income?</i>										
Q20b. <i>What other sources of income do you have?</i>										
Non-durable RTW/No RTW (workers' compensation payments only)	10	12	11	7↓	16↑	8	11	8	12	10
Partial RTW (employment, workers' comp. and other)	5	6	6	3↓	6	4	6	11↑	2	1↓

Base: All respondents

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

1.6 Employment and duties

Two aspects of RTW that are measured is if the injured worker was working for the **same employer** as at the time of injury (Section 1.6.1) and if they were doing the **same duties** (Section 1.6.2) or whether they were working for a new employer or in different duties.

This section of the report shows changed duties and changes to employer as outcome measures based on the status of the injured worker 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

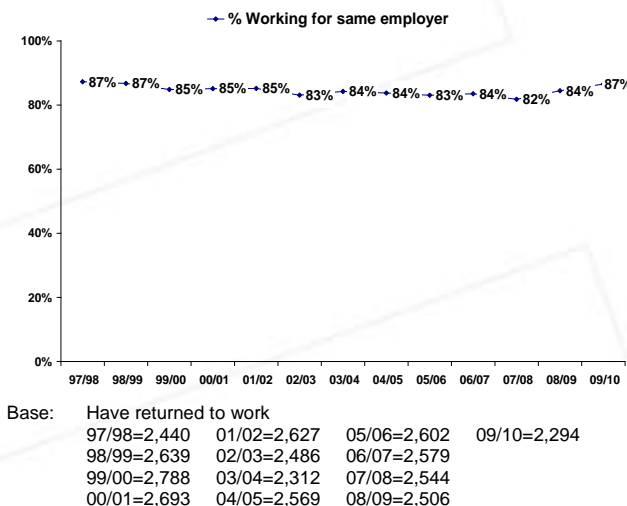
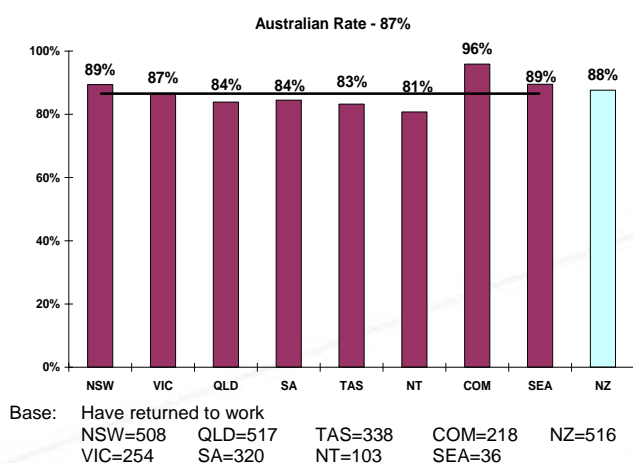
Almost nine in ten (87%) injured workers who had returned to work, were working with the same employer at the time of interview (or when they stopped working) as they were working for when they sustained their injury – the “same” employer (Figure 16). Injured workers covered by Comcare (96%) were most likely to RTW with their original employer.

In 2009/10, the rate of RTW with the same employer at 87% represents a significant increase from 82% in 2007/08 (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Return to same employer

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?



In 2009/10, 87% of injured workers who had returned to work, were working with the same employer at the time of interview (or when they stopped working) as they were working for when they sustained their injury.

1.6.2 Duties at time of interview

Three in four (74%) 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).

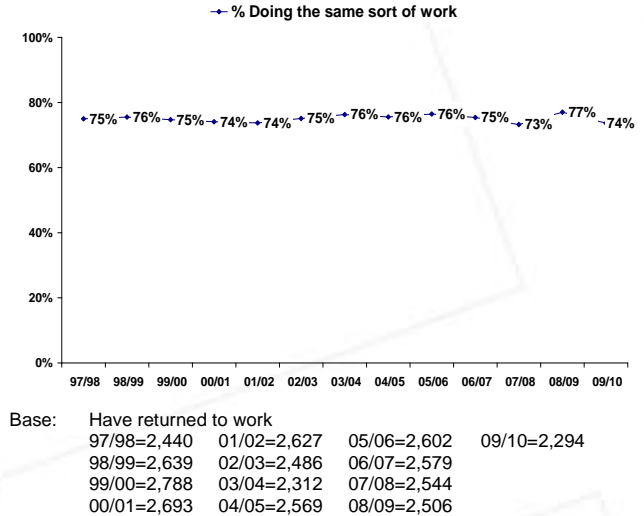
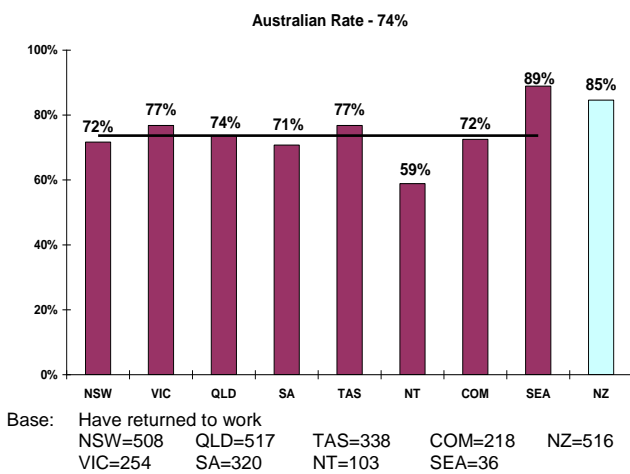
Injured workers from the Northern Territory (59%) who had returned to work were less likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the Australian national average. Those covered by Seacare (89%) and in New Zealand (85%) were more likely to have returned to the *same* duties compared to the national average.

The declining trend between 2005/06 (76%) and 2007/08 (73%) for injured workers to return to the *same* duties was reversed in 2008/09 (77%), but not maintained in 2009/10 (Figure 19).

Figure 18: Return to same duties

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?



In 2009/10, 74% of 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 (68%) Australian injured workers who had returned to work, were working for the same employer *and* carrying out the same duties at the time of interview (or when they stopped working) as they had prior to their injury (Table 4).

Continuity of *employer* and *duties* was more common in New Zealand (80%) compared to Australia, while return to the *same employer* and *different duties* was most likely among injured workers covered by Comcare (25%).

Injured workers from the Northern Territory and Tasmania who had returned to work were more likely to have returned to a *different employer* and *different duties* (16% and 11% respectively) compared to the Australian national average (8%).

Table 4: Continuity of employer and duties at interview

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

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

	AUS (2,294) %	NSW (508) %	VIC (254) %	QLD (517) %	SA (320) %	TAS (338) %	NT (103) %	COM (218) %	SEA (36) %	NZ (516) %
Same employer/ same duties	68	68	69	68	64	71	56↓	71	81	80↑
Same employer/ different duties	19	22	18	16	21	12↓	25	25↑	9	8↓
Different employer/ same duties	6	4	8	6	7	6	3	2↓	8	5
Different employer/ different duties	8	6	6	10	8	11↑	16↑	2↓	2	8

Base: Have returned to work

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

In 2009/10, 68% of Australian injured workers who had returned to work, were working for the same employer and carrying out the same duties as they had prior to their injury.

2. Process Measures

The previous section discussed a number of key outcomes as measured by the RTW Monitor. This section reports on a number of process measures. The process measures include:

- The culture of the workplace where the injury occurred (identifying characteristics that are supportive of the RTW process)⁵
- 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 and least helpful
- 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 culture. These were assigned a value from one to five, where one was “*strongly disagree*”, five was “*strongly agree*” and three indicated “*neither agree nor disagree*” with a statement. The mean score for all respondents is reported and the proportion who agreed and disagreed 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”

⁵ The impact of Workplace Culture on Return to Work, Comcare Australia paper presented to WorkCongress5, Adelaide 2001.

- 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".

In terms of perceptions about the workplace where the injury was sustained, close to nine in ten Australian injured workers agreed that the work they do is important to them (93%) and were satisfied with that work (88%). A slightly lower proportion of injured workers felt valued at their workplace (77%), with 15% disagreeing with this statement (Table 5). There has been a significant decline in work importance and satisfaction with work since 2008/09 (4.5 and 4.3 respectively).

Table 5: Level of agreement with attitude statements about the workplace

Q34. *I would like you to tell me if you agree or disagree with the statements I am going to read out. Is that strongly agree/disagree?*

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Work importance - agree	93	92	93	94	93	93	90	90	98	93
Work importance - disagree	5	6	4	4	5	5	4	6	-	4
Work importance - mean rating out of 5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4
Work satisfaction - agree	88	90	84	88	89	91	93	89	96	93↑
Work satisfaction - disagree	8	7	10	8	8	8	3↓	9	2	5↓
Work satisfaction - mean rating out of 5	4.2	4.3	4.1↓	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4↑	4.2	4.4	4.4↑
Valued at work - agree	77	78	74	80	77	76	76	76	83	87↑
Valued at work - disagree	15	15	16	14	17	16	15	15	10	8↓
Valued at work - mean rating out of 5	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.2↑

Base: All respondents

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

A higher proportion of New Zealand injured workers agreed that they were satisfied with the work they do (93%) and felt that people at work really value the work they do (87%) compared to Australian injured workers.

Workplace attributes associated with returning to work and workplace safety had lower levels of agreement compared to those of workplace satisfaction. Of Australian injured workers (Table 6):

- 67% agreed and 25% disagreed that management would help injured workers RTW
- 65% agreed and 24% disagreed that their employer had clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers to work
- 62% agreed and 29% disagreed that management was prepared to spend time and money to make the workplace safe – down from 66% agree in 2009/10 (or a mean rating of 3.6 in 2008/09 compared to 3.5 in 2009/10).

A number of differences in attitudes towards the workplace by jurisdiction were evident when compared to the Australian level of agreement (and disagreement):

- Injured workers from New Zealand were more likely to agree with aspects of management assistance with RTW (76%) and spending on Occupational Health and Safety (75%)
- Tasmanian injured workers were more likely to agree that management would help them to get back to work (73%) and that their employer had clear policies and procedures about returning injured workers back to work (74%)
- Injured workers covered by Comcare and Seacare were more likely to agree that their employer had clear RTW policies and procedures (73% and 76% respectively) and less likely to disagree on the willingness of their employer to spend time and money on Occupational Health and Safety (21% and 16% disagreed respectively)
- Lower levels of agreement (and higher disagreement) were found among Victorian and Northern Territory injured workers regarding their employer being prepared to spend time and money on Occupational Health and Safety (56% and 47% agreed respectively).

Table 6: Level of agreement with statements about workplace safety

Q34. *I would like you to tell me if you agree or disagree with the statements I am going to read out. Is that strongly agree/disagree?*

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Management help RTW - agree	67	68	63	71	67	73↑	61	68	64	76↑
Management help RTW - disagree	25	24	29	23	26	21↓	30	22	22	18↓
Management help RTW - mean rating out of 5	3.6	3.6	3.4↓	3.7	3.5	3.8↑	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.9↑
Clear RTW policies and procedures - agree	66	63	64	70	63	74↑	59	73↑	76	69
Clear RTW policies and procedures - disagree	24	25	25	20	26	20	29	18	10↓	21
Clear RTW policies and procedures - mean rating out of 5	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.7↑	3.5	3.8↑	3.4	3.8↑	3.9	3.7↑
OH&S spending - agree	62	66	56↓	66	59	65	47↓	69	73	75↑
OH&S spending - disagree	29	26	35↑	26	31	26	42↑	21↓	16↓	20↓
OH&S spending - mean rating out of 5	3.5	3.6	3.3↓	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.1↓	3.6	3.9↑	3.8↑

Base: All respondents

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

Injured workers generally felt that their work was important and were satisfied with their work. While the level of agreement with attributes associated with returning to work and workplace safety were lower compared to attitudes about the workplace, they have generally improved over time.

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 (80%) Australian injured workers reported that it was easy to get the information they required to lodge a claim (Figure 20). Another 12% indicated that it wasn't easy and 8% were unable to say.

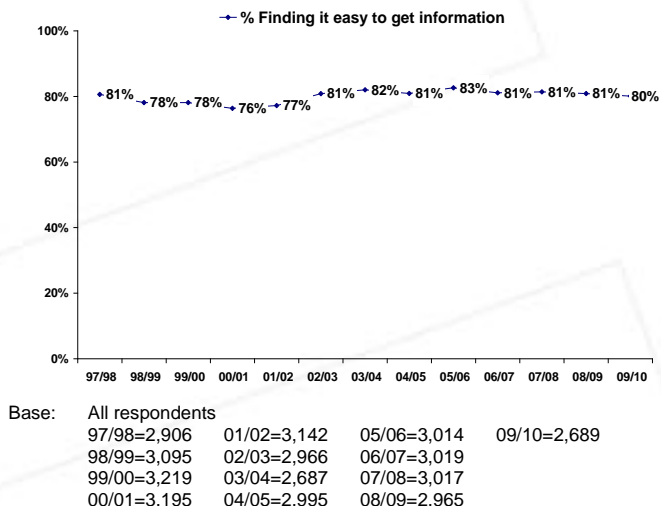
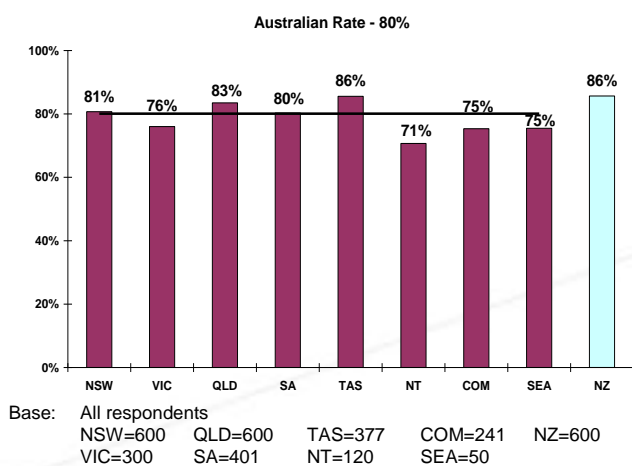
Injured workers from New Zealand (86%) and Tasmania (86%) were more likely to rate it easy to access information to make a claim compared to the Australian national average (80%), while fewer injured workers from the Northern Territory (71%) reported that it was easy to get the information needed to make a claim.

With the exception of a peak to 83% in 2005/06, the proportion of injured workers reporting it easy to access claim information has remained stable over the last eight years of the Monitor (Figure 21).

Figure 20: Easy to get information for a claim

Figure 21: 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?



In 2009/10, 80% of Australian injured workers found it easy to get the 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* (56%) or *very simple* (18%) to put in a claim, while nearly two in ten (18%) considered the process *complicated* (12%) or *very complicated* (5%) (Table 7). Nine percent did not feel it simple or complicated.

The proportion of injured workers reporting the claim process as simple in Tasmania (83%), New Zealand (82%) and Queensland (78%) was higher compared to the Australian national average, while the proportion reporting the claim process was complicated in Comcare (44%) and the Northern Territory (26%) was higher than the Australian national average.

Over time, the proportion of injured workers who found it complicated to lodge their claim has declined. The most recent decline being from 21% in 2006/07.

Table 7: Ease of putting in a claim

Q2a. Would you describe the process of putting in a claim as?										
	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Very simple	18	19	14	20	15	20	11	5↓	30↑	18
Simple	56	55	55	58	58	63↑	55	47↓	38↓	64↑
Total simple	74	74	69	78↑	73	83↑	66	53↓	67	82↑
Complicated	12	12	14	11	11	9↓	18	35↑	14	11
Very complicated	5	5	7	4	5	3	8	10↑	2	3↓
Total complicated	18	17	21	14	16	12	26↑	44↑	16	15
Can't say	9	9	10	8	11	6↓	8	3	16	3

Base: All respondents

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

In 2009/10, 74% of Australian injured workers found it simple to put in their claim and 18% found it complicated. Fewer now found it complicated to put in their claim compared to, most recently, 2006/07.

2.3 Previous claim experience

2.3.1 Previous claim

A question about previous claim experience was introduced in 2002. While injured workers in the RTW Monitor were eligible only if they had a claim of 10 or more days compensation, response to this question could relate to a claim of any duration.

In 2009/10, close to four in ten (38%) injured workers included in the RTW Monitor who made a claim of ten days or more in duration reported having a previous workers' compensation claim (Figure 22). Injured workers from New Zealand (51%), covered by Comcare (49%), and Queensland (43%) were significantly more likely to have had a previous claim compared to the Australian national average.

The reported incidence of previous claims has approximated four in ten injured workers since 2002/03 (Figure 23).

Figure 22: Previous claims

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

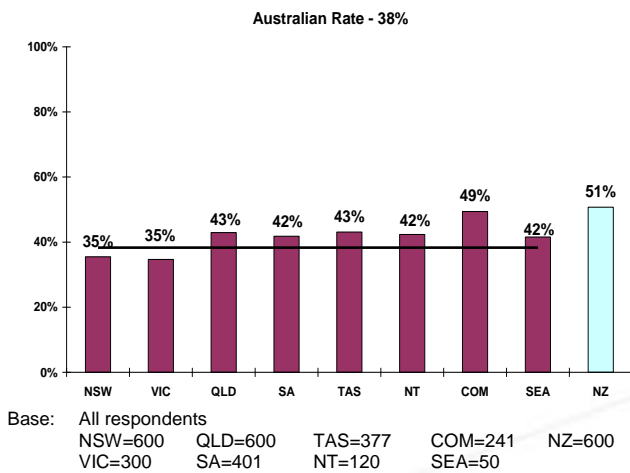
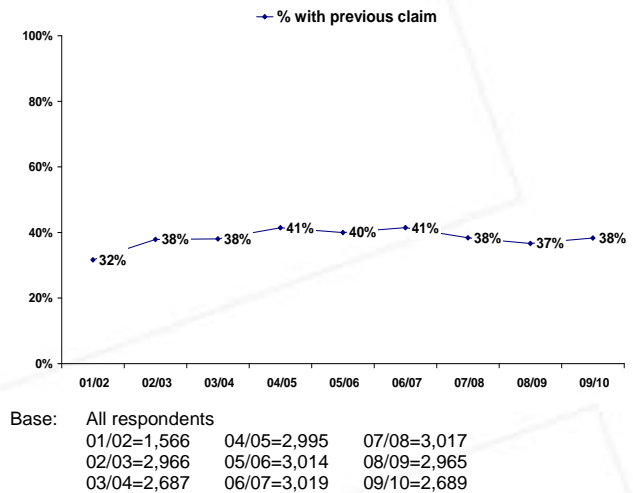


Figure 23: Previous claims (Trend)



In 2009/10, 38% of injured workers reported having a previous workers' compensation 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 the earlier claim.

In 2009/10, close to nine in ten (86%) injured workers who reported that they had a previous claim indicated that they had time off work as a result of the earlier claim or claims.

