



WA Public Sector Report

2023/24

A workers compensation and injury management scheme that works for all.

workcover.wa.gov.au



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WA Public Sector Report

WorkCover WA

WorkCover WA is the government agency responsible for overseeing the workers compensation and injury management scheme in Western Australia (WA).

WA operates a privately underwritten workers compensation scheme, where private insurance agencies are approved by WorkCover WA to provide workers compensation insurance to WA employers. Additionally, WorkCover WA also exempts large employers, who have the material and financial resources to cover their own liabilities from any workplace injuries that may occur, from having to obtain workers compensation insurance from an approved insurer. Exempt employers are commonly referred to as self-insurers. During the period referenced in this report, there were six approved insurers and 23 self-insurers operating within the WA workers compensation scheme.

Data from the Insurance Commission of Western Australia (ICWA) is also included in this report. ICWA manages workers compensation arrangements for WA government agencies. Although not an approved insurer within the WA workers compensation scheme, ICWA is considered to be more appropriately grouped with approved insurers rather than self-insurers.

This report is based on the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*, as it was in effect during the period covered by this report (up to 30 June 2024). Future reports will reflect the changes introduced by the new *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023*, which took effect from 1 July 2024.

Purpose of report

WorkCover WA annually publishes this report providing insight into claims activity within the Western Australian public sector workers compensation scheme over a four-year period.

Things to note

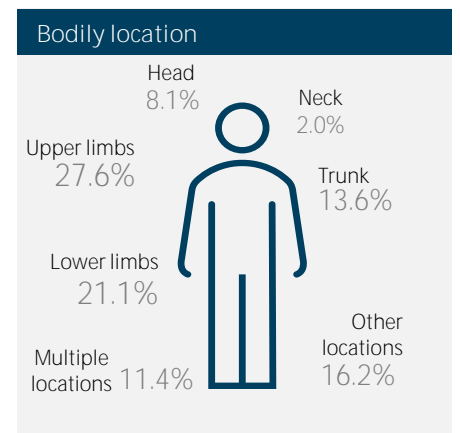
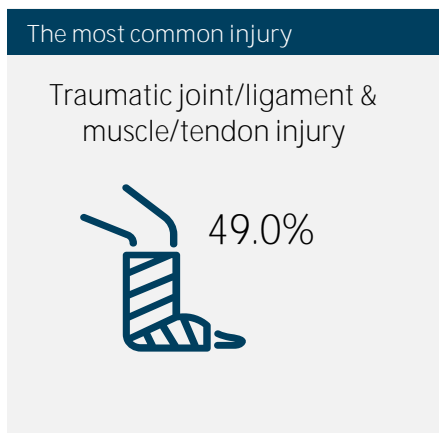
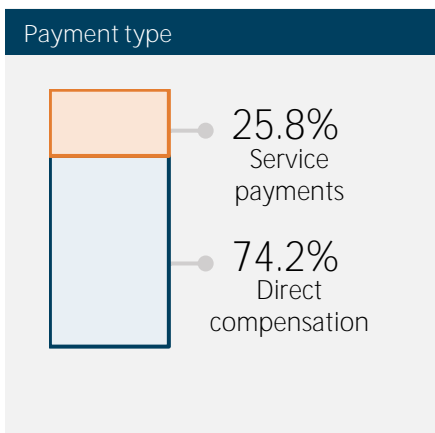
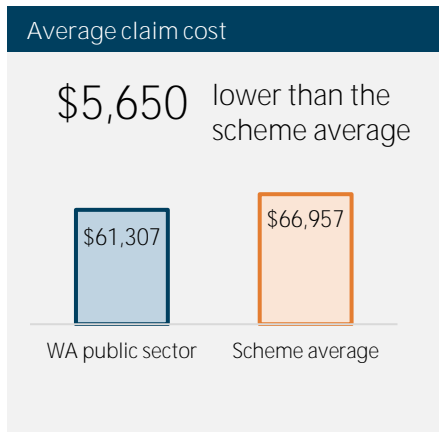
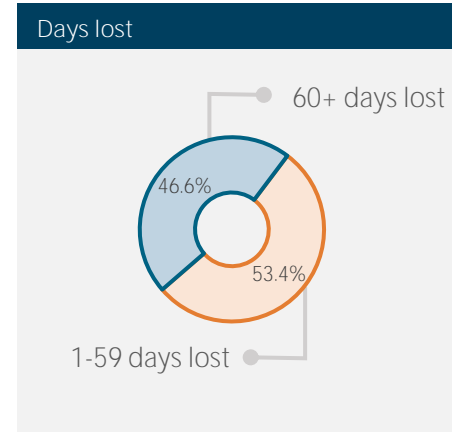
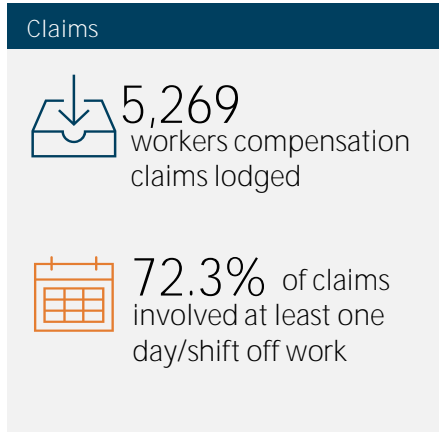
As data for the most recent financial year is subject to develop over time due to the evolving nature of claims, care should be exercised when referencing and comparing against previous years. Developments are less likely to affect claim numbers but will have more impact on claim payments.