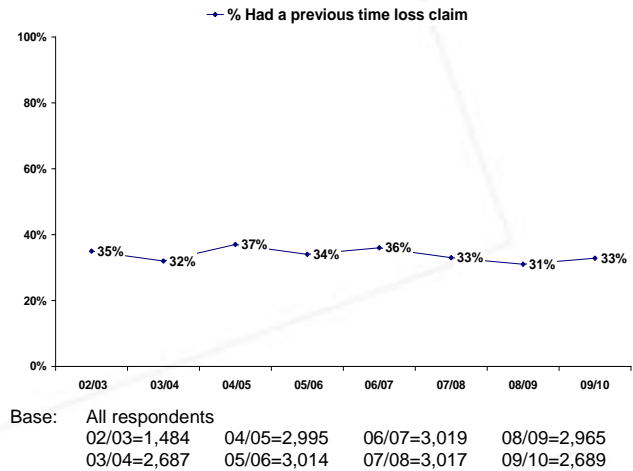
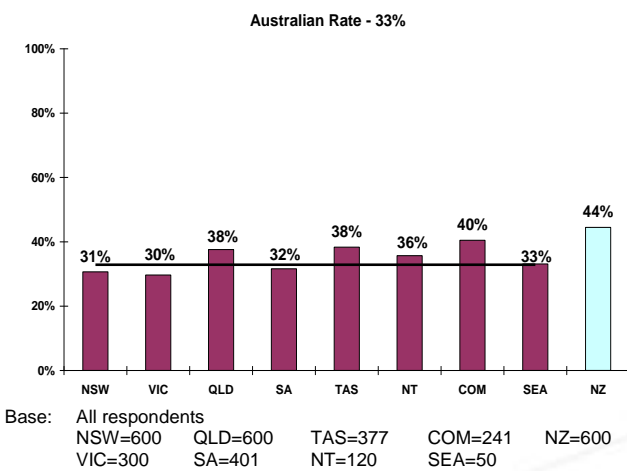
Of all injured workers, one in three (33%) reported that they had time off work because of an earlier claim, that is, they had a "lost time" claim (Figure 24). Injured workers in New Zealand (44%), covered by Comcare (40%), and in Tasmania (38%) and Queensland (38%) were significantly more likely to report a previous lost time claim compared to the Australian national average.

The incidence of previous "lost time" claims has been lower over the last three years of the RTW Monitor compared to earlier years (Figure 25).

Figure 24: Previous lost time claims

Figure 25: Previous lost time claims (Trend)

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



In 2009/10, 33% of injured workers reported a previous lost time claim.

2.4 Reasons for RTW

In total, 85% of Australian injured workers had returned to work. Of these, two in five (40%) stated (without prompting), that their *main* reason for returning to work was that they had *recovered from their injury* (Table 8), while 16% mentioned that they had returned because of *economic need* (16%) and 13% had returned because they *wanted to*.

When injured workers were probed for *any other reasons* for returning to work, *recovered from injury* was mentioned by almost half (46%). Another 26% mentioned that they returned because they *wanted to* and 27% because of *economic need*.

Among injured workers with a durable RTW, *recovered from injury* (47%) and *economic need* (29%) were the main reasons cited for having returned to work compared to those with a non-durable RTW (36% and 16% respectively). While these were also the reasons cited by those injured workers with a non-durable RTW, external influenced, such as pressure from the employer were cited more often by those with a non-durable than durable RTW (9% and 4% respectively).

Perceived recovery was the primary reason for returning to work, while economic need also remains an important driver.

Table 8: Reasons for RTW

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

	Main reason	Total reasons		
		National (2,294) %	National (2,294) %	Durable RTW (2,043) %
Recovered from injury	40	46	47↑	36
Economic need / needed the money	16	27	29↑	16
I wanted to return to work	13	26	26	27
Bored at home	4	10	9	12
Offered alternative duties	7	11	10	15
I was told to return by doctor / doctor's advice	8	11	10	13
Pressured from employer	3	5	4	9↑
Wanted to keep job	2	4	4	4
Benefits stopped / too low	1	2	2	1
Pressured by insurer	1	2	2	1
Supportive employer	0	1	0	1
Offered part-time work	0	1	1	1
Part of RTW plan	1	1	1	1
Self employed / run own business / farm	1	1	1	1
Didn't like being on workers' compensation	-	0	0	0

Base: Have returned to work

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

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

2.4.1 Trend in reasons for RTW by RTW outcome

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

- Close to half have consistently identified *recovered from injury*
- Close to one third identified *economic need* as the reason for RTW
- There has been a declining trend in the proportion of injured workers who *wanted to RTW*.

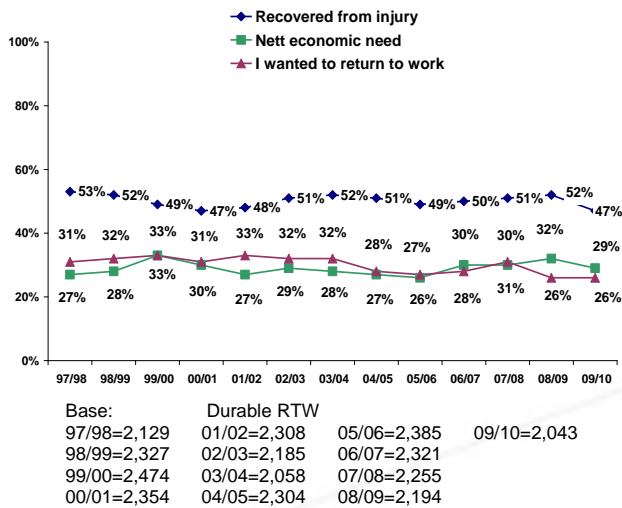
Key reasons over time for RTW among injured workers with a non-durable RTW are:

- There has been an upwards trend in *recovery from injury*
- There has been fluctuation in RTW because of *economic need* and because they *wanted to RTW*.

Durable RTW

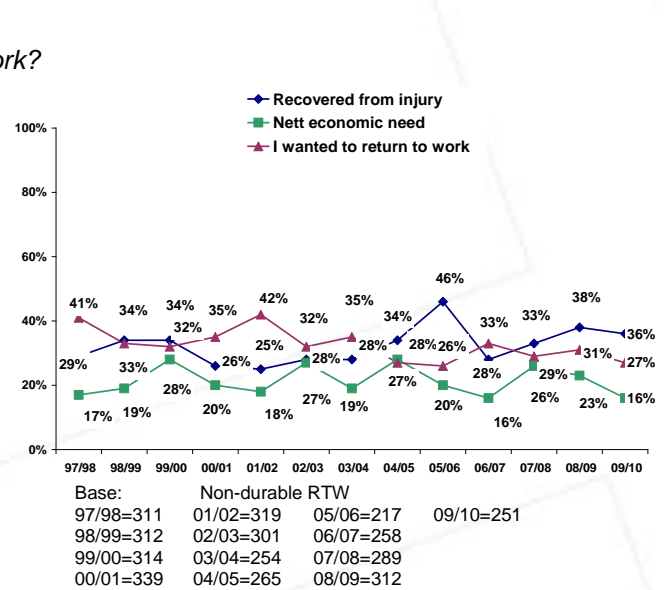
Figure 26: Total reasons for RTW

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



Non-durable RTW

Figure 27: Total reasons for RTW



2.5 Reasons for not working

The National RTW Monitor identifies reasons reported by injured workers for currently not working. Responses to this question are unprompted.

In total, 25% 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 9). Another 7% indicated that their *old injury had got worse*.

Being *still injured* was more often cited as a reason for not working at the time of interview by those who had not returned to work compared to those with a non-durable RTW (73% and 26% respectively). *Injury related reasons* also topped the reasons for not working among those with a non-durable RTW, however, labour market influences also figured quite prominently among those with a non-durable RTW – *no work available/seasonal* (14%).

Table 9: 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 reason	Total reasons		
		National (646) %	National (646) %	No RTW (395) %
Still injured	48	54	73↑	26
New injury	4	5	3	9↑
Old injury got worse / aggravated	7	9	5	16↑
Psychological reasons	2	4	5	3
Can't work in that type of job due to type of injury	1	2	2	2
Retired	1	2	1	3
Resigned	4	6	5	8
Studying	3	4	2	5
No work available / seasonal	6	11	8	14
Employer closed down	1	2	2	2
Retrenched	4	5	4	7
Dismissed by employer	9	12	10	14
Maternity leave	1	1	0	2↑
Work not facilitating return / uncooperative	-	0	-	1
Other	5	7	3	13↑
Don't know	2	5	5	4

Base: Total not working

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

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

Reasons for not working have been summarised as three main types (Figure 29)⁶:

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.

Injury related reasons are lower than they have been compared to earlier years of the Monitor having declined from a high of 77% in 2002/03 to 65% in 2008/09 and 67% in 2009/10 (Figure 28). Injury related reasons were cited by a similar proportion of injured workers in each jurisdiction in 2009/10 (Figure 29).

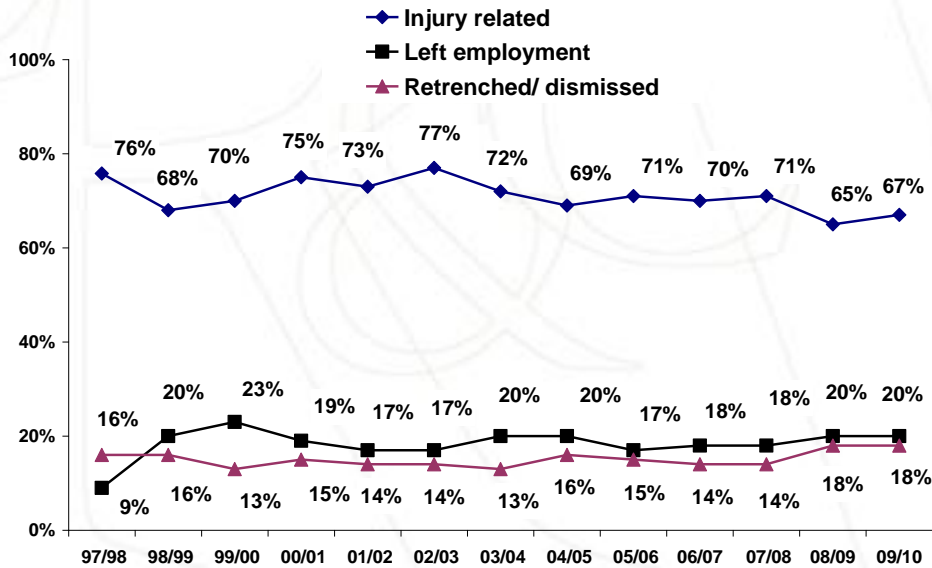
The proportion of injured workers *leaving the workforce voluntarily* has remained relatively stable since 2000/01 (20% in 2009/10), while those not working at the time of interview because they were *retrenched or dismissed* has peaked over the last two years (18% in 2009/10). A lower proportion of injured workers covered by Comcare mentioned these as a reason for not working (5% and 4% respectively).

Injury related reasons remain the single most prominent reason for injured workers being out of the workforce at the time of interview.

⁶ The net categories were amended in the 2007/08 RTW Monitor report. The results will differ slightly too previous reports.

Figure 28: Total reasons for not working (trend)

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently

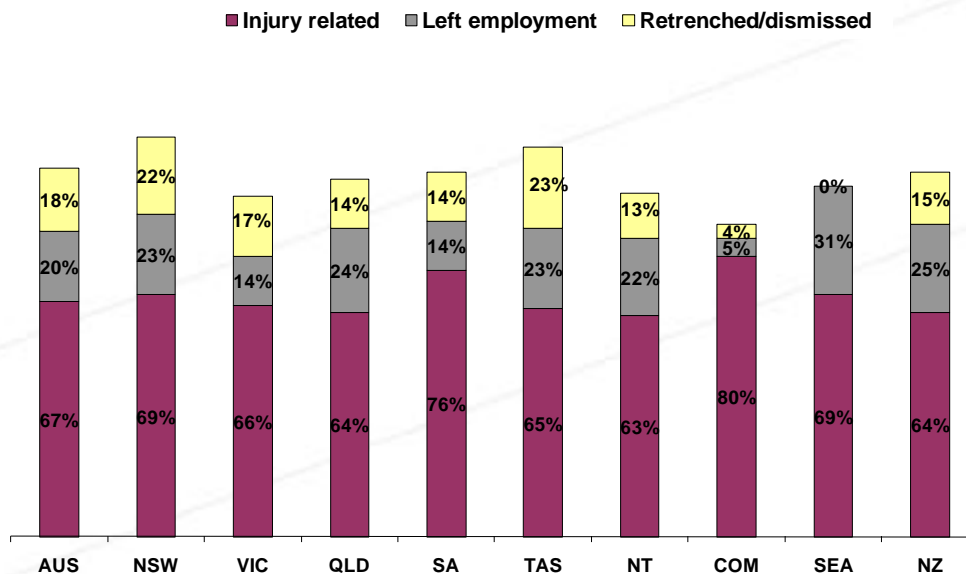


Base: Total not working
 97/98 = 777 00/01 = 841 03/04 = 629 06/07=698 09/10=646
 98/99 = 768 01/02 = 834 04/05 = 691 07/08=762
 99/00 = 745 02/03 = 781 05/06=629 08/09=771
 Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Figure 29: 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?



Base: Total not working
 AUS=646 VIC=76 SA=114 NT=28 SEA=19
 NSW=158 QLD=135 TAS=70 COM=46 NZ=136
 Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.
 Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

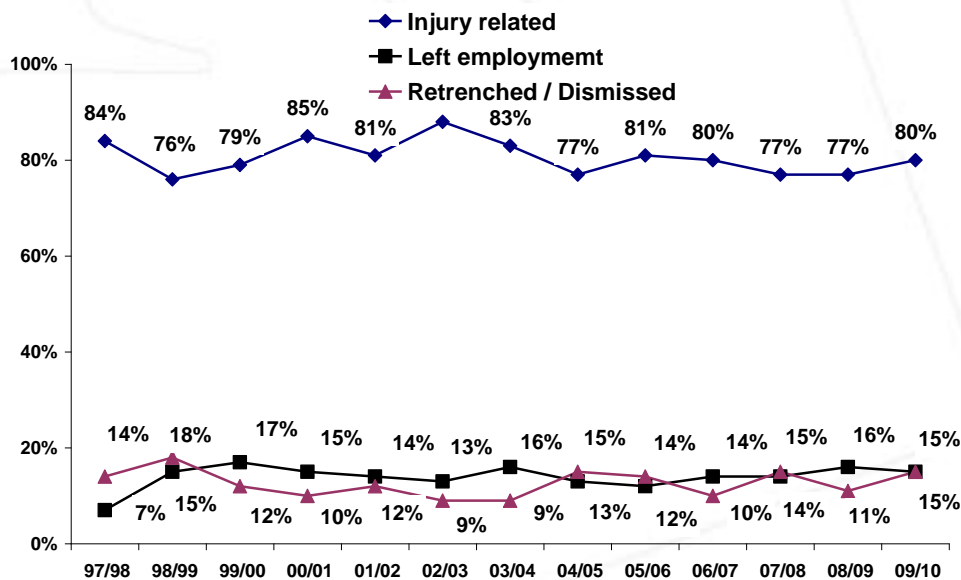
Reasons for not working trend – No RTW

In 2009/10, at the time of interview, 15% 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 four in five (80%) of those who had not returned to work mentioned *injury related* reasons
- 15% either left employment voluntarily or were retrenched or dismissed.

Figure 30: Total reasons for not working – No RTW

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently



Base: Injured workers who had not returned to work
 97/98 = 465 00/01 = 502 03/04 = 373 06/07=437 09/10=395
 98/99 = 456 01/02 = 515 04/05 = 424 07/08=473
 99/00 = 431 02/03 = 478 05/06=410 08/09=459

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

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

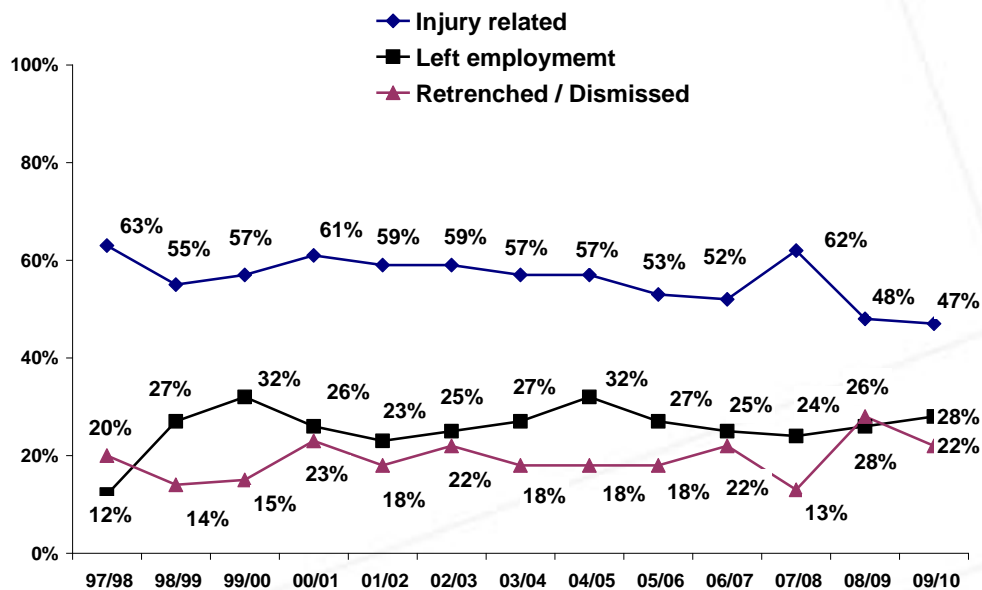
Reasons for not working trend – Non-durable RTW

In 2009/10, by the time of interview, 10% 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 32):

- *Injury related* reasons were the lowest recorded (47%) falling significantly from 2007/08 (62%)
- Being *retrenched or dismissed* was mentioned more often in 2009/10 (22%) compared to, most recently 2007/08 (13%)
- Those who *left employment voluntarily* have approximated one in four of those with a non-durable RTW (28% in 2009/10).

Figure 31: Total reasons for not working – Non-durable RTW

Q9a/b. All reasons for not working currently



Base: Injured workers who had a non-durable RTW
 97/98 = 311 00/01 = 339 03/04 = 254 06/07=258 09/10=251
 98/99 = 312 01/02 = 319 04/05 = 265 07/08=289
 99/00 = 314 02/03 = 301 05/06=217 08/09=312
 Note: Results may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Over the last two years, injury related reasons have declined as the reason for those with a non-durable RTW not working at the time of interview.

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
- The helpfulness of the RTW plan from the perspective of the injured worker.

2.6.1 Development of and involvement in RTW plan

Almost six in ten (56%) injured workers nationally reported they had a RTW plan developed for them (Figure 32). There was no significant difference in the proportion of injured workers who received a RTW plan who had a durable RTW (56%) compared to those with a non-durable RTW (63%) and no RTW (53%).

While wide variations between jurisdictions have been observed over the thirteen years of the Monitor, RTW plans were more frequently reported among injured workers in South Australia (69%), Tasmania (66%) and by injured workers covered by Comcare (69%) compared to the Australian national average. A below average proportion of RTW plans were observed for Queensland (47%) and New Zealand⁷ (37%) injured workers and those covered by Seacare (34%).

Since the commencement of the Monitor, the proportion of injured workers reporting the development of RTW plans has steadily increased with more reporting receiving a RTW plan in 2009/10 than ever before and in comparison to 2008/09 (53%).

⁷ In New Zealand, RTW plans are not a requirement for claims under 13 weeks.

Figure 32: Development of RTW plan

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.

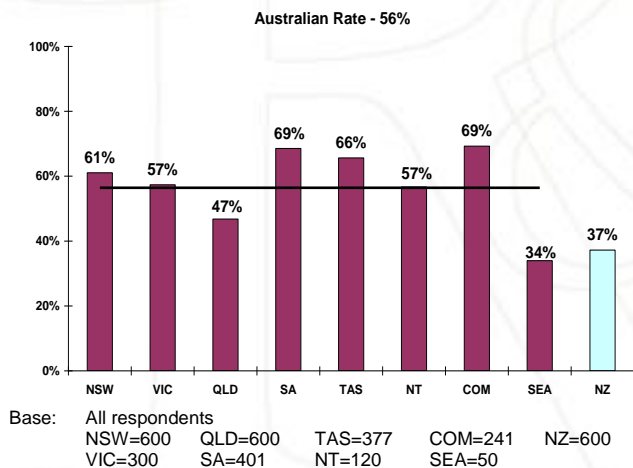
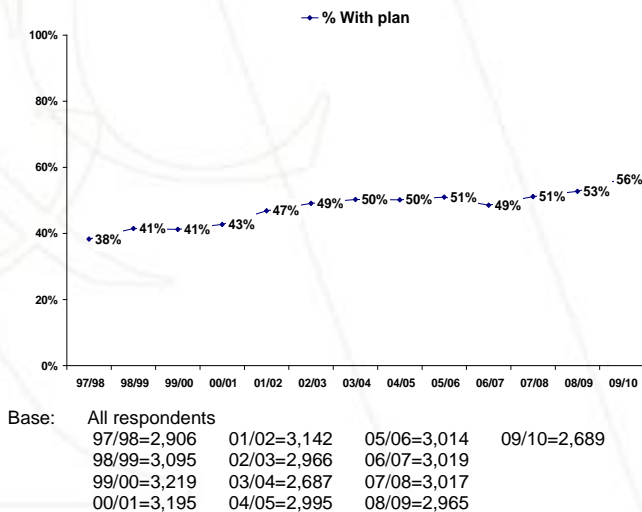


Figure 33: Development of RTW plan (Trend)



In 2009/10, 56% of Australian injured workers reported having a RTW plan, which was higher than all previous years of the Monitor, including 2008/09.