The 'p' in the reference period (2023/24p) signifies 'provisional data' - data that is subject to change over time as further information about the claims are received.

Information in the report should also be read with consideration of the statements set out in the disclaimer provided.

Frequency rates are based on the latest available data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which lags by one year from this report's timeframe.

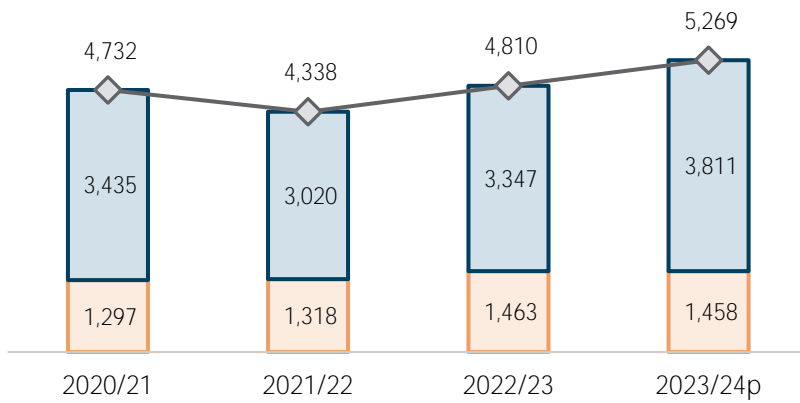
WA Public Sector at a glance 2023/24p



¹ Source: Western Australian Public Sector Workforce Report – September 2024 - Public Sector Commission

² Source: Labour Force, Australia, November 2024 - Australian Bureau of Statistics

Claim numbers number of claims lodged by lost-time

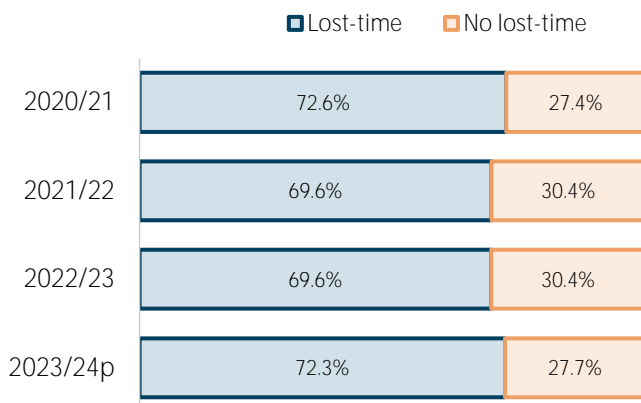


■ All claims
Total claims in the WA Public Sector increased (+11.3%) over four years.

■ Lost-time claims
Lost-time claims averaged 3,403 claims per year between 2020/21 and 2023/24p.

■ No lost-time claims
Claims with no time off work averaged 1,384 claims per year over four years.

Claim numbers proportion of claims lodged by lost-time

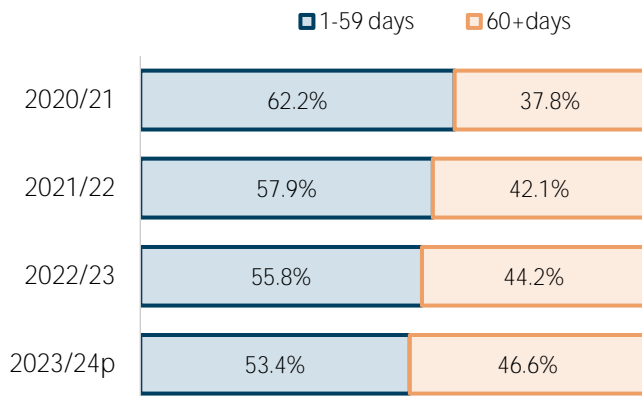


In 2023/24p, the WA Public Sector accounted for **19.6%** of total claims lodged in the WA workers compensation scheme.

Claim numbers number of claims lodged by days lost

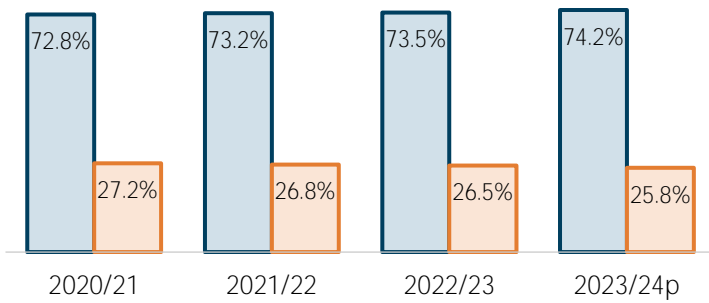
| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| 0 days | 1,297 | 1,318 | 1,463 | 1,458 |
| 1 - 4 days | 755 | 626 | 616 | 683 |
| 5 - 19 days | 780 | 614 | 672 | 738 |
| 20 - 59 days | 603 | 510 | 579 | 613 |
| 60 - 119 days | 389 | 375 | 388 | 536 |
| 120 - 179 days | 243 | 207 | 268 | 459 |
| 180+ days | 665 | 688 | 824 | 782 |
| Total claims | 4,732 | 4,338 | 4,810 | 5,269 |

Lost-time claims proportions by days lost



In 2023/24p, the proportion of long duration claims in the WA Public Sector (46.6%) was on par with the rest of the scheme (46.8%)

Total claim payments proportions by payment group

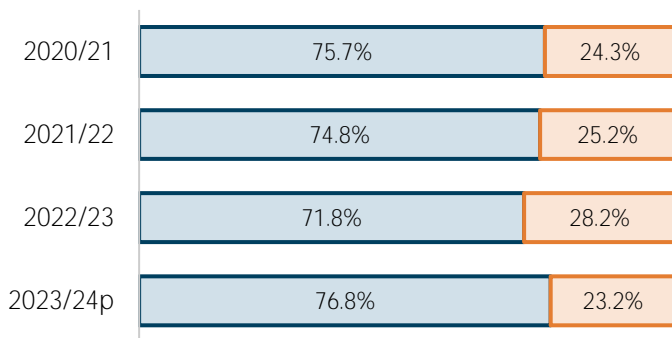


Direct compensation payments made directly to the worker (either by income replacement or lump sums).



Service payments includes medical & hospital, allied health, workplace rehabilitation and legal & miscellaneous payments.