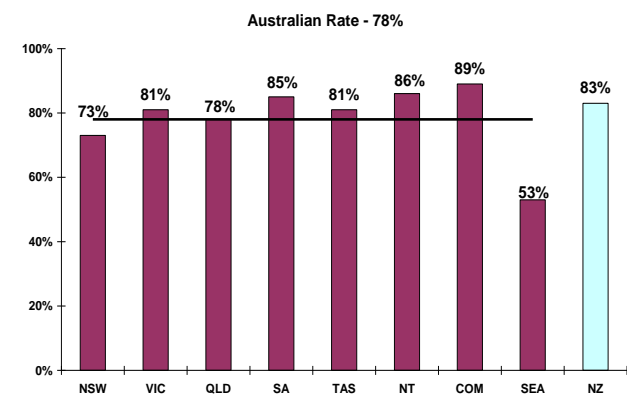
Injured workers with a RTW plan were also asked if they had been involved in the development of that plan.⁸ Four in five (78%) injured workers with a RTW plan indicated that they had been involved in its development. Involvement in the development of the plan was higher for those with a durable RTW (80%), compared to those who had no RTW (70%).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (89%) and in South Australia (85%) were more likely to be involved in the development of a RTW plan compared to the Australian average (Figure 34).

Since November 2000, all jurisdictions have been asked about injured worker involvement in RTW plans. With the exception of a slight decline in 2008/09, involvement in the development of the RTW plan has remained stable over time (Figure 35).

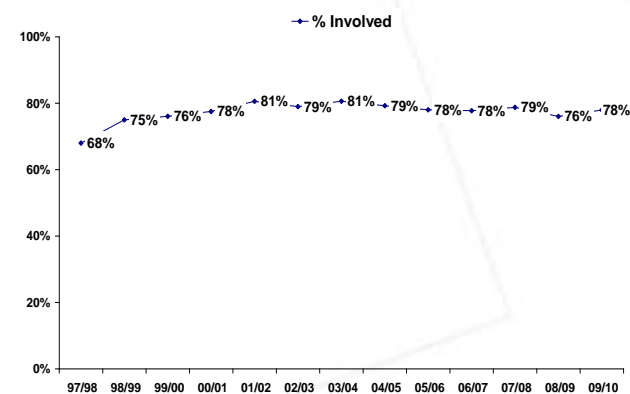
Figure 34: Involvement in RTW plan

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



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=366 QLD=281 TAS=247 COM=167 NZ=223
 VIC=172 SA=275 NT=68 SEA=17
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 35: Involvement in RTW plan (Trend)



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=252 01/02=1,582 05/06=1,666 09/10=1,593
 98/99=327 02/03=1,541 06/07=1,591
 99/00=473 03/04=1,419 07/08=1,670
 00/01=1,506 04/05=1,633 08/09=1,639

In 2009/10, 78% of Australian injured workers with a RTW plan were involved in the development of the plan.

⁸ Prior to November 2001, this question was only asked in Victoria, ACT and Comcare.

2.6.2 Helpfulness of RTW plan

Seven in ten (73%) injured workers who received a RTW plan considered the plan to be helpful (Figure 36). Injured workers who had a durable RTW (79%) were more likely to consider the plan helpful compared to those with a non-durable RTW (58%) or no RTW (53%). Injured workers involved in the development of the RTW plan were also more likely to rate the plan helpful (80%) than those who had no involvement in the development of the plan (47%).

Injured workers covered by Comcare (81%) and in Queensland (79%) were more likely to have found the plan helpful compared to the Australian average. South Australian injured workers were least likely to have found the plan helpful (65%) with 26% indicating that the plan was not helpful.

Over the last four years, there has been a declining trend in the perceived helpfulness of the RTW plan (Figure 37).

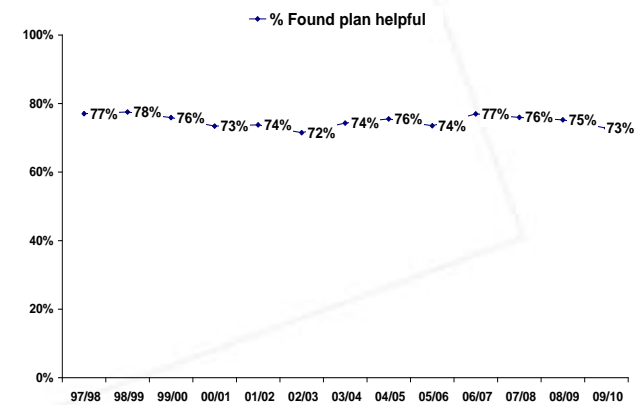
Figure 36: Helpfulness of RTW plan

Q15. Was the plan helpful?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=366 QLD=281 TAS=247 COM=167 NZ=223
 VIC=172 SA=275 NT=68 SEA=17
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 37: Helpfulness of RTW plan (Trend)



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=1,329 01/02=1,582 05/06=1,666 09/10=1,593
 98/99=1,483 02/03=1,541 06/07=1,591
 99/00=1,510 03/04=1,419 07/08=1,670
 00/01=1,506 04/05=1,633 08/09=1,639

In 2009/10, 73% of Australian injured workers who received a RTW plan considered it helpful. This proportion has been declining over the past four years.

2.6.3 Given help to follow RTW plan

Six in ten (60%) injured workers in Australia who received a RTW plan reported they were given help to do what was recommended in their RTW plan (Figure 38). Injured workers who had a durable RTW (63%) were more likely to report being given help to follow the RTW plan compared to those with a non-durable RTW (52%) or no RTW (46%).

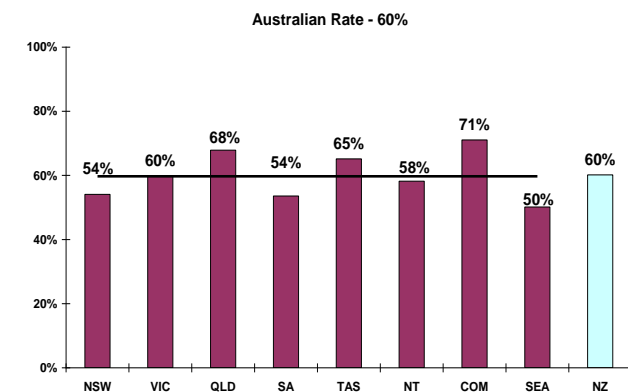
Assistance with following the RTW plan was highest among injured workers covered by Comcare (71%) and in Queensland (68%). While assistance was lowest for injured workers in South Australia (54%), with 40% indicating that they were not given help to follow their RTW plan.

The proportion of injured workers given help to do what was recommended in the RTW has remained stable over the last seven years. (Figure 39).

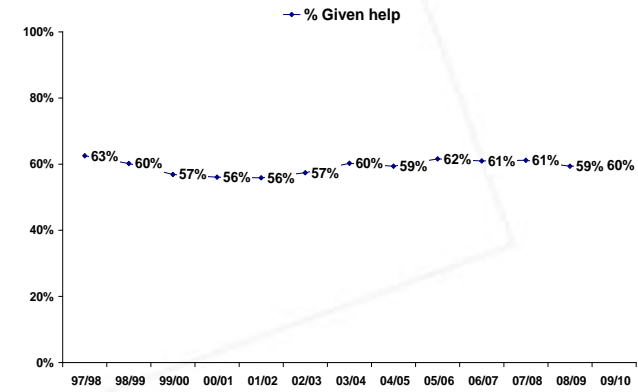
Figure 38: Given assistance to follow RTW plan

Figure 39: Given assistance to follow RTW plan (Trend)

Q16. Were you given help to follow RTW plan?



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 NSW=366 QLD=281 TAS=247 COM=167 NZ=223
 VIC=172 SA=275 NT=68 SEA=17
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.



Base: Received RTW/rehabilitation plan
 97/98=1,329 01/02=1,582 05/06=1,666 09/10=1,593
 98/99=1,483 02/03=1,541 06/07=1,591
 99/00=1,510 03/04=1,419 07/08=1,670
 00/01=1,506 04/05=1,633 08/09=1,639

In 2009/10, 60% of Australian injured workers who received a RTW plan were given assistance to follow the plan.

When asked *who helped* with the RTW plan (Table 10) in most cases it was someone within the workplace (overall 35% mentioned 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 at work (11%). Injured workers from New Zealand (20%) were less likely, to mention a person from work helping with the RTW plan. In contrast, those covered by Comcare were more likely to mention a person from work helping with the RTW plan and this was often the main supervisor at work.

Help from outside the workplace generally came from the rehabilitation provider (14%). Injured workers covered by Comcare (39%) in the Northern Territory (26%) and Tasmania (24%) more frequently mentioned rehabilitation providers as providing help with the RTW plan.

A minority of Australian injured workers received help from their insurer (4%), with a higher incidence in New Zealand (17%) – in New Zealand the ACC is the equivalent of the insurer in Australian jurisdictions.

Table 10: People who helped with RTW plan

Q16b. *Who gave you that help? Did anyone else help?*

	AUS (1,593) %	NSW (366) %	VIC (172) %	QLD (281) %	SA (275) %	TAS (247) %	NT (68) %	COM (167) %	SEA (17)* %	NZ (223) %
Someone from work (net)	35	31	38	39	29	33	28	45↑	22	20↓
Rehab provider (outside work)	14	11	14	15	16	24↑	26↑	39↑	34	14
Employer	15	17	13	16	15	17	15	17	5	11
Main supervisor at work	13	11	15	16	9	11	3↓	23↑	-	11
Workplace rehab coordinator (at work)	11	6↓	16	15	7	8	9	13	17	-↓
Someone else	12	9	13	14	9	10	5	19↑	7	6↓
Doctor	9	8	8	8	10	11	9	14↑	12	6
Insurer	4	5	2	5	3	7	7	2	5	17↑
Myself	1	1	1	1	1	2	-	1	-	0

Base Received RTW/rehabilitation plan

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

Note: ↑ (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, a non-durable RTW or no RTW were equally as likely to have a RTW plan developed for them. Those who had a durable RTW were also more likely than those who had not returned to work (and generally those who had a non-durable RTW) to (Table 11):

- 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 11: Summary of RTW plans by RTW outcomes

	AUS (2,689) %	Durable RTW (2,043) %	Non-durable RTW (251) %	NO RTW (395) %
Development of RTW plan	56	56	63	53
	(1,593) %	(1,208) %	(157) %	(228) %
Involvement in RTW plan	78	80↑	76	70↓
Helpfulness of RTW plan	73	79↑	58↓	53↓
Given assistance to follow RTW plan	60	63↑	53↓	47↓
Someone from work helped with RTW plan	35	41↑	25↓	13↓

Base All respondents; Received RTW/rehabilitation plan

Note: ↑ (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 2009/10, over seven in ten (73%) Australian injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so (Figure 40). Readiness to RTW was higher among those with a durable RTW (74%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (60%).

A higher proportion of injured workers from Seacare (92%) who had returned to work felt ready to do so compared to other jurisdictions.

Over the thirteen years of the Monitor, between 72% and 78% of injured workers, who had returned to work, indicated that they felt ready to do so. The incidence this year (73%) represents one of the lower periods (Figure 41).

Figure 40: Readiness to RTW

Q7. Did you feel ready to return to work?

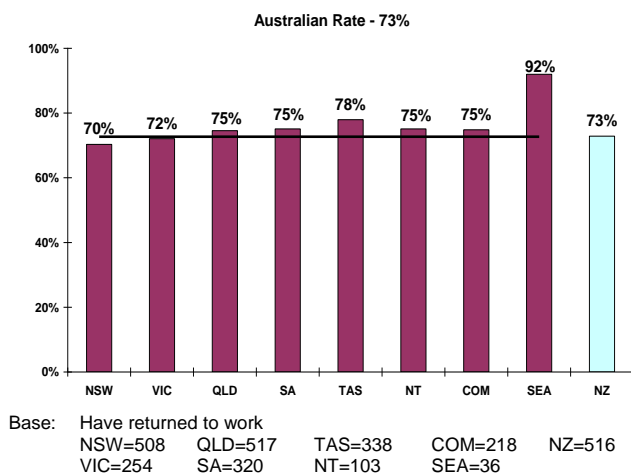
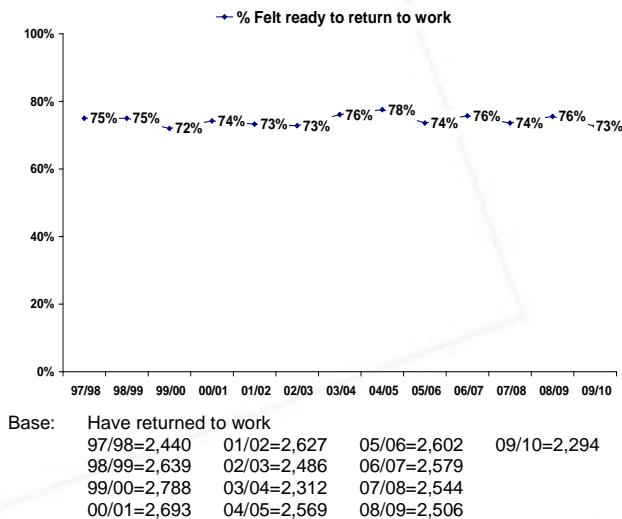


Figure 41: Readiness to RTW (Trend)



In 2009/10, 73% of Australian injured workers who returned to work felt ready to do so.

2.7.2 Reasons for not feeling ready to RTW

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

Four in five (82%) of all injured workers who reported that they were not ready to RTW, or 20% of all injured workers who had returned to work, reported that they weren't ready to RTW because they were *still injured or in pain*. This finding has remained fairly consistent over the course of the Monitor.

One in ten (11%) reported that they had felt *pressured by their employer/insurer/doctor*, to return to work even though they didn't feel ready to, while under one in ten (7%) indicated that the *duties or hours were not appropriate* or that they were *mentally unprepared to RTW* (6%). Comcare injured workers were less likely to mention still being injured or in pain (67%), but more likely to feel they were mentally unprepared for a RTW (13%) compared to the Australian national average.

Table 12: Reasons for not feeling ready to RTW

Q7a.	What was the reason you did not feel ready to return to work?									
	AUS (513) %	NSW (132) %	VIC (62) %	QLD (117) %	SA (73) %	TAS (60) %	NT (20) %	COM (47) %	NZ (126) %	
Still injured/in pain	82	81	76	88	89	80	76	67↓	87	
Employer/insurer/doctor pressure	11	14	10	10	9	3	31	2	8	
Duties/hours were not appropriate	7	6	6	10	1	15↑	5	13	9	
Mentally unprepared	6	8	5	3	7	3	-	13↑	2	
Did not want to jeopardise position/lose job	1	2	2	-	-	-	5	-	2	
Employer promised but did not give alternative duties/hours	0	1	-	-	1	2	-	2	2	
Had to RTW against doctor's advice	1	-	2	2	1	-	5	-	-	
Felt it was necessary to aid recovery	2	3	3	1	-	2	4	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=2).

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

In 2009/10, 82% of injured workers in Australia who had returned to work but did not feel ready to, reported that they were *still injured* or *in pain*.

2.7.3 Suitable duties at RTW

Over four in five (82%) Australian injured workers reported suitable duties at RTW (Figure 42), while under one in five (17%) considered the duties they were given at RTW *not* suitable. The perception of suitable duties was higher among those with a durable RTW (83%) compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (76%).

Injured workers from New Zealand (75%) and those covered by Seacare (60%), were less likely than the Australian national average to report that their duties at the time of their RTW were suitable (Figure 42).

Since 2003/04, at least four in five injured workers have reported that their duties at the time of their RTW were suitable (Figure 43).

Figure 42: Suitable duties at RTW

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

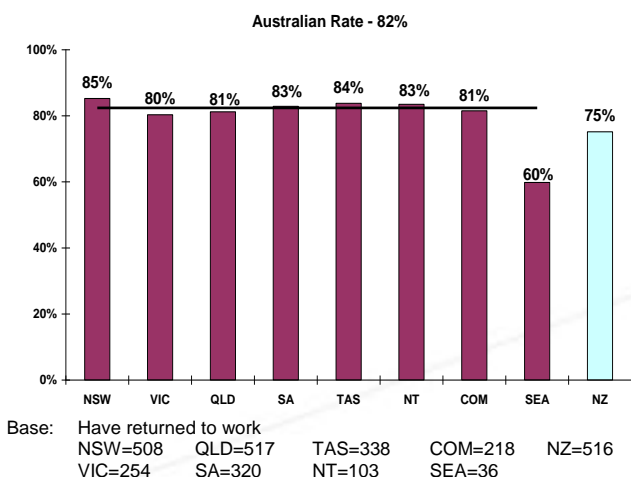
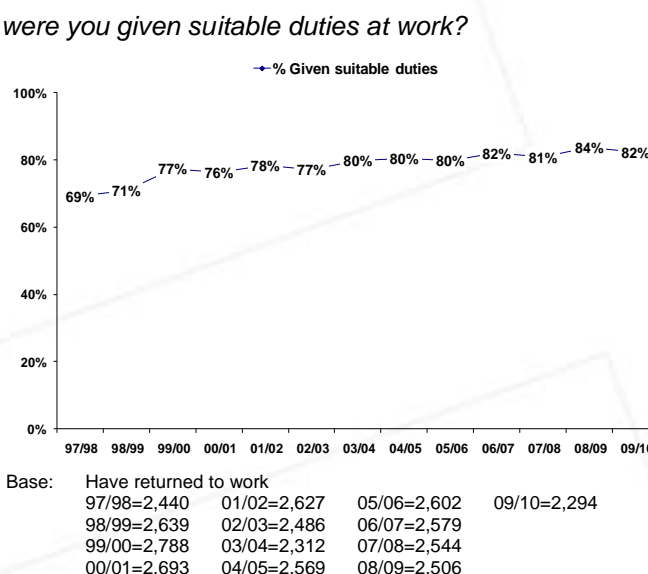


Figure 43: Suitable duties at RTW (Trend)



In 2009/10, 82% of Australian injured workers, who had returned to work, reported suitable duties at the time of RTW.

2.7.4 Changed duties at RTW

Injured workers who had returned to work 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 have also helped to identify partial RTW and reduced hours at RTW.

Seven in ten (69%) 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 44). While not evident in Figure 44, changes in duties predominantly included *lighter duties* and *no heavy lifting*.