Direct compensation payments proportions by payment type

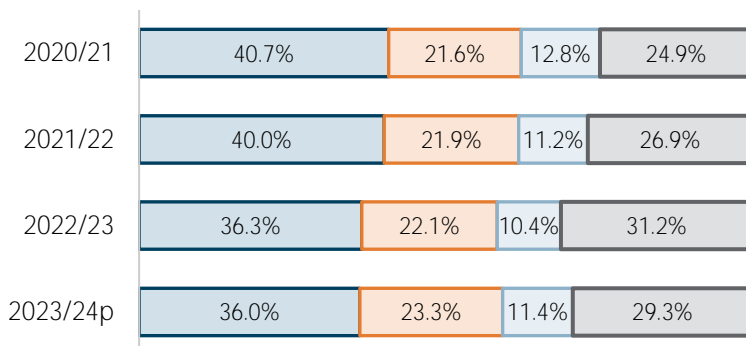


Income payments accounted for around three-quarters of direct compensation payments over four years.



Lump sums as a proportion of direct compensation payments ranged from 24.3% to 28.2% between 2020/21 and 2023/24p.

Service payments proportions by payment type



Medical & hospital



Allied health



Workplace rehabilitation



Legal & miscellaneous

Claim payments (\$million adjusted)

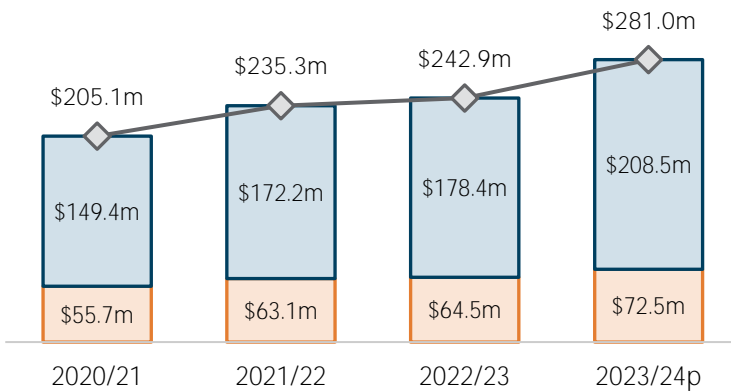
| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| DIRECT COMPENSATION | | | | |
| Income payments | \$113.0m | \$128.8m | \$128.1m | \$160.1m |
| Lump sums | \$36.3m | \$43.4m | \$50.3m | \$48.4m |
| SERVICE PAYMENTS | | | | |
| Medical & hospital | \$22.7m | \$25.2m | \$23.4m | \$26.1m |
| Allied health* | \$12.1m | \$13.8m | \$14.2m | \$16.9m |
| Workplace rehabilitation | \$7.1m | \$7.1m | \$6.7m | \$8.3m |
| Legal & miscellaneous | \$13.8m | \$16.9m | \$20.1m | \$21.2m |
| Total claim payments | \$205.1m | \$235.3m | \$242.9m | \$281.0m |



Total claim payments are adjusted for inflation to allow for meaningful comparisons over time.

* Allied health includes 'other treatment services'.

Total claim payments (\$million adjusted) by payment group



Direct compensation payments increased from \$149.4 million to \$208.5 million over four years.



Service payments increased from \$55.7 million in 2020/21 and stands at \$72.5 million in 2023/24p.

Payments for claims in the WA Public Sector in 2023/24p totalled \$281.0 million, accounting for 21.1% of total scheme payments.

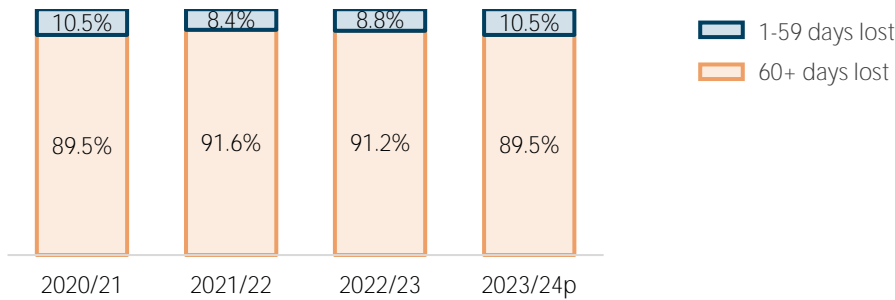
Claim costs* total claim costs by days lost

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1-59 days lost | \$23.0m | \$18.8m | \$21.9m | \$24.5m |
| 60+ days lost | \$195.7m | \$204.5m | \$226.1m | \$209.2m |
| Total claims | \$218.7m | \$223.3m | \$248.0m | \$233.6m |

Provisional financial data expected to increase over time.

* Due to the evolving nature of claims, data is subject to change particularly in the most recent year.

Claim costs* proportions of claim costs by days lost



Claim costs* average claim costs by days lost

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1-59 days lost | \$10,765 | \$10,744 | \$11,722 | \$12,031 |
| 60+ days lost | \$150,885 | \$161,037 | \$152,777 | \$117,710 |
| Total claims | \$63,672 | \$73,947 | \$74,094 | \$61,307 |

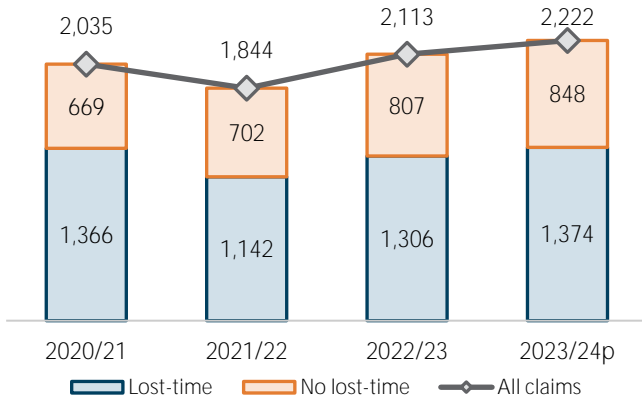
Provisional financial data expected to increase over time.

The average claim cost for the WA Public Sector was **\$61,307** in 2023/24p, below the scheme average of \$66,957.