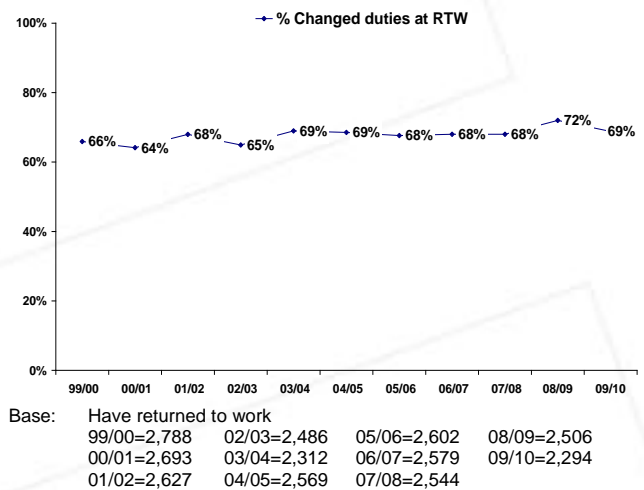
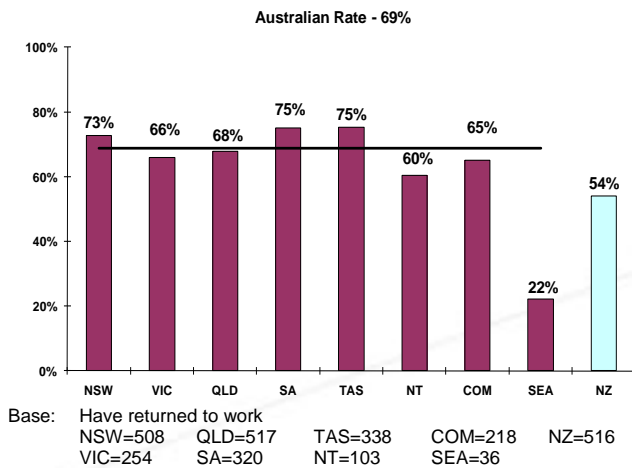
A change in duties was less common among those injured workers covered by Seacare (22%) and those in New Zealand (54%) compared to the Australian national average. The low proportion of injured workers covered by Seacare who changed duties at RTW reflects the requirement of seamen to be fully fit to work on ships at sea.

The proportion of injured workers reporting changed duties at the time they returned to work has remained fairly stable over the course of the Monitor.

Figure 44: Changed duties at RTW

Figure 45: Changed duties at RTW (Trend)

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



In 2009/10, 69% of injured workers in Australia who returned to work reported some change in their duties.

Three in five (61%) Australian injured workers reported they were given lighter duties at RTW (Figure 46) including:

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

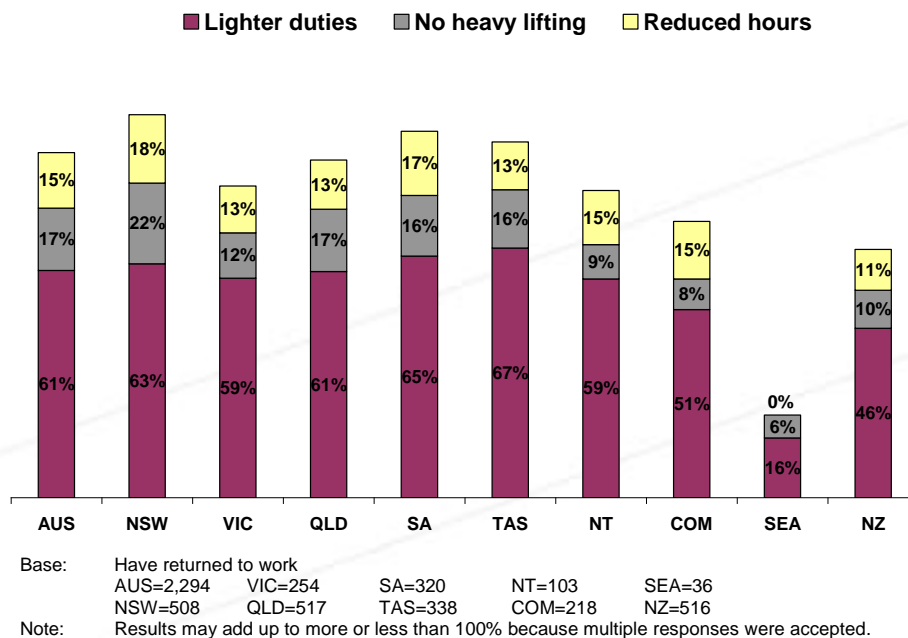
One in five (17%) injured workers in Australia reported being given duties that did not require heavy lifting.

Reduced hours (which was not included in the “net change in duties at RTW”) was mentioned by over one in ten (15%) injured workers, although no injured worker covered by Seacare mentioned having reduced hours.

Overall, one in five (23%) 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 (69%) were the most likely to report that their duties had not changed, followed by those in New Zealand (39%) and covered by Comcare (29%).

Figure 46: Type of change in duties at RTW (Comparative)

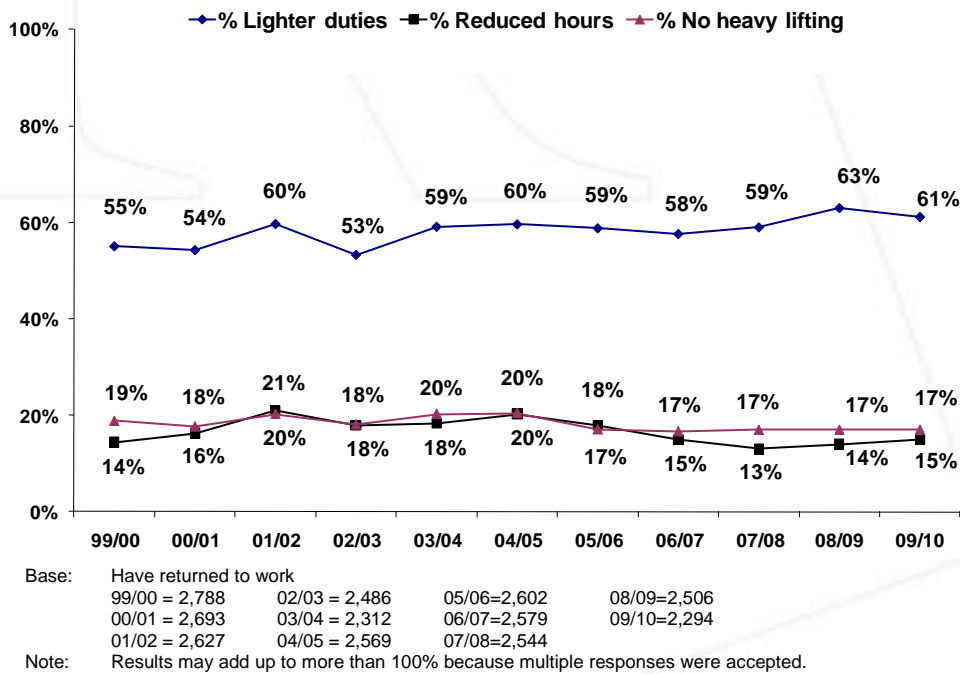
Q5a. *What was different about your duties when you returned to work?*



In general, since 2003/04 the proportion of injured workers who reported lighter duties at the time of RTW has approximated six in ten, and with more taking on lighter duties compared to earlier years. This suggests that employers are becoming more aware and supportive of helping injured workers RTW, and this may also account for the decline in the proportion of injured workers reporting reduced hours and no heavy lifting, as these may be accommodated for in lighter duties (Figure 47).

Figure 47: Type of change in duties at RTW (Trend)

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

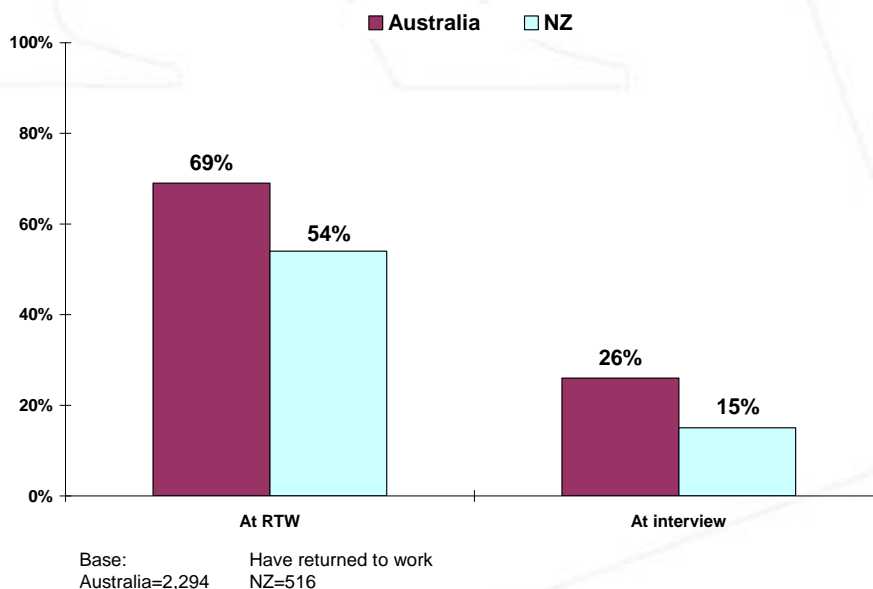


Changes in duties at RTW were generally temporary. Among Australian injured workers, seven in ten (69%) reported a change in duties at the time of RTW, however, at the time of interview (or leaving work for those with a non-durable RTW) this had declined to one in four (26%) (Figure 48).

A similar pattern was also evident among New Zealand injured workers, with 54% reporting a change in duties at return to work (lower when compared to the Australian national average) and declining to 15% at the time of interview.

Figure 48: 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 10). Over one in four (27%) of all injured workers (or 32% of those who had returned to work) returned to work on a partial basis at the time of RTW (Figure 49). There was no difference between those with a durable RTW (31%) and those who had a non-durable RTW (32%).

It should be noted that some injured workers (5%) were unsure whether they were receiving workers' compensation payments or not.

At a jurisdictional level, the partial RTW rate was higher in South Australia (36%) and lower for injured workers covered by Seacare (2%) and in New Zealand (19%) compared to the Australian national average. The partial RTW rate is the highest it has ever been and, most recently, significantly higher than the 2006/07 rate (Figure 50).

Figure 49: Partial RTW rate at RTW⁹

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

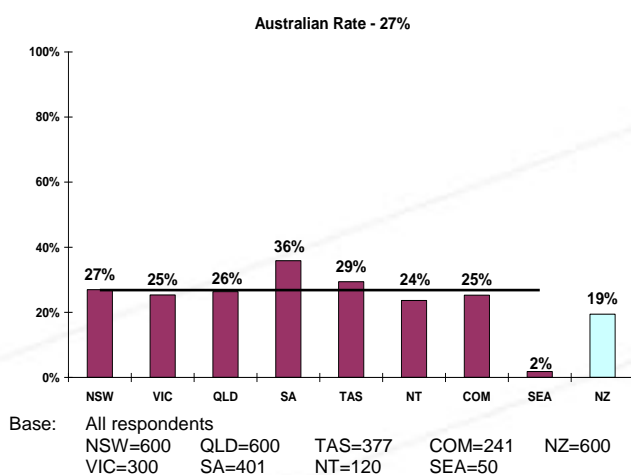
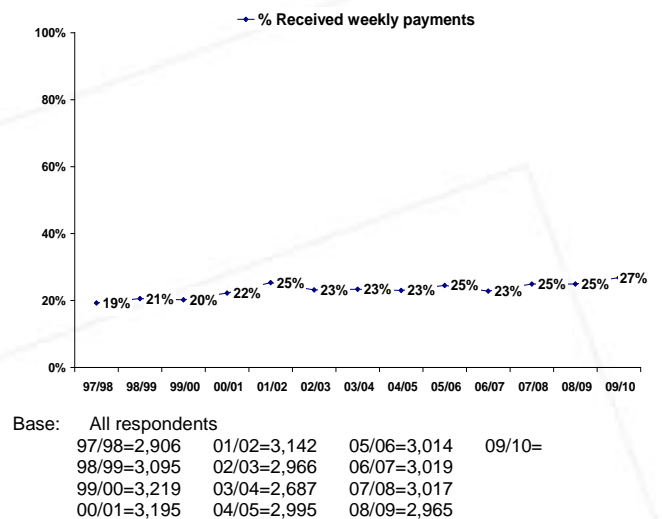


Figure 50: Partial RTW rate at RTW (Trend)



⁹ Previously reported on the base “have returned to work”.

In 2009/10, the partial RTW rate (27%), representing the proportion of Australian injured workers who were still receiving workers' compensation payments at the time of their RTW, is the highest it has ever been.

2.9 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 (52%) returned to their previous hours (Figure 51). Those with a durable RTW (53%) were more likely to have returned to their pre-injury hours compared to those who had a non-durable RTW (42%).

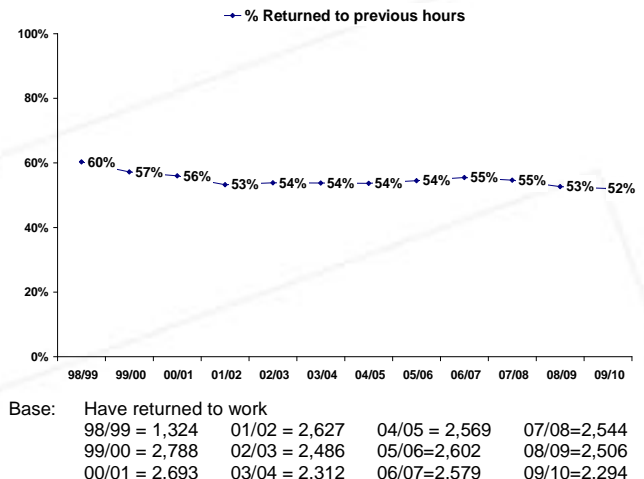
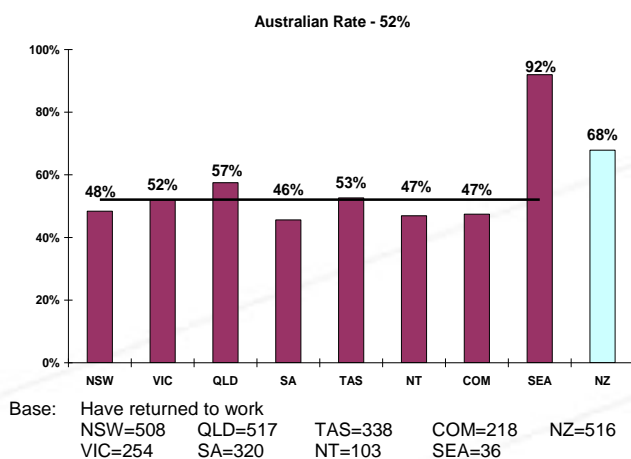
There was a higher rate of return to previous hours for injured workers covered by Seacare (92%), in New Zealand (68%) and Queensland (57%), while injured workers in South Australia (46%) had a lower return to previous hours compared to the Australian national average.

The proportion of injured workers returning to their pre-injury hours has essentially been stable over the last nine years of the Monitor (Figure 52).

Figure 51: Returned to previous hours

Figure 52: Returned to previous hours (Trend)

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



In 2009/10, 52% of injured workers who had returned to work, returned to their pre-injury hours.

2.10 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 13).

Perceptions of readiness to RTW, the availability of suitable duties at the time of RTW and returning to their previous hours were all significantly higher among those with a durable RTW compared to those with a non-durable RTW (Table 13). Interestingly, there was no difference in the proportion of injured workers with a durable RTW and non-durable RTW who changed their duties at the time of their RTW.

Table 13: Summary of RTW process measure at time of RTW by RTW outcomes

	AUS (2,689) %	Durable RTW (2,043) %	Non-durable RTW (251) %
Partial RTW rate at RTW	27	31	32
	(2,294) %	(2,043) %	(251) %
Readiness to RTW	73	74↑	60↓
Suitable duties at RTW	82	83↑	76↓
Changed duties at RTW	69	70	68
Returned to previous hours	52	53↑	42↓

Base: All respondents; have returned to work

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

2.11 Sources of assistance with RTW

Assistance to RTW is measured in a two ways:

- Injured workers are asked, *without prompting*, who helped the most and who helped the least in their RTW
- 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.

These findings are discussed in the following sections.

2.11.1 Who helped injured workers RTW the most?

Australian injured workers identified doctors (21%), physiotherapists (17%) and someone from work (16%) as helping the most with their RTW (Figure 53). The high proportion of injured workers identifying *doctors* as the person who provided the most help in getting them back to work was in contrast to the proportion identifying doctors assisting with RTW plans (Section 2.6.3).

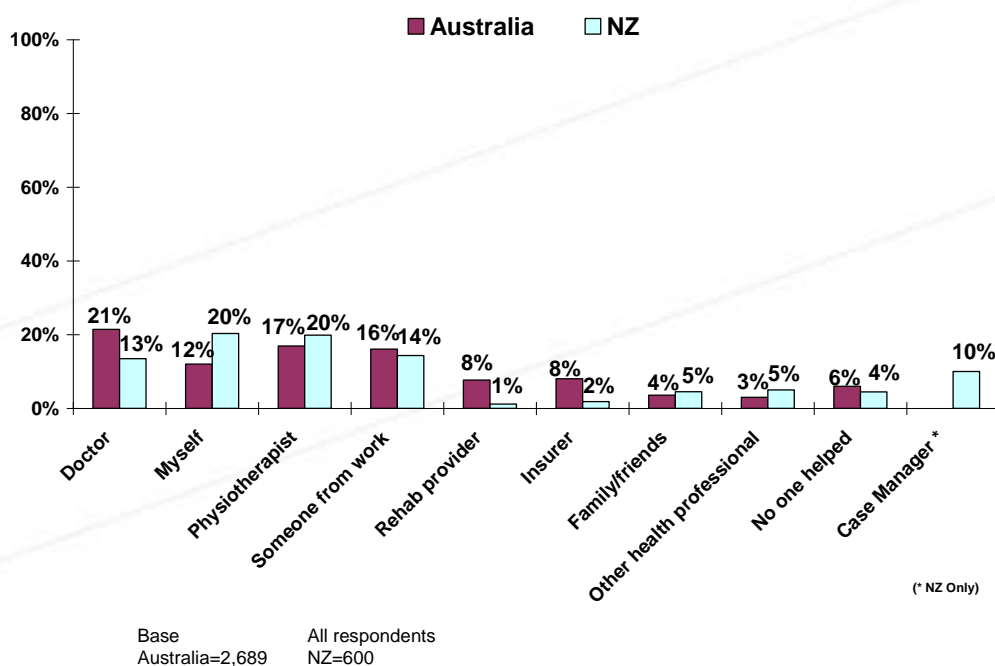
When injured workers reported someone from work as the most helpful to their RTW they were then asked “*Who was that person from work?*”: Of these, 36% identified their supervisor, 35% identified their employer, while other people were mentioned less often including: OH&S officer (10%); the HR Department (7%); a workmate (4%); and a RTW coordinator or rehabilitation officer (3%).

New Zealand injured workers most often identified physiotherapists (20%), someone from work (14%), their doctor (13%) and their Case Manager (10%) as the most help in their RTW.

Only 12% of Australian injured workers considered that they themselves were most instrumental in the RTW process, while 20% of New Zealand injured workers felt that they were most instrumental in the RTW process

Figure 53: 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, physiotherapists and someone from work were often identified as providing most help with getting the injured worker back to work.

In absolute terms, in all jurisdictions *doctors* were mentioned more than any other professional as helping with RTW, particularly among injured workers in New South Wales (26%).

Physiotherapists were less often identified as helping with the RTW for those in South Australia (11%) and covered by Comcare (12%).

Rehabilitation providers were more likely to be mentioned by injured workers covered by Comcare (18%), in South Australia (16%), Tasmania (13%) and the Northern Territory (14%) compared to the national average (8%). Few New Zealand injured workers mentioned rehabilitation providers (1%).

The *insurer* was seen to play a greater role in the RTW process in Queensland where 14% of injured workers identified Q-COMP as providing the most help with the RTW compared to the national average of 8%.