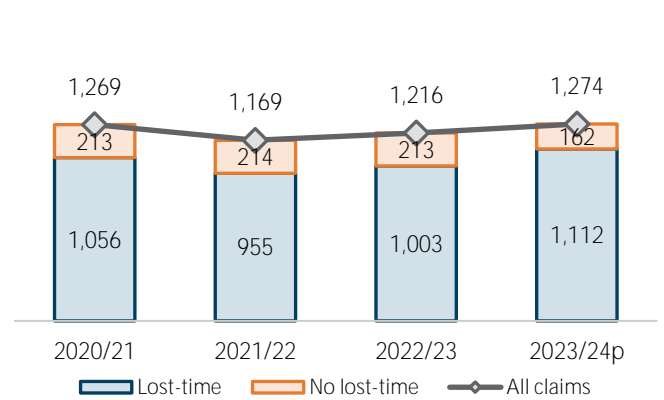
WA PUBLIC SECTOR

Claim numbers by lost-time per industry division

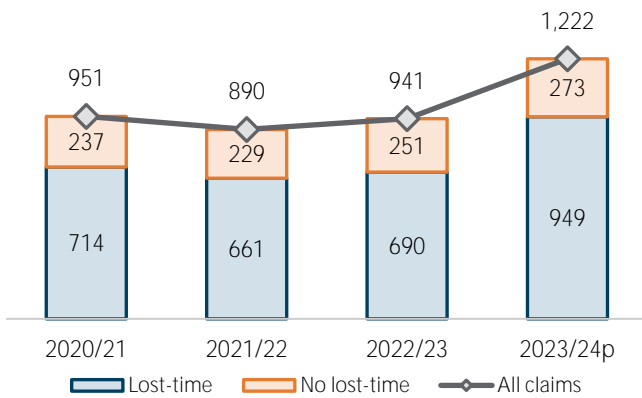
Education and training



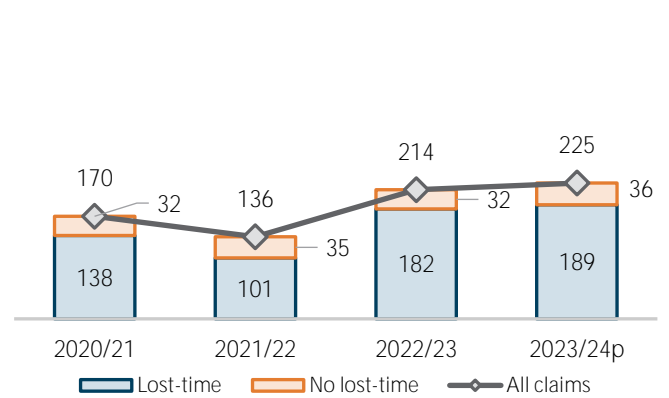
Health care and social assistance



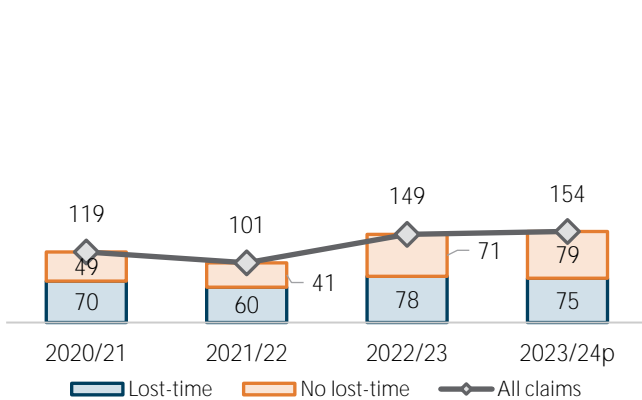
Public administration and safety



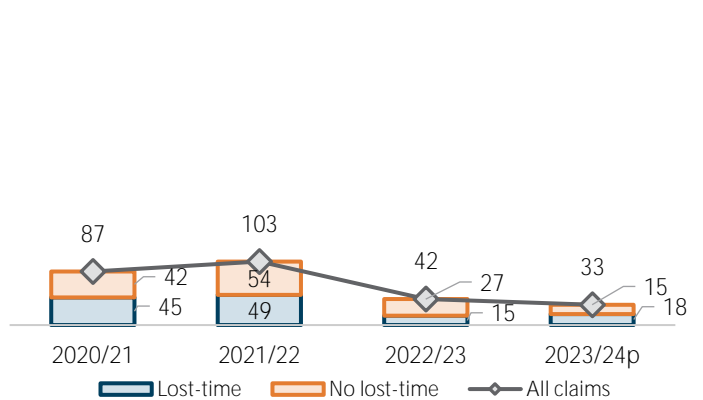
Transport, postal and warehousing



Arts and recreation services



Agriculture, forestry and fishing

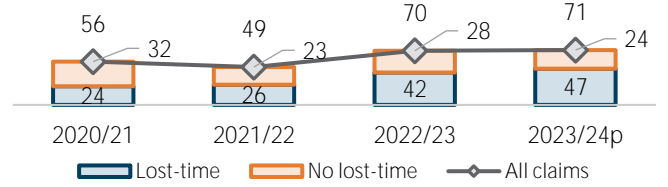
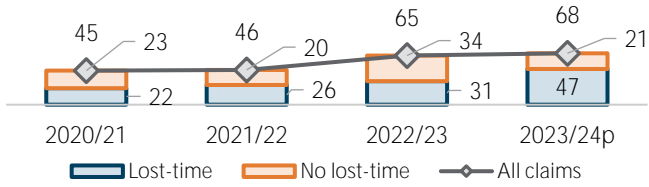


WA PUBLIC SECTOR

Claim numbers by lost-time per industry division

Electricity, gas, water and waste services

All other industries



Lost-time claims by industry division

| | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23p |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Education and training | 1,140 | 1,365 | 1,146 | 1,384 |
| 1-59 days lost | 847 | 931 | 764 | 812 |
| 60+ days lost | 293 | 434 | 382 | 572 |
| Health care and social assistance | 925 | 1,056 | 962 | 1,019 |
| 1-59 days lost | 539 | 597 | 488 | 530 |
| 60+ days lost | 386 | 459 | 474 | 489 |
| Public administration and safety | 797 | 717 | 664 | 716 |
| 1-59 days lost | 474 | 418 | 348 | 315 |
| 60+ days lost | 323 | 299 | 316 | 401 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing | 95 | 138 | 102 | 186 |
| 1-59 days lost | 55 | 71 | 42 | 96 |
| 60+ days lost | 40 | 67 | 60 | 90 |
| Arts and recreation services | 81 | 70 | 61 | 83 |
| 1-59 days lost | 59 | 49 | 37 | 54 |
| 60+ days lost | 22 | 21 | 24 | 29 |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 14 | 44 | 49 | 17 |
| 1-59 days lost | 9 | 37 | 33 | 9 |
| 60+ days lost | 5 | 7 | 16 | 8 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services | 8 | 22 | 26 | 30 |
| 1-59 days lost | 4 | 12 | 13 | 17 |
| 60+ days lost | 4 | 10 | 13 | 13 |
| All other industries | 37 | 24 | 26 | 44 |
| 1-59 days lost | 25 | 14 | 19 | 26 |
| 60+ days lost | 12 | 10 | 7 | 18 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Work status rate lost-time claims

| Return to work rate | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| at 1 month | 70.6% | 61.1% | 58.8% | 58.6% |
| at 3 months | 81.3% | 74.3% | 72.3% | 72.0% |
| at 6 months | 86.7% | 82.9% | 80.3% | 78.8% |
| at 12 months | 90.0% | 86.4% | 84.9% | n/a |



The return to work rate measures the proportion of claimants who returned to work at any capacity at key intervals from the date of claim lodgement.

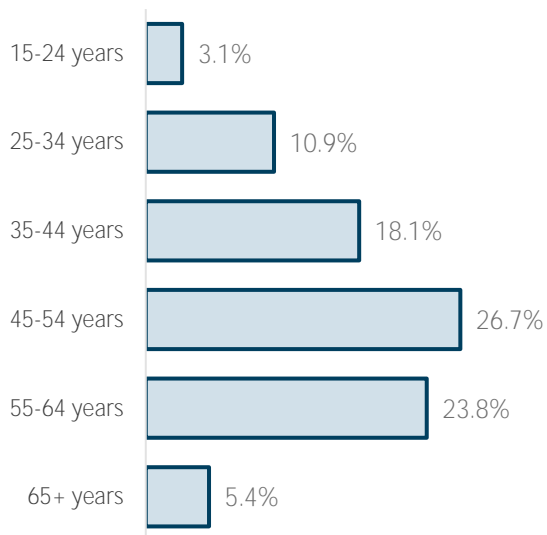
* Claims lodged towards the end of the financial year have not had sufficient time lapsed for the work status to be assessed. Therefore, the return to work rate is expected to revise upwards, especially at the 6 and 12 month mark.

In 2022/23, **84.9%** of claimants in the WA Public Sector returned to work at some capacity 12 months from claim lodgement. This is slightly below the total scheme (87.5%).

Lost-time claims by age group

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 15-24 years | 99 | 89 | 117 | 148 |
| 25-34 years | 394 | 369 | 414 | 526 |
| 35-44 years | 708 | 610 | 689 | 835 |
| 45-54 years | 1,075 | 913 | 1,016 | 1,063 |
| 55-64 years | 976 | 856 | 907 | 990 |
| 65+ years | 183 | 183 | 204 | 249 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

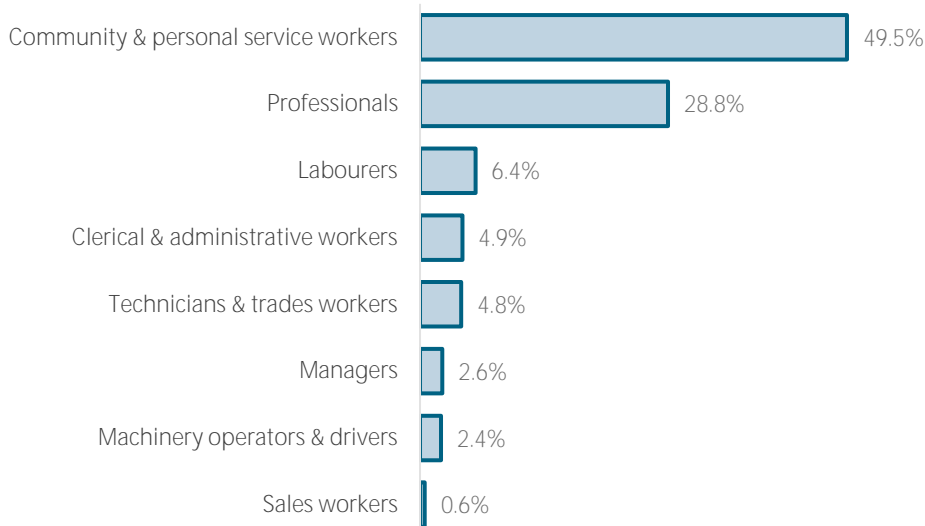
Lost-time claims proportions by age group 2023/24p



Lost-time claims by occupation

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Community & personal service workers | 1,606 | 1,421 | 1,636 | 1,888 |
| Professionals | 1,032 | 860 | 963 | 1,096 |
| Labourers | 284 | 237 | 238 | 245 |
| Clerical & administrative workers | 170 | 167 | 144 | 187 |
| Technicians & trades workers | 170 | 174 | 171 | 182 |
| Managers | 68 | 68 | 86 | 99 |
| Machinery operators & drivers | 73 | 66 | 65 | 93 |
| Sales workers | 32 | 27 | 44 | 21 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Lost-time claims proportions by occupation 2023/24p



Carers & aides and protective service workers accounted for over 90% of 'Community & personal service workers' in 2023/24p.

Lost-time claims by nature of injury/disease

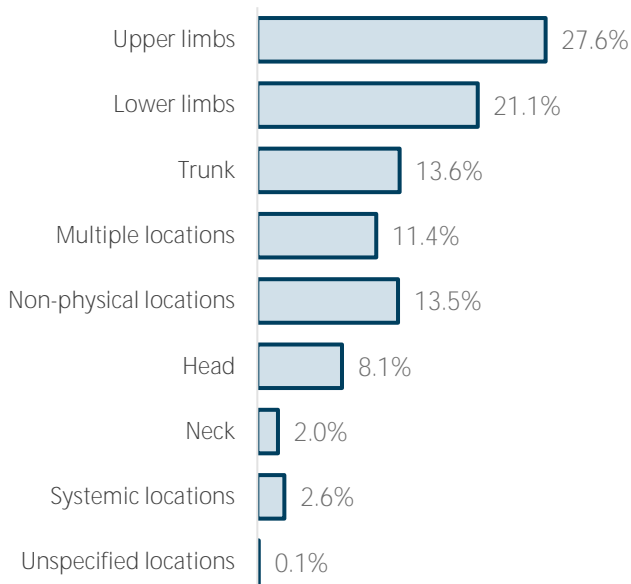
| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Traumatic joint/ligament & muscle/tendon injury | 1,965 | 1,587 | 1,822 | 1,866 |
| Wounds, lacerations, amputations & internal organ damage | 503 | 