Table 14: People who were the most help

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

	AUS (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Doctor	21	26↑	23	16↓	18	24	15	21	18	13↓
Physiotherapist	17	17	17	19	11↓	15	20	12↓	10	20
Someone from work	16	15	19	14	14	13	14	20	16	14
Myself	12	11	12	13	15	14	12	13	16	20↑
Rehabilitation provider	8	9	6	5↓	16↑	13↑	14↑	18↑	11	1↓
Insurer	8	6	5	14↑	9	6	5	2↓	4	2↓
Family/wife/husband/friend	4	3	2	5	5	4	4	2	6	5
Other health professional	3	2	3	2	3	1	4	4	2	5↑
No one helped	6	5	7	6	5	6	8	3	10	4

Base: All respondents

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

2.11.2 Who helped injured workers RTW the least?

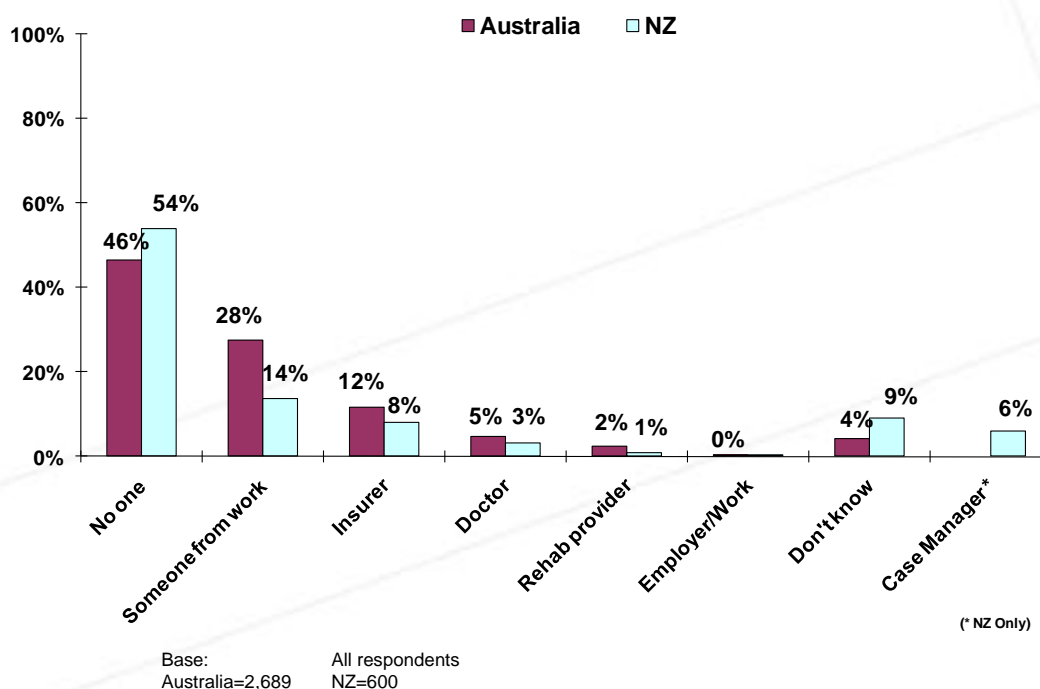
Injured workers had difficulty in identifying the person who was the least helpful with their RTW, with almost five in ten (46%) injured workers in Australia and significantly more in New Zealand (54%) not being able to identify anybody.

When injured workers did identify a person as least helpful, the person was most likely to be someone from work or the insurer. Three in ten (28%) Australian injured workers identified someone from work and one in eight (12%) reported their insurer/Scheme/WorkCover was the least helpful with their RTW. These incidences were significantly lower in New Zealand (14% and 8% respectively).

When injured workers reported someone from the workplace as *least* helpful to RTW they were asked “Who was that person from work?”. Of these, 61% of Australian injured workers identified their employer, significantly more than New Zealand injured workers (81%), 24% identified their supervisor. Other people were also mentioned but less often, including: the HR Department (5%); a workmate (3%); and OH&S officer (2%).

Figure 54: People who were the least help to RTW

Q29. *And who helped you the least?*



Injured workers were most likely to identify someone from work as being unhelpful in their RTW process.

2.11.3 Rating of helpfulness of those involved in RTW process

The person who helped the most or least provides an unprompted identification of who injured workers could expect to get help from in returning to work. Prompted ratings of those who were involved in the RTW process also provide a comparative "evaluation".

Injured workers were asked to rate a range of different people who may have helped or made it harder for them to get back to work. These were assigned a value from one to five, where one was "*made it a lot harder*", five was "*helped a lot*" and three indicated "*neither helpful nor unhelpful*". The mean score for all injured workers is reported and the proportion who indicated that a person helped (*a lot or a little*) and made it harder (*a lot or a little*) for the injured workers to get back to work.

Doctors (79%), rehabilitation providers (74%) and work rehabilitation coordinators (59%) were rated the most helpful in getting Australian injured workers back to work (Table 15). Close to half of Australian injured workers rated their work supervisor (50%), employer (51%) and insurer (45%) as helping them get back to work and just over one in ten rated them as making it harder to return to work (14%, 16% and 11% respectively). This result aligns with an earlier result where injured workers, without prompting, were most likely to identify someone from work as being least helpful in the RTW process (Section 2.11.2).

There were a number of differences in the helpfulness rating between jurisdictions compared to the Australian national rating:

- 79% of injured workers rated their **doctor** as having helped in the RTW process
 - more injured workers covered by Comcare (90%) felt the doctor helped
 - fewer from Queensland (72%) and New Zealand (70%) felt their doctor helped
- 74% of injured workers rated their **rehabilitation provider** as having helped
 - more injured workers from New South Wales (79%) felt the rehabilitation provider helped
 - fewer from New Zealand (62%), South Australia (68%) and Tasmania (68%) felt the rehabilitation provider helped

- 59% of injured workers rated their **work rehabilitation coordinator** as having helped
 - fewer from New Zealand (53%) felt the work rehabilitation coordinator helped
- 51% of injured workers rated their **employer** as having helped
 - fewer from New Zealand (11%) felt they made it harder to RTW
- 50% of injured workers rated their **main supervisor** as having helped
 - more injured workers covered by Comcare (59%) considered that their supervisor had helped them RTW
 - fewer from Seacare (32%) thought that supervisor had helped
 - fewer from New Zealand (7%) felt they made it harder to RTW
- 45% of injured workers rated their **insurer** as having helped
 - more injured workers from Queensland (53%) felt that the insurer had helped
 - fewer from Tasmania (38%) and Seacare (25%) thought that the insurer had helped them with their RTW.

Table 15: Rating of people who helped/made it harder to RTW

Q21a-f. For each person I would like you to tell me if what they are doing is helping you get back to work, making it harder to get back to work or having no effect on you getting back to work...

Indicative base for jurisdictions		AUS (2,689)	NSW (600)	VIC (300)	QLD (600)	SA (401)	TAS (377)	NT (120)	COM (241)	SEA (50)	NZ (600)
Mean rating out of 5		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Doctor (n=2,617)	Helped	79	82	80	72↓	81	79	75	90↑	68	70↓
	Harder	4	4	2	5	4	4	3	1	4	3
	Mean	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.1↓	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.6↑	4.2	4.2↓
Rehab provider (n=1,989)	Helped	74	79↑	75	70	68↓	68↓	75	80	77	62↓
	Harder	4	6	2	4	4	6	3	6	-	2
	Mean	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.1↓	4.1↓	4.3	4.3	4.3	3.9↓
Work rehab coord. (n=1,810)	Helped	59	56	61	59	60	64	70	55	64	53↓
	Harder	8	10	8	6	5	6	5	6	4	9
	Mean	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0↑	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.7
Supervisor (n=2,362)	Helped	50	51	46	51	49	52	50	59↑	32↓	50
	Harder	14	14	15	13	15	13	19	14	2↓	7↓
	Mean	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.8↑
Employer (n=2,528)	Helped	51	52	51	49	51	52	49	56	43	54
	Harder	16	18	16	14	18	14	21	13	13	11↓
	Mean	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.8↑
Insurer (n=2,485)	Helped	45	44	41	53↑	41	38↓	38	41	25↓	49
	Harder	11	13	12	9	9	10	15	12	12	11
	Mean	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.8↑	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.6

Base: All respondents who provided a rating

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

At least six in ten Australian injured workers considered their doctors (79%), rehabilitation providers (74%) and work rehabilitation coordinators (59%) helpful in getting the injured worker back to work. Close to half of Australian injured workers rated their work supervisor (50%), employer (51%) and insurer (45%) as helping in the RTW process.

2.11.4 Rating of helpfulness of insurer involved in RTW process

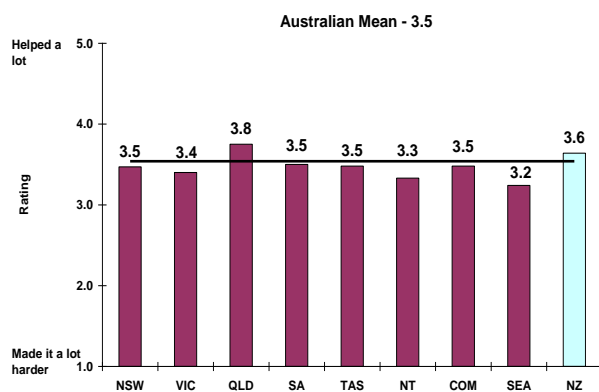
This section of the report provides a more detailed analysis of injured workers' perception of the helpfulness of the insurer in the RTW process over time. In South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria this relates to the companies, mostly insurance companies, who act as agents for the regulator, while in New Zealand it is the Accident Compensation Corporation.

In 2009/10, 42% of Australian injured workers rated their insurer as helpful in their RTW process (27% felt they helped a lot and 14% a little). The helpfulness of Australian insurers has improved over the course of the Monitor, with the last five years relatively stable and achieving an average helpfulness rating of 3.5 in 2009/10.

Injured workers in Queensland (3.8) gave a higher rating of helpfulness for their insurer compared to the Australian national average (3.5) (Figure 55).

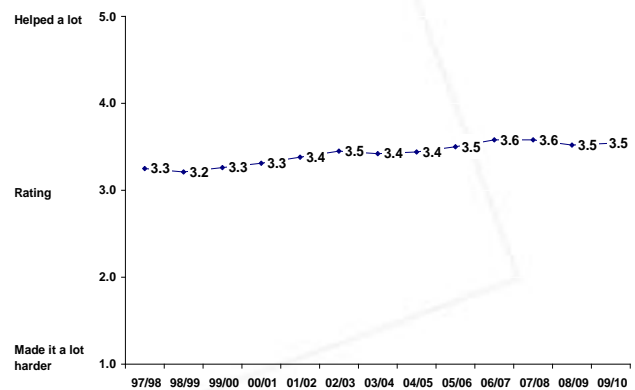
Figure 55: Rating of insurer helpfulness

Q21c. Helpfulness rating of insurer



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 QLD=600 TAS=377 COM=241 NZ=600
 VIC=300 SA=401 NT=120 SEA=50

Figure 56: Rating of insurer helpfulness (Trend)



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 01/02=3,142 05/06=3,014 09/10=2,689
 98/99=3,095 02/03=2,966 06/07=3,019
 99/00=3,219 03/04=2,687 07/08=3,017
 00/01=3,195 04/05=2,995 08/09=2,965

2.11.5 Someone made it harder in RTW process

Injured workers were asked to rate six different people who may have helped or made it harder (*a lot* or *a little*) getting them back to work including health professionals, those in the workplace and compensation providers.

Three in ten (28%) injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder (a lot or a little) for them to RTW (Figure 57), while 71% rated all people as either helping or having no effect in getting them back to work. There were no significant differences by jurisdiction. The proportion of injured workers identifying at least one person who made it harder for them to RTW has remained relatively stable over time (Figure 58).

Those who identified at least one person who made it harder for them to get back to work were more likely to: have participated in rehabilitation (32%) compared to those who had not (25%); did not consider their duties suitable at RTW (46%) compared to those who thought their duties to be suitable (22%); still be receiving weekly compensation benefits at the time of interview (36%) compared to those who were not (26%); had not returned to work (42%) or had a non-durable RTW (43%) 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 57: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW

Q21a-f. Helpfulness rating of different people

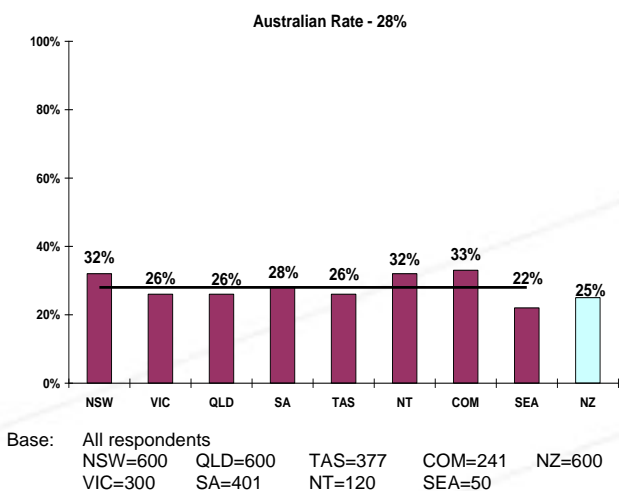
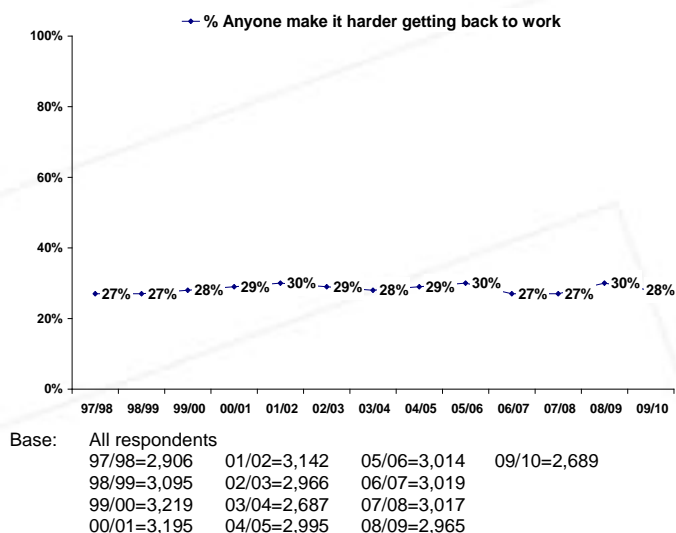


Figure 58: Identified a person who made it harder to RTW (Trend)



In 2009/10, 28% of Australian injured workers identified at least one person who made it harder (*a lot* or *a little*) for them to RTW.

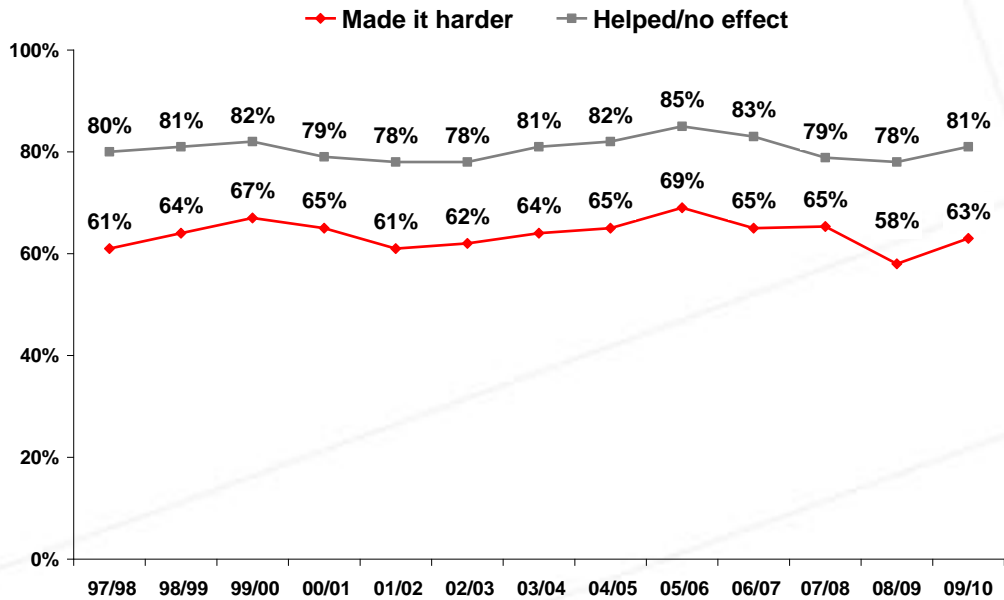
This data has also been analysed to ascertain the RTW outcomes of those who indicated at least one person in the RTW process made it harder for them to get back to work compared to those who indicated that those in the RTW process either helped or had no effect on them returning to work.

Those who identified at least one person who had made it harder to RTW were less likely to have a durable RTW (63% in 2009/10) compared to those who either rated those in the RTW process as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (81%) (Figure 59).

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

Figure 59: 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	00/01=932	03/04=776	06/07=812	09/10=766
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=2,100	00/01=2,235	03/04=1,895	06/07=2,183	09/10=1,913
98/99=2,214	01/02=2,177	04/05=2,102	07/08=2,170	
99/00=2,257	02/03=2,055	05/06=2,111	08/09=2,065	

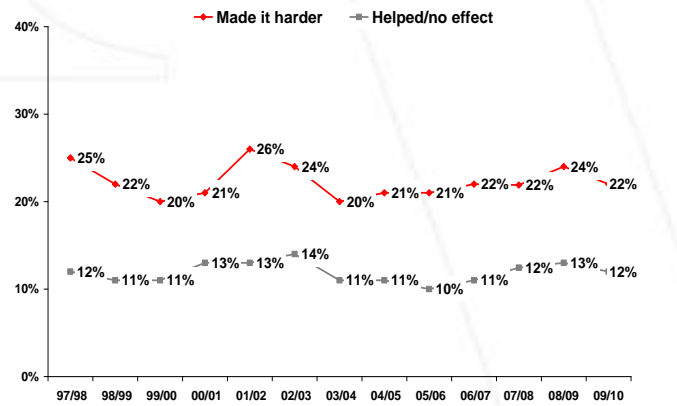
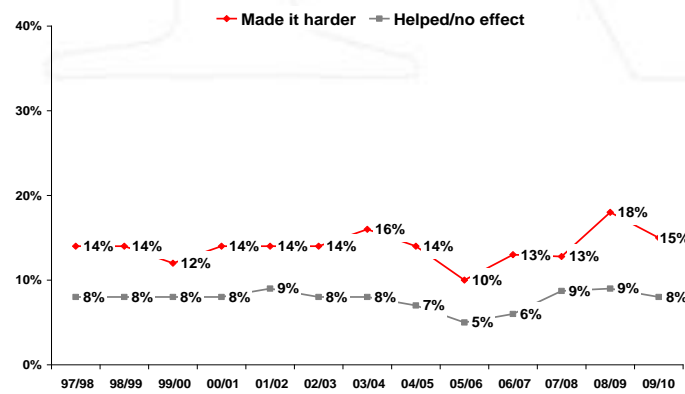
Those who identified at least one person who had made it harder to RTW were more likely to have a non-durable RTW (15%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (8%) (Figure 60).

Finally, those who identified at least one person who had made it harder to RTW were more likely to have not returned to work at all (22%) compared to those who rated people as helpful or having no effect on their RTW (12%) (Figure 61).

Figure 60: Impact of helpfulness of people involved in the RTW process on non-durable RTW

Figure 61: 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 09/10=766
 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 09/10=1913
 98/99=2214 01/02=2177 04/05=2102 07/08=2170
 99/00=2257 02/03=2055 05/06=2111 08/09=2065

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 09/10=766
 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 09/10=1913
 98/99=2214 01/02=2177 04/05=2102 07/08=2170
 99/00=2257 02/03=2055 05/06=2111 08/09=2065

The 2009/10 results confirm previous year's results in supporting the importance of good injury management and support in achieving a positive RTW outcome.

2.12 Rating of customer service by insurer/ Scheme

2.12.1 Communication with insurer

Half (47%) of the injured workers indicated that they had contact, in the three months prior to the interview, with the people who handled their claim (Figure 62). Contact about the RTW Monitor was specifically excluded from the question.

Injured workers in South Australia (54%) and covered by Comcare (56%) were more likely to have contact with the people handling their claim than the Australian national average. Conversely, injured workers covered by Seacare (18%) and those in New Zealand (24%), Tasmania (26%) and Queensland (42%) were less likely to have contact with their insurer than the Australian national average.

Contact with the insurer in the three months prior to interview has gradually increased over the course of the Monitor from under four in ten to five in ten injured workers (Figure 63).

Figure 62: Contact with insurer in last three months

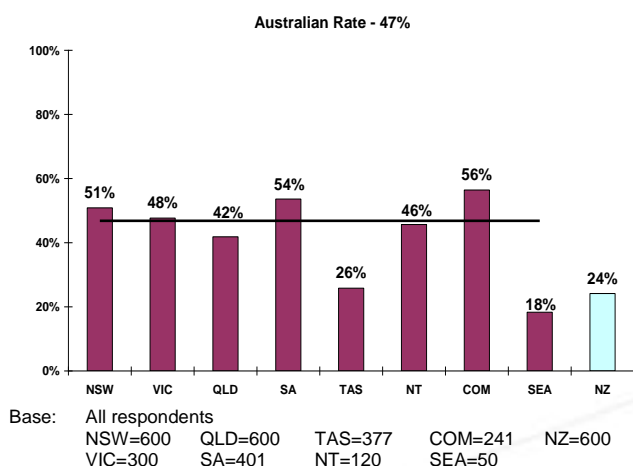
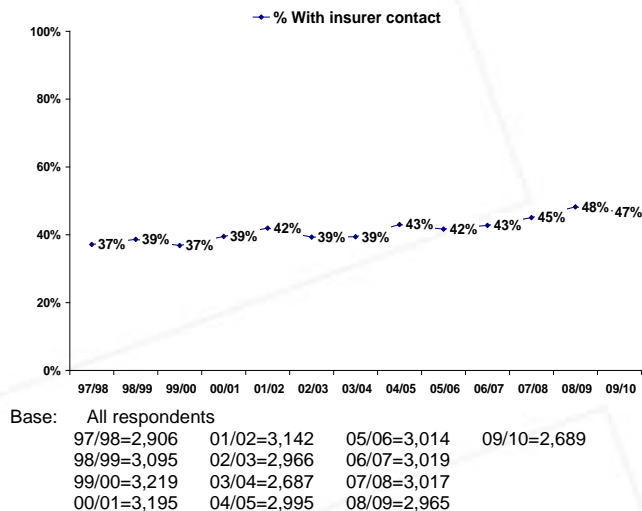


Figure 63: Contact with insurer in last three months (Trend)



In 2009/10, 47% of Australian injured workers indicated that they had contact with the people handling their claim in the three months prior to interview. The proportion of injured workers having contact with the insurer has gradually increased over the course of the Monitor.

2.12.2 Rating of customer service

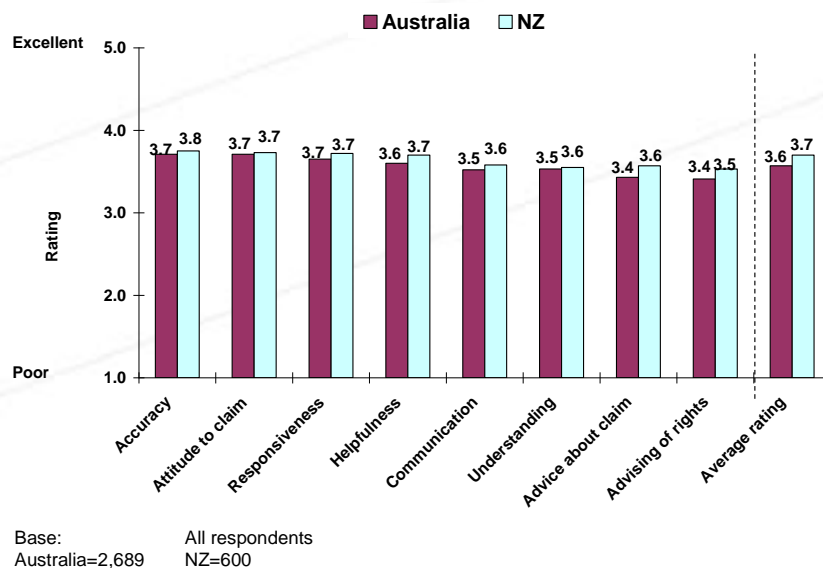
Injured workers were asked to rate the performance of the agency providing insurance services on a number of dimensions related to the way the claim was handled. Performance of the insurer was rated on a five point scale, where one was “poor” and five was “excellent”. A mean rating has been derived for each performance measure as well as an average customer service rating (Table 17). A “top two box” rating represents a combined rating of 4 or 5 (excellent) (Table 16). Insurers were rated on:

- Attitude to claim
- The way in which they responded to enquiries
- Providing accurate information
- Helpfulness
- Understanding the worker’s situation
- Communicating with worker
- Giving advice about claim
- Giving advice about rights.

Injured workers provided above average ratings (3.0) on all dimensions. They were most favourable regarding the provision of accurate information (3.7 – 62% top two box) and the attitude to the claim (3.7 – 61% top two box), and least favourable in terms of giving advice about their rights (3.4 – 51% top two box) and advice about the claim (3.4 – 52% top two box).

Figure 64: Rating of insurer type services

Q27. For each statement how would you rate the insurer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.



Over half of all injured workers in Queensland gave a rating of 4 or 5 (excellent) for all aspects of customer service, with an average customer service rating (3.8 - Table 17) above the Australian national average (3.6).

In contrast, providers in the Northern Territory (3.3), New South Wales (3.5) and Comcare (3.4) were rated, on average, below the Australian national average (3.6), with many aspects of customer service below the "top two box" Australian national average (Table 16).

Table 16: Rating of insurer type services – top two box

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 (2,689) %	NSW (600) %	VIC (300) %	QLD (600) %	SA (401) %	TAS (377) %	NT (120) %	COM (241) %	SEA (50) %	NZ (600) %
Provision of accurate info	62	58	61	68↑	59	59	50↓	60	46↓	63
Attitude to claim	61	56↓	58	71↑	61	59	54	54↓	57	64
Response to enquiries	58	53↓	52	71↑	54	54	48↓	49↓	44	60
Helpfulness	58	54	53	69↑	54	57	50	51↓	57	62
Communication	55	50↓	52	67↑	49↓	49↓	44↓	45↓	48	57
Understanding situation	56	53	52	65↑	54	55	50	43↓	62	58
Advice about claim	52	48	45↓	64↑	51	47	40↓	40↓	46	55
Advice about rights	51	50	47	57↑	54	53	38↓	59↑	34↓	55

Base: All respondents

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

Table 17: 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*

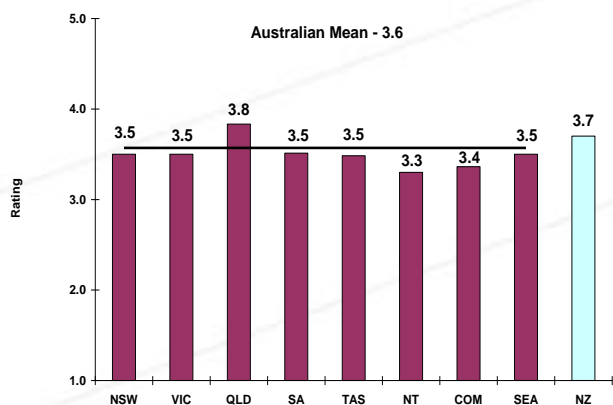
Rating out of 5	AUS (2,689)	NSW (600)	VIC (300)	QLD (600)	SA (401)	TAS (377)	NT (120)	COM (241)	SEA (50)	NZ (600)
Provision of accurate info	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.9↑	3.6	3.6	3.3↓	3.6	3.5	3.8
Attitude to claim	3.7	3.5↓	3.7	4.0↑	3.7	3.6	3.4↓	3.5	3.7	3.7
Response to enquiries	3.7	3.5↓	3.5	4.0↑	3.5	3.6	3.3↓	3.3↓	3.5	3.7
Helpfulness	3.6	3.5↓	3.5	3.9↑	3.5	3.5	3.3↓	3.4↓	3.7	3.7
Communication	3.5	3.4↓	3.4	3.9↑	3.4	3.3↓	3.2↓	3.2↓	3.3	3.6
Understanding situation	3.5	3.4↓	3.5	3.8↑	3.5	3.5	3.2↓	3.2↓	3.7	3.6
Advice about claim	3.4	3.3↓	3.3	3.8↑	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1↓	3.3	3.6↑
Advice about rights	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.0↓	3.5	2.9↓	3.5
Average customer service rating	3.6	3.5↓	3.5	3.8↑	3.5	3.5	3.3↓	3.4↓	3.5	3.7

Base: All respondents

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

Over the course of the Monitor, the average Australian customer service rating has steadily improved, from 3.1 in 1997/98 to 3.6 in 2009/10, although it is noted that the last five years have been relatively stable (Figure 66).

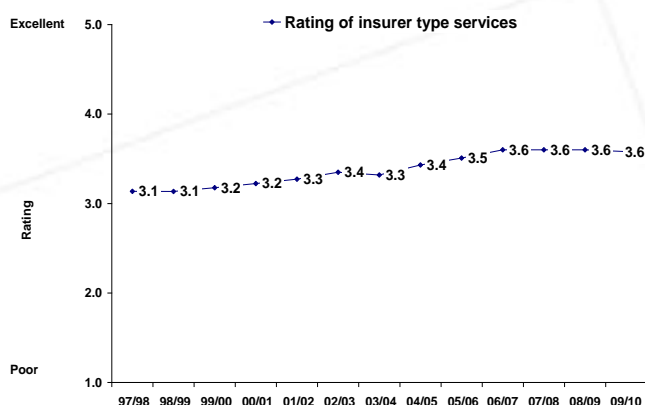
Figure 65: Average service rating for insurer type services



Base: All respondents

NSW=600 QLD=600 TAS=377 COM=241 NZ=600
VIC=300 SA=401 NT=120 SEA=50

Figure 66: Average service rating for insurer type services (Trend)



Base: All respondents

97/98=2,906 01/02=3,142 05/06=3,014 09/10=2,689
98/99=3,095 02/03=2,966 06/07=3,019
99/00=3,219 03/04=2,687 07/08=3,017
00/01=3,195 04/05=2,995 08/09=2,965

3. Summary of differences

The following table summarises the Australian national results and identifies jurisdictions that have results that are statistically different to the Australian national results. Statistically significant differences in the Australian national results between 2008/09 and 2009/10, as well as significant differences between 2006/07 and 2008/09, are included: a green arrow indicates a positive trend; a red arrow indicates a negative trend; and an orange arrow indicates that the trend could be either positive or negative depending on other influencing factors.

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

Table 18: Summary of differences

Indicator	Page ref	Result		2009/10		Australian National Trend	
		08/09	09/10	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	06/07 vs 08/09	08/09 vs 09/10
RTW Outcomes							
Q3 RTW rate	1	83%	85%	TAS, COM	SA, SEA	-	-
Q3/8 Durable RTW	2	72%	75%	TAS	SEA	↓	↑
Q3/8 Non-durable RTW	3	11%	10%	-	-	↑	-
Q8a Mean length of durable RTW	5	141 days	141 days	TAS, COM, NZ	SA	-	-
Q10 Mean length of non-durable RTW	6	84 days	78 days	-	-	-	-
Q19 Compensation payment status at time of interview	7	23%	23%	NSW, SA, COM	QLD, TAS, NZ	-	-
Q20a/b Full RTW (employment as the only source of income at time of interview)	8	59%	59%	COM, NZ	-	↓	-
Q20a/b Partial RTW (employment plus any other source of income at time of interview)	8	14%	16%	-	NZ	-	-
Q20a/b Non-durable/ no RTW (income from all sources except employment)	8	27%	25%	SA	TAS, COM	↑	-
Q11 Continuity of employer	14	84%	87%	COM	-	-	-
Q12 Returning to same duties at time of interview	15	77%	74%	SEA, NZ	NT	-	↓

Table 18: Summary of differences

Indicator	Page ref	Result		2009/10		Australian National Trend		
		08/09	09/10	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	06/07 vs 08/09	08/09 vs 09/10	
RTW Process Measures								
Workplace culture (rating out of 5)								
Q34c	Work importance	17	4.5	4.4	-	-	↑	↓
Q34d	Work satisfaction	17	4.3	4.2	NT, NZ	VIC	↑	↓
Q34e	Valued at work	17	3.9	3.9	NZ	-	-	-
Q34a	Management help RTW	17	3.6	3.6	TAS, NZ	VIC	-	-
Q34f	Clear RTW policies and procedures	17	3.6	3.6	QLD, TAS, COM, NZ	-	-	-
Q34b	OH&S spending	17	3.6	3.5	SEA, NZ	VIC, NT	-	↓
Making a claim								
Q1	Ease of getting information to put in a claim	21	81%	80%	TAS, NZ	NT	-	-
Q2a	Simple to put in a claim	22	74%	74%	QLD, TAS, NZ	COM	-	-
Q1a	Previous claim experience	23	37%	38%	QLD, COM, NZ	-	↓	-
Q1b	Previous lost time claim	24	31%	33%	QLD, TAS, COM, NZ	-	↓	-
Reasons for RTW (total)								
Q4a/b	Recovered from injury	25	50%	46%	TAS, SEA, NZ	-	-	↓
Q4a/b	Wanted to RTW	25	27%	26%	SEA	-	-	-
Q4a/b	Net economic need	25	31%	28%	NZ	SA, COM	-	-
Q4a/b	Net assisted by RTW process	25	10%	12%	SEA, NZ	-	-	-
Q4a/b	Net health provider influence	25	9%	11%	SA	NZ	-	↑
Q4a/b	Net WorkCover/employer pressure	25	6%	9%	-	-	-	↑
Reasons for not working (total)								
Q9a/b	Net injury related	28	65%	67%	-	-	-	-

Table 18: Summary of differences

Indicator	Page ref	Result		2009/10		Australian National Trend	
		08/09	09/10	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	06/07 vs 08/09	08/09 vs 09/10
Q9a/b Net left employment	28	20%	20%	-	COM	-	-
Q9a/b Net retrenched/dismissed	28	18%	18%	-	COM	-	-
RTW plan							
Q13 Development of a RTW plan	34	53%	56%	SA, TAS, COM	QLD, SEA, NZ	↑	↑
Q13a Involvement in the development of RTW plan	34	76%	78%	SA, COM	-	-	-
Q15 Helpfulness of the RTW plan	37	75%	73%	QLD, COM	SA	-	-
Q16 Assistance given to follow the RTW plan	38	59%	60%	QLD, COM	-	-	-
Who helped to follow RTW plan							
Q16b Rehab provider	38	15%	14%	TAS, NT, COM	-	-	-
Q16b Main supervisor	38	13%	13%	COM	NT	-	-
Q16b Workplace rehab coordinator	38	9%	11%	-	NSW, NZ	-	-
Q16b Someone else	38	11%	12%	COM	NZ	-	-
Q16b Doctor	38	9%	9%	COM	-	-	-
Q16b Insurer	38	4%	4%	NZ	-	-	-
At time of RTW							
Q7 Readiness to RTW	41	76%	73%	SEA	-	-	-
Q5 Suitable duties at RTW	43	84%	82%	-	SEA, NZ	-	-
Q5a Lighter duties at RTW	44	63%	61%	TAS	COM, SEA, NZ	↑	-
Q5a Reduced hours at RTW	44	14%	15%	-	SEA, NZ	-	-
Q5a No heavy lifting at RTW	44	17%	17%	NSW	COM, NZ	-	-
Q5a Change in duties at RTW	44	72%	69%	SA, TAS	SEA, NZ	↑	-
Q5a No change in duties at RTW	44	22%	23%	COM, SEA, NZ	SA	↓	-
Q6. Partial RTW to RTW	48	25%	27%	SA	SEA, NZ	-	-

Table 18: Summary of differences

Indicator	Page ref	Result		2009/10		Australian National Trend	
		08/09	09/10	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	06/07 vs 08/09	08/09 vs 09/10
Q6a Return to previous hours	49	53%	52%	QLD, SEA, NZ	SA	-	-
Rating of help to RTW							
Most assistance given							
Q28 Doctor	51	21%	21%	NSW	QLD, NZ	-	-
Q28 Myself	51	15%	12%	NZ	-	-	↓
Q28 Someone from work	51	15%	16%	-	-	-	-
Q28 Physiotherapist	51	17%	17%	-	SA, COM	-	-
Q28 Rehab provider	51	7%	8%	SA, TAS, NT, COM	QLD, NZ	-	-
Q28 No one	51	6%	6%	-	-	-	-
Q28 Insurer	51	7%	8%	QLD	COM, NZ	-	-
Least assistance given							
Q29 No one	53	47%	46%	SEA, NZ	-	-	-
Q29 Someone from work	53	27%	28%	NT, COM	NZ	-	-
Q29 Insurer	53	12%	12%	NSW	NZ	↑	-
Q29 Doctor	53	3%	5%	-	COM	-	-
Q29 Rehab provider	53	1%	2%	-	NZ	-	↑
Rating of helpfulness of people in RTW (rating out of 5)							
Q21 Doctor	54	4.3	4.3	COM	QLD, NZ	-	-
Q21 Rehabilitation provider	54	4.2	4.2	-	SA, TAS, NZ	-	-
Q21 Work rehabilitation coordinator	54	3.8	3.8	TAS	-	-	-
Q21 Main supervisor	54	3.6	3.6	NZ	-	-	-
Q21 Employer	54	3.6	3.6	NZ	-	-	-
Q21 Insurer	54	3.5	3.5	QLD	-	-	-
Rating of insurer's customer service (rating out of 5)							

Table 18: Summary of differences

Indicator	Page ref	Result		2009/10		Australian National Trend	
		08/09	09/10	Above AUS National rate	Below AUS National rate	06/07 vs 08/09	08/09 vs 09/10
Q26 Contact with insurer in the last three months	61	48%	47%	SA, COM	QLD, TAS, SEA, NZ	↑	-
Q27 Attitude to claim	61	3.7	3.7	QLD	NSW, NT	-	-
Q27 Accuracy of information	61	3.7	3.7	QLD	NT	-	-
Q27 Response to enquiries	61	3.6	3.7	QLD	NSW, NT, COM	-	-
Q27 Helpfulness	61	3.6	3.6	QLD	NSW, NT, COM	-	-
Q27 Understanding of worker's situation	61	3.5	3.5	QLD	NSW, NT, COM	-	-
Q27 Communicating with worker	61	3.6	3.5	QLD	NSW, TAS, NT, COM	↑	-
Q27 Giving advice about the claim	61	3.5	3.4	QLD, NZ	NSW, COM	-	-
Q27 Giving advice about rights	61	3.5	3.4	-	NT, SEA	↑	-
Q27 Average customer service	61	3.6	3.6	QLD	NSW, NT, COM	-	-

Appendix A: 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 a work related injury. Prior to this, workers took their injury claims to court under common law. Costs, however, were often prohibitive for the average worker, while proving negligence against an individual employer was difficult and resource intensive. Furthermore, the slow legal process and the possibility of a lump sum payment were thought to operate as a disincentive to workers returning to work.

"No fault" compensation for injured workers was first introduced in Germany under the *Accident Compensation Law 1884*. This was followed closely in the UK by the English *Workmen's Compensation Act 1897* and then "Australia". Unlike the European and New Zealand models, however, Australia's legislation and enforcement were state based, with South Australia being the first to establish its laws in 1900. It wasn't until 1926 that all workers in Australia were covered by workers compensation.

Public monopoly or private underwriting?

Today, 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 agents and private insurers in the implementation of the respective schemes varies. Perhaps the biggest variation between schemes is associated with funding arrangements where some jurisdictions operate a public monopoly (central fund), some operate a private model underwritten by private insurers, and others have a mix of both systems.

The role of premium

Workers compensation is paid out of premiums collected from employers. Premiums are actuarially determined as a 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.

RTW roles and responsibilities

The statutory authority 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 authorities also manage claims, although in most schemes insurers or agents manage the individual claims for compensation.

The aim of most claims management is to return the injured worker to work. Return to work (**RTW**) provisions are implemented by the responsible statutory authority, the employer, the injured worker, the insurer and health and rehabilitation providers. Each has duties and/or responsibilities which are prescribed by legislation or delegated through policies.

Insurers are required to follow the mandated rules, reduce delays in claims management and minimise disputes between the worker and their employer or other party for genuine claims. 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.

Employer responsibilities include 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.

The primary role of rehabilitation providers is to engage with the injured worker, the employer and other treating health professionals to assist achieving sustainable RTW outcomes. Rehabilitation requirements are generally specified by regulations. In some instances they are required by legislation.

Medical practitioners and other health professionals assist with the physical rehabilitation. They are encouraged, but not mandated, to work with injured workers to achieve RTW.

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 HWCA comparison in 2005).

Since the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities October 2007 meeting, the National Self Insured Working Group has proceeded with the implementation of a number of projects.

Appendix B: Background and Methodology

Background to the RTW Monitor

Return to work (RTW) is a key outcome used to provide an indicative measure of the performance of workers' compensation systems both in Australia and in New Zealand. RTW reflects the successful outcome and, in most cases, a 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 in 1993 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
- A rating of the services provided by insurers (or Schemes).

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.

The first RTW Monitor report was published in May 1998 following surveys in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. Since that time, the Australian Capital Territory, Comcare, Seacare and New Zealand have participated in the RTW Monitor. Table 19 shows the years in which each jurisdiction has participated.

Table 19: Australia and New Zealand RTW Monitor Summary of Participation

Year	National (ex NZ)	NSW	ACT	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	NT	Com	Sea	NZ
1997/98	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
1998/99	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
1999/00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		May only
2000/01	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2001/02	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2002/03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2003/04	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2004/05	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2005/06	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2006/07	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2007/08	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2008/09	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2009/10	✓	✓		May only ¹⁰	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹⁰ WorkSafe Victoria is represented in the May 2010 wave of surveying (n=300), but not in the November 2009 wave. Care should therefore be taken when comparing the results obtained between Victoria and other jurisdictions and/or decrease the statistical power of any significance tests undertaken with this data.

The RTW Monitor was designed to provide an indication of how individual jurisdictions performed in relation to helping injured workers return to work. The RTW was not designed as a performance measure. As such, the RTW Monitor's objectives are to:

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

Jurisdictions

This report presents the Australian and New Zealand results for the 2009/10 financial year (i.e. the aggregate of the November 2009 and May 2010 waves) and represents the thirteenth annual report of the Return to Work Monitor. Injured workers employed by organisations which are self-insured are not included in this report.

The sample consists of 2,689 injured workers who had made a workers' compensation claim of 10 or more days compensation, seven to nine months prior to interview.

Table 20: Participants of the November 2009 and May 2010 RTW Monitor

Abbreviation	Jurisdiction	Sample Size
NSW	New South Wales	600
VIC	Victoria	300
QLD	Queensland	600
SA	South Australia	401
TAS	Tasmania	377
NT	Northern Territory	120
COM	Comcare	241
SEA	Seacare	50
AUS	Total Australia (national)	2,689
NZ	New Zealand	600

Methodology

Two waves of telephone interviews are conducted each year of the Monitor using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility. Minor adjustments are made to the survey used in each jurisdiction to take into account the different structures of compensation and/or terminology used. The RTW Monitor uses the same sampling, consent, interviewing, coding and analysis procedures across each participating jurisdiction. The consistency of procedures from wave to wave provides a robust measure, which is sensitive to change over time. Results were analysed using the Quantum data analysis package.

Sample

The sample base of prospective injured workers for the aggregate survey was randomly selected by each jurisdiction from their claim database. In smaller jurisdictions this represented the entire population of eligible claims. The criteria for inclusion were:

- Submitted a claim between March and April 2009 (February to April 2009 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the November 2009 survey wave
- Submitted a claim between September and October 2009 (August to October 2009 for Tasmania, the Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare) for the May 2010 survey wave
- 10 days or more compensation (including any excess) paid.^{11 12}

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

Each jurisdiction provided statistics for key characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn for each survey wave. Campbell Research has confirmed that for the key variables (days compensation and claim cost) the sample of persons interviewed for each jurisdiction, in the November 2009 and May 2010 waves, was representative of the population from which the sample was drawn.

¹¹ It has been confirmed that all jurisdictions provided sample consistent with the specifications in 2009/10.

¹² Historically, inconsistencies in the interpretation of the data specifications resulted in some jurisdictions providing sample with either '10 or more days' or 'more than 10 days' paid compensation. A review of the 2008/09 data, however, indicated that jurisdictional differences to the national rate in the key RTW outcome measures (RTW rate and durable RTW rate) in 2008/09 were not affected by this inconsistency in the selection criteria.

Sampling error

Where a sample of eligible injured workers is surveyed, the statistics produced have sampling errors 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 lies outside a range of two standard errors either side of the sample estimate. Such a range defines a 95% confidence interval (CI) for that estimate.

Table 21 provides confidence intervals for sample estimates of 80% and 50%. For example, if 50% of the 2009/10 sample of 2,689 gave a particular response, it is 95% certain that between 48.1% and 51.9% of the entire population from which the sample was drawn (injured workers with 10 or more days compensation paid, with claims submitted seven to nine months prior to interview) would give this response. If the estimate was 80% it is 95% certain that between 78.5% and 81.5% would give that response.

Table 21: Survey estimates of 50% & 80% at 95% confidence interval (CI)

Sample size	Survey estimate of 50%			Survey estimate of 80%		
	Confidence interval	Lower band	Upper band	Confidence interval	Lower band	Upper band
2,689	± 1.9%	48.1%	51.9%	± 1.5%	78.5%	81.5%
600	± 4.0%	46.0%	54.0%	± 3.2%	76.8%	83.2%
400	± 4.9%	45.1%	54.9%	± 3.9%	76.1%	83.9%
300	± 5.7%	44.3%	55.7%	± 4.5%	75.5%	84.5%
200	± 6.9%	43.1%	56.9%	± 5.5%	74.5%	85.5%
100	± 9.8%	40.2%	59.8%	± 7.8%	72.2%	87.8%

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 22 and Table 23.

This adjustment was reviewed by Associate Professor 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.

Table 22: National – November 2009 interview weighting calculations

	Eligible population	Data collection period (months)	Estimated eligible population over a 6 month period	Interview sample size	Recommended weights
NSW	3,356	2	10,068	300	33.56
QLD	2,904	2	8,712	300	29.04
SA	630	2	1,890	200	9.45
TAS	453	3	906	191	4.74
NT	222	3	444	60	7.40
COM	213	3	426	120	3.55
SEA	49	6	49	26	1.88
NZ	1,544	2	4,632	300	15.44

Table 23: National – May 2010 interview weighting calculations

	Eligible population	Data collection period (months)	Estimated eligible population over a 6 month period	Interview sample size	Recommended weights
NSW	3,189	2	9,567	300	31.89
VIC	2,911	2	17,466 ¹³	300	58.22
QLD	3,140	2	9,420	300	31.40
SA	598	2	1,794	201	8.93
TAS	373	3	746	186	4.01
NT	151	3	302	60	5.03
COM	250	3	500	121	4.13
SEA	56	6	56	24	2.33
NZ	1,409	2	4,227	300	14.09

¹³ The estimate for Victoria is based on 12 months to provide an annual estimated eligible population.

Consent and privacy

A passive consent process is used in 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 update their contact details or withdraw from the interview.

Interviewers are trained under Interview Quality Control Australia (IQCA) Standards ensuring that 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 withdraw to give their consent at any point during the interview and that 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 to maintain them.

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

Field Report (2009/10)¹⁴

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

A high level of response was achieved for the survey (Table 24). The response rate, where contact was made, was 75%.

Table 24: Interviews as a percentage of contacts made for 2009/10

	AUS (3,565) %	NSW (785) %	VIC (416) %	QLD (767) %	SA (610) %	TAS (487) %	NT (167) %	COM (274) %	SEA (59) %	NZ (765) %
Response rates	75	76	72	78	66	77	72	88	85	78

¹⁴ The field report for November 2009 is included in the mid (financial) year report to jurisdictions.

The response rate for the Australian national sample was 47% (Table 25). Of the total sample provided, 15% refused to participate in the interview. Inactive or invalid telephone numbers accounted for 12% of numbers supplied and 25% of injured workers were not interviewed because the quotas were filled (that is, the target number of interviews for the jurisdiction was reached).

Table 25: Field report for 2009/10 National RTW survey

	n	%
Interviews	2,689	47
Refusals	876	15
Total contacts made	3,565	63
Remaining "active" telephone numbers	1,424	25
Unused telephone numbers	7	0
"Inactive" telephone numbers	697	12
Total sample provided	5,693	

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).

Table 26: Field report for 2009/10 (Comparative)

	NSW (1,360) %	VIC (587) %	QLD (1,367) %	SA (903) %	TAS (689) %	NT (286) %	COM (402) %	SEA (99) %	NZ (1,392) %
Interviews	44	51	44	44	55	42	60	51	43
Refusals	14	20	12	23	16	16	8	9	12
Total contacts made	58	71	56	68	71	58	68	60	55
Remaining "active" telephone numbers	28	22	34	23	12	17	23	25	35
Unused telephone numbers	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
"Inactive" telephone numbers	15	7	10	9	17	23	9	15	10

Base: Total sample provided

Appendix C: Reporting Conventions

Reporting differences

Results presented in this report were analysed as the reported experience of injured workers across all participating jurisdictions. The report provides indicative Australian national estimates based on an aggregation across Australian jurisdictions appropriately weighted in accordance with the reported claim population for each participating jurisdiction.

Only statistically significant differences were discussed in the text of the report¹⁵.

Time series comparisons

Direct time series comparisons were shown for the last thirteen years: 1997/98 through to 2009/10:

- There have been some variations in the national jurisdictions because of different jurisdictions participating (please see Table 19)
- The national time series is based on Australian jurisdictions but does not include self-insurers
- New Zealand was not included in the Australian national 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.

¹⁵ Statistically significant differences are reported at the 95% confidence level.

Reading the graphs

- Graphs have been used to:
 - demonstrate differences between each jurisdiction and the Australian average
 - demonstrate trends over time.
- The relevant survey questions have been 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.

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%.
- Proportions are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

Appendix D: Demographic and Claim Characteristics

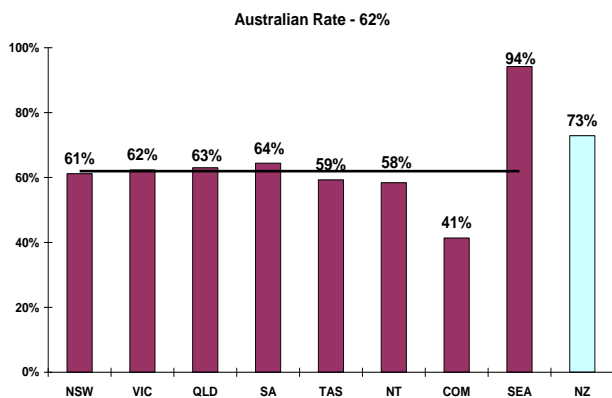
This section reports the characteristics of the sample for the RTW Monitor from the data provided by jurisdictions. That is, the sub-population of claims with 10 or more days compensation paid, seven to nine months prior to interview. These data are not indicators of overall scheme performance, only of performance in relation to RTW. For claim based performance indicators the reader is referred to the Comparative Performance Monitoring Report¹⁶.

Gender

Three in five (62%) injured workers in Australia were male (Figure 67). Before 2000/01, closer to seven in ten injured workers were male (Figure 68).

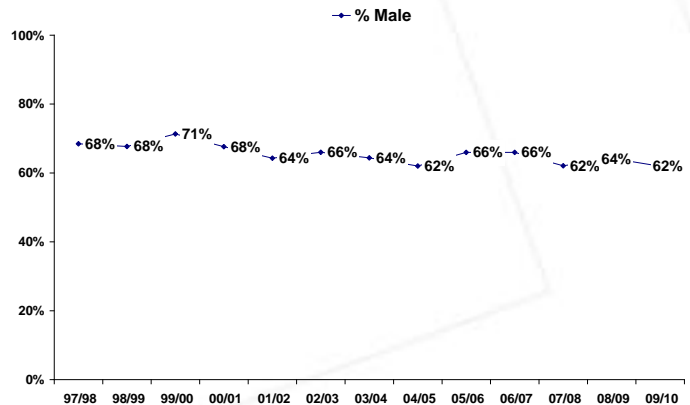
Almost all (94%) injured workers covered by Seacare were male. There was a below average incidence of male injured workers covered by Comcare (41%).

Figure 67: Proportion of males



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=300 QLD=600 SA=401 TAS=377 NT=120 COM=241 SEA=50 NZ=600

Figure 68: Proportion of males (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 09/10=2,689

¹⁶ Comparative Performance Monitoring (CPM) report 11th edition, December 2009, Workplace Minister's Council and deewr.gov.au/WorkplaceRelations/WRMC/Pages/Reports.aspx

Age

In 2009/10, the average age of injured workers was 43 years (Figure 69). On average, injured workers covered by Comcare (46 years) and Seacare (48 years) were older.

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

Figure 69: Mean age of injured workers

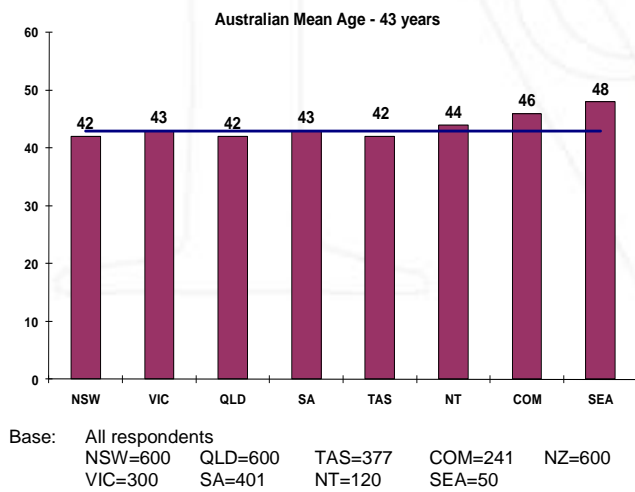
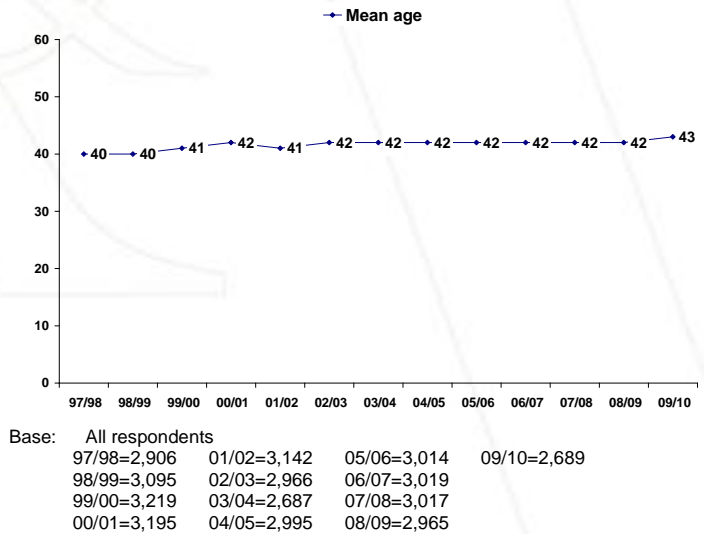


Figure 70: Mean age of injured workers (Trend)



Language spoken at home

Less than one in ten (6%) Australian injured workers spoke a language other than English (LOTE) at home. The most common languages, other than English, spoken at home were European type languages (e.g. Italian, Serbian, Greek and Croatian – 2%) and Asian languages (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian – 2%).

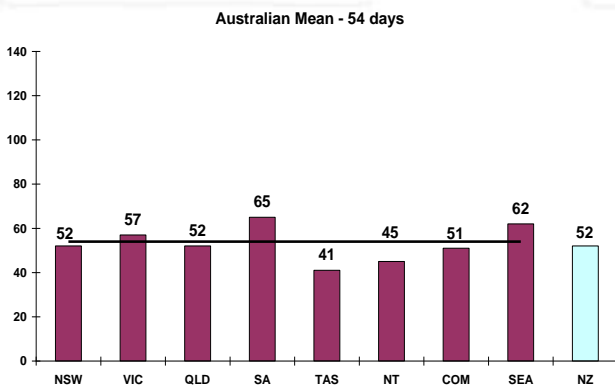
New South Wales (10%) had the highest proportion of injured workers who spoke a language other than English.

Days compensation paid and claim cost

Days compensation paid is the number of days compensation paid up to the end of the quarter before the interview (September for the November wave and March for the May wave). In 2009/10, an average of 54 days compensation was paid to injured workers (Figure 71). Injured workers in South Australia (65 days), followed by injured workers covered by Seacare (62 days) had the highest average number of paid compensation days. Injured workers in Tasmania (41 days) and the Northern Territory (45 days) had the lowest average number of paid compensation days.

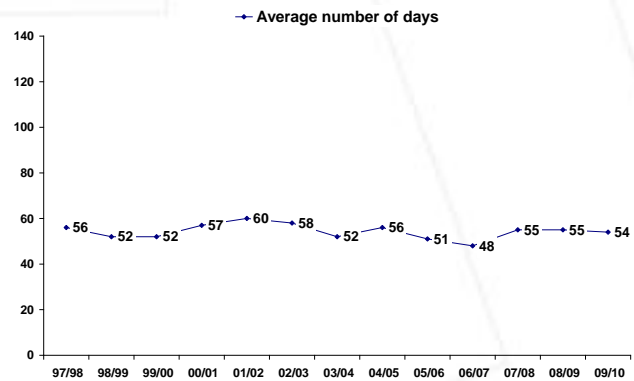
The national average number of days compensation paid has varied over the thirteen years of the Monitor although the 2009/10 result was the similar to the two previous years (Figure 72).

Figure 71: Mean number of days compensation paid



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=300 QLD=600 SA=401 TAS=377 NT=120 COM=241 SEA=50 NZ=600

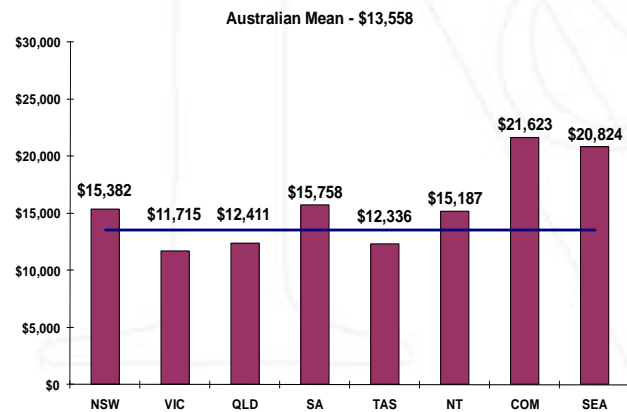
Figure 72: Mean number of days compensation paid (Trend)



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 09/10=2,689

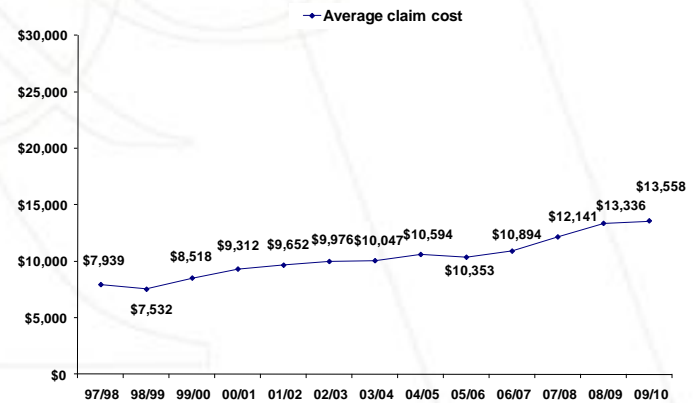
In 2009/10, the average claim cost paid to Australian injured workers, who were eligible and completed the survey, was \$13,558 (Figure 73). The average claim cost was highest among injured workers covered by Comcare (\$21,623) and Seacare (\$20,824), and lowest in Victoria (\$11,715). The average claim cost has continued to increase since the start of the Monitor (Figure 74).

Figure 73: Mean claim cost



Base: All respondents
 NSW=600 VIC=300 QLD=600 SA=401 TAS=377 NT=120 COM=241 SEA=50 NZ=600

Figure 74: Mean claim cost (Trend)



Base: All respondents
 97/98=2,906 01/02=3,142 05/06=3,014 09/10=2,689
 98/99=3,095 02/03=2,966 06/07=3,019
 99/00=3,219 03/04=2,687 07/08=3,017
 00/01=3,195 04/05=2,995 08/09=2,965

Rehabilitation participation and cost

Participation in rehabilitation was identified by some rehabilitation expenditure 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 2009/10, half of injured workers (48%) were identified as having participated in rehabilitation. There were substantial differences in the rate of rehabilitation participation between jurisdictions (Figure 75). Highest rates of rehabilitation participation were in the Northern Territory (78%), Queensland (73%), South Australia (64%), Tasmania (56%) and for injured workers covered by Comcare (61%). The lowest rates of rehabilitation participation were for injured workers in New South Wales (36%), Victoria (29%) and covered by Seacare (8%).

With the exception of a decline in 2006/07, over the last six years, close to half of injured workers were identified as having participated in rehabilitation (Figure 76).

Figure 75: Participation in rehabilitation

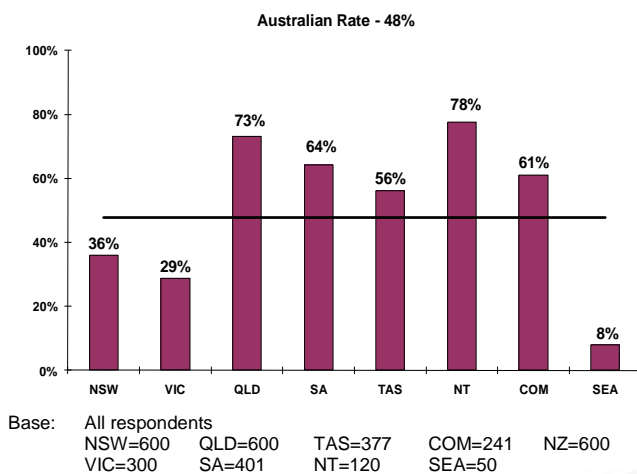
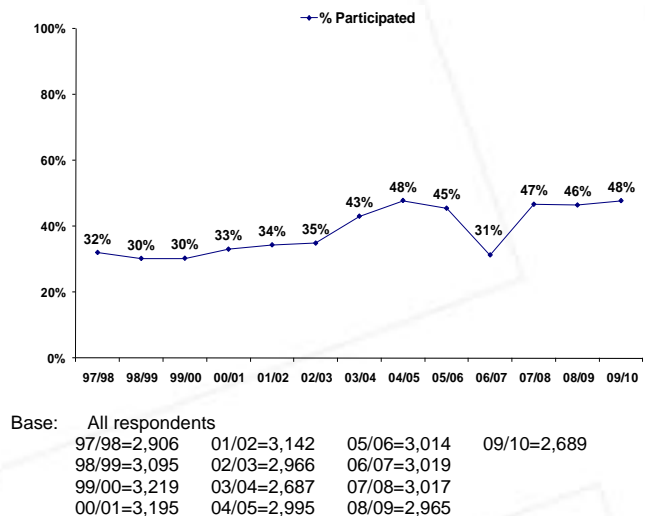


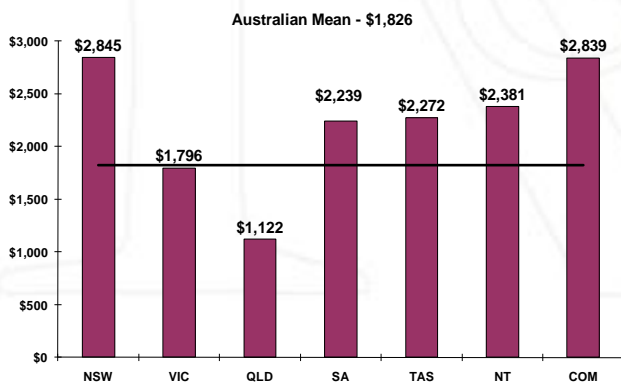
Figure 76: Participation in rehabilitation (Trend)



The average cost of rehabilitation¹⁷ in 2009/10 was \$1,826. There was variation in the average cost of rehabilitation across jurisdictions. The highest costs were for Comcare (\$2,893) and in New South Wales (\$2,845), while the lowest cost was in Queensland (\$1,122).

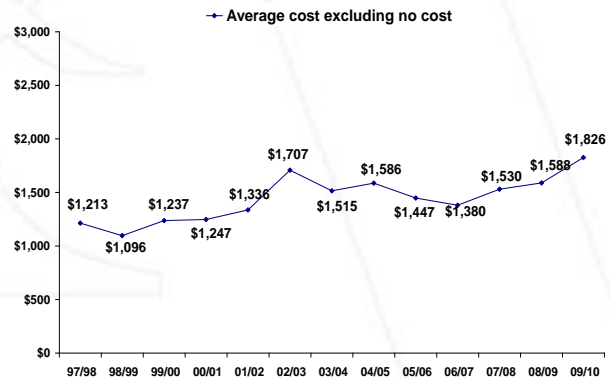
There has been an upwards trend in the cost of rehabilitation over the past four years (Figure 78).

Figure 77: Mean rehabilitation costs



Base: Participated in rehabilitation
 NSW=216 QLD=438 TAS=212 COM=147
 VIC=86 SA=258 NT=92
 Note: Results where the sample sizes are less than 30 should be treated with caution.

Figure 78: Mean rehabilitation costs (Trend)



Base: Participated in rehabilitation
 97/98=1,161 01/02=1,385 05/06=1,524 09/10=1,452
 98/9=1,220 02/03=1,264 06/07=1,430
 99/00=1,270 03/04=1,313 07/08=1,509
 00/01=1,329 04/05=1,559 08/09=1,450

¹⁷ This measure is calculated only from cases where there was a rehabilitation cost in the claim data (i.e. excluding no cost) and does not take into account costs that were not recorded in the claims data supplied.

Organisation size

Three in five (61%) Australian injured workers were employed in large organisations (where remuneration was over \$2,000,000), one third (32%) of which were organisations with remuneration \$20,000,000 and over. One in five (22%) injured workers were employed in medium organisations (\$350,000 to \$2,000,000 remuneration) and less than one in five (16%) were employed in small organisations (less than \$350,000 remuneration).

There were notable differences in organisation size by jurisdiction compared to the Australian national average:

- New Zealand and New South Wales shared a similar profile, with a higher proportion of smaller and medium sized organisations, and lower proportion of large organisations
- South Australia and Tasmania had a higher proportion of medium sized organisations and fewer large organisations
- Victorian and Queensland had a disproportionately high incidence of injured workers from large organisations
- Comcare only had injured workers from large organisations.

Table 27: Organisation size¹⁸

	AUS (2,443) %	NSW (527) %	VIC (296) %	QLD (594) %	SA (398) %	TAS (377) %	COM (241) %	NZ (565) %
Small (less than \$350,000 remuneration)	16	23↑	14	13↓	20	17	0↓	27↑
Medium (\$350,000 - \$2,000,000 remuneration)	22	26↑	19	20	33↑	32↑	0↓	33↑
Large (over \$2,000,000 remuneration)	61	51↓	68↑	67↑	47↓	50↓	100↑	40↓
\$20,000,000 and over	32	20↓	39↑	38↑	12↓	16↓	100↑	10↓

Base: Information supplied by jurisdiction in extended data

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

¹⁸ Data on organisation remuneration was not provided by the Northern Territory or Seacare

Appendix E: Terms and Definitions

Table 28: 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), seven to nine months after making their claim.
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 interview, seven to nine months after the claim.
Full RTW	An injured worker who was in paid employment at the time of interview and was not receiving workers' compensation payments.
Partial RTW	An injured worker who was 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.
RTW plan	Return to work plan, or in some jurisdictions this is called a rehabilitation plan. This is a structured plan designed to enhance the achievement of a durable RTW within the limitation of the injured worker's functional capacity.
Jurisdiction	Refers to the compensation authority that has legal jurisdiction over a population of injured workers. In Australia, workers' compensation is the responsibility of individual states and territories. Comcare and Seacare have responsibility for Commonwealth agencies and maritime industry employees respectively.
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.
Seacare	Seacare is the body responsible for managing workers' compensation for all maritime industry employees.
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 2009/10, this included New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Comcare and Seacare.
Compensation Provider	Is used to refer to the provider of workers' compensation payment and insure type services. In most jurisdictions this is the insurer or claims agent. In New Zealand, it is the Accident Compensation Corporation..
LOTE	A language other than English is spoken at the home of the injured worker.
Remuneration	Comprises both salary and non-salary payments to employees. It may include superannuation and salary sacrifice payments.
Significant result	All results discussed in the text of this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Durability of RTW

There are three principal ways to measure durability of RTW. These are durable RTW, compensation status and source of income:

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?*" (Section 1.2).

This measure is supplemented by questions identifying the reasons why injured workers are not working (Section 2.5) 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.

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.

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?*" 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/no RTW (income from all sources except employment).

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

There are five questions that identify “change 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”¹⁹.

Four questions refer to the duties undertaken at time of RTW, while 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)
 - These questions are 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 2.7.3)
 - Responses to this question were a simple “yes” or “no”

¹⁹ In previous reports the wording “*alternative duties*” has been used.

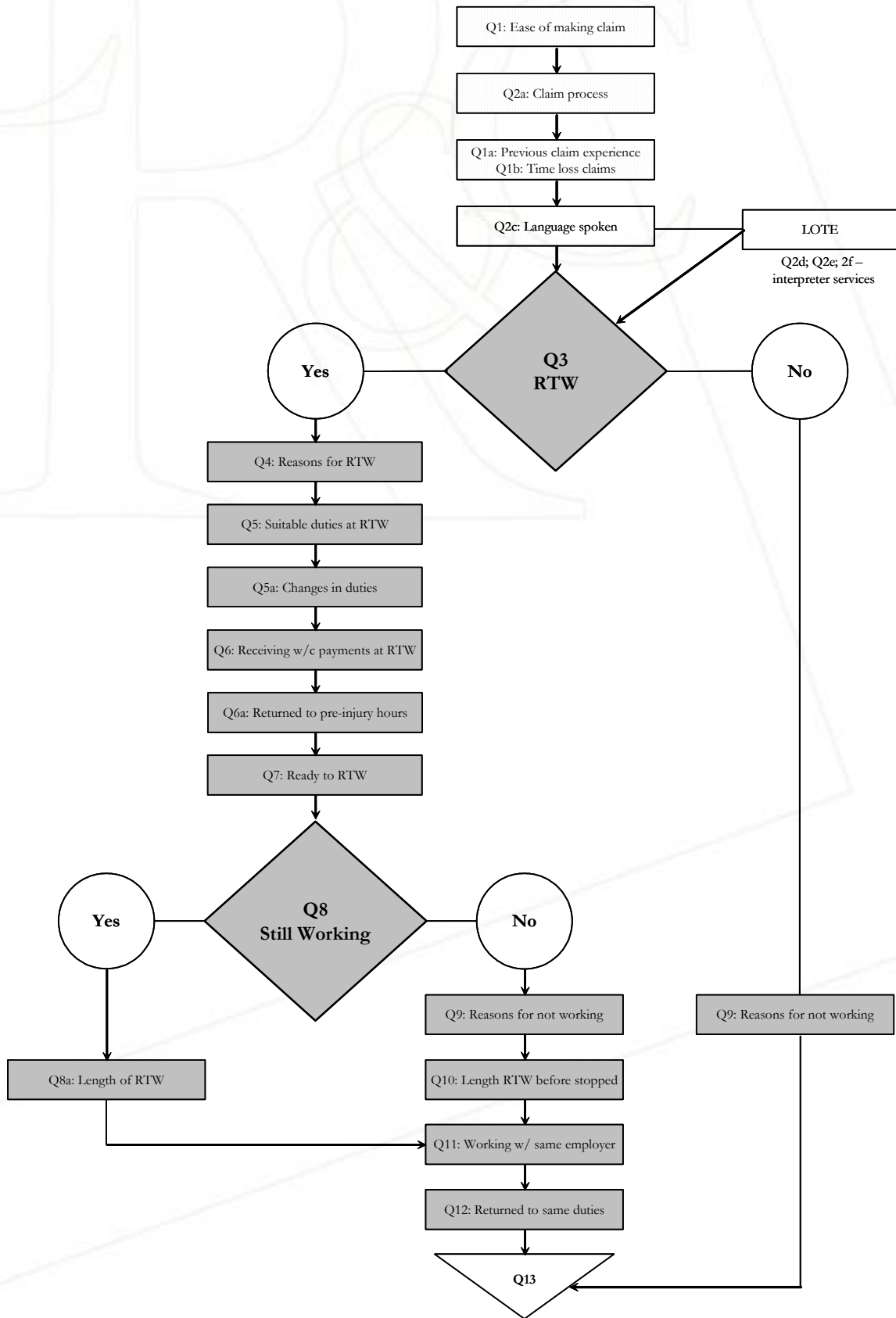
- Injured workers were also asked whether there were any **changes in duties when they returned to work**. Question 5a asked: *“What was different about your duties when you returned to work? (compared to what you were doing when you were injured?)”* (Section 2.7.4)
 - Responses to this question were coded into three broad categories including “lighter duties”, “no heavy lifting” or “reduced hours”
 - “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 2.9)
 - 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 question identifies whether employees were undertaking the same duties or different duties. Question 12 is asked differently depending on whether the respondent was working at the time of interview or not. For example:
 - Those who were working at the time of interview (durable RTW) were asked, “Are you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?”
 - Those who were not working at the time of interview (non-durable RTW) were asked, “Were you doing the same sort of work or duties that you were doing when you incurred your original injury?”
- **“Same or different” employer at the time of the interview** compared with the time of injury was also explored in Question 11 (Section 1.6.1). The relevant wording and analysis of that question was similar to that as discussed in Question 12 immediately above.

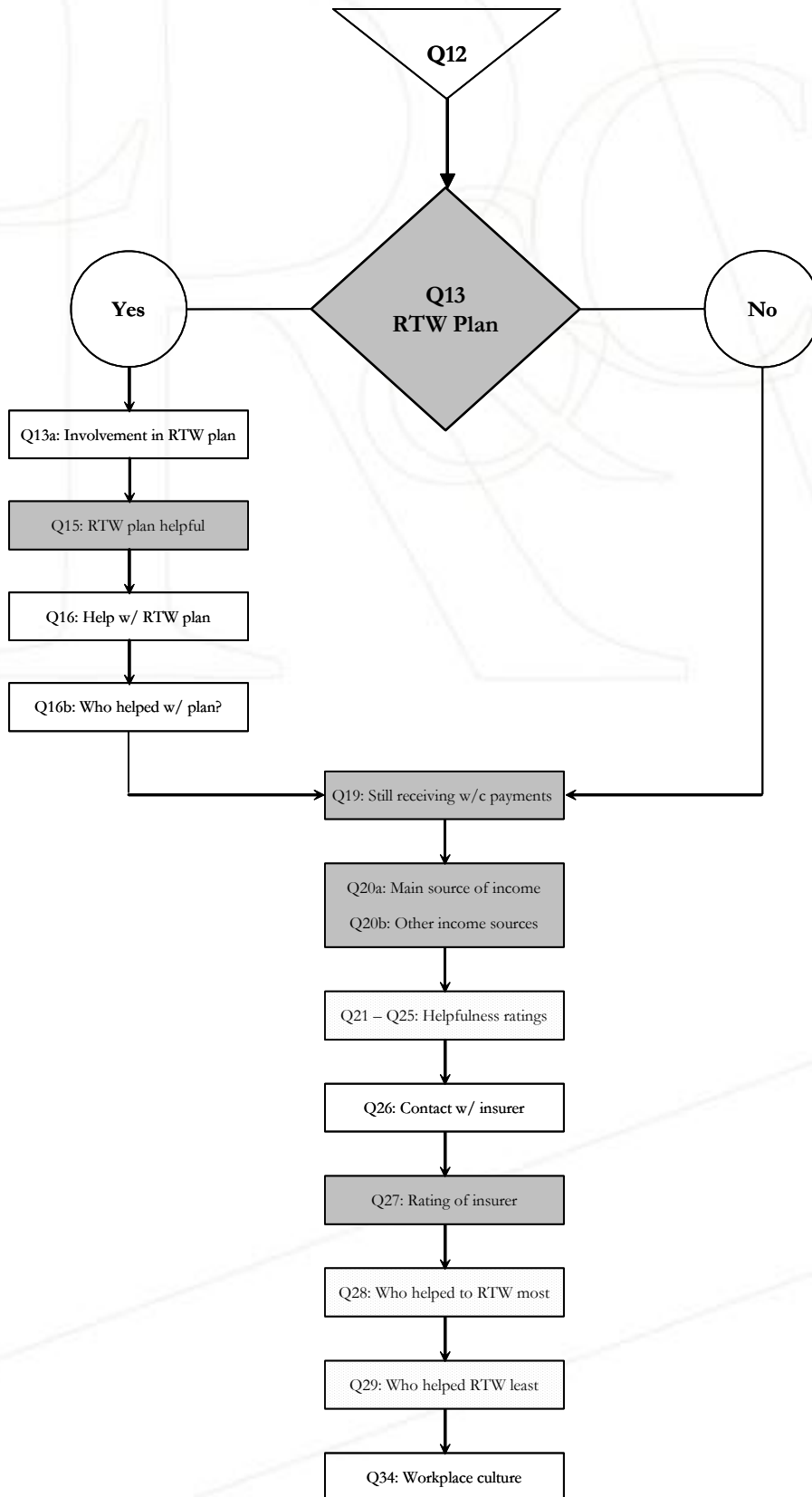
Interpretation of results for the Seacare Authority

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

- The majority of Seacare Authority injured workers are stationed on ships at sea and are away at sea for 4-6 weeks at a time.
- An injured seafarer ready to RTW must have access to a supernumerary position on a ship for a graduated return to seafarer duties or must be passed medically fit by an Australian Maritime Safety Authority approved medical practitioner in accordance with fitness for duty regulations before being able to return to full pre-injury seafarer duties. There are few supernumerary positions on ships and as ships are often away from port for 4-6 weeks at a time, 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 F: CATI Questionnaire (Flow Chart)





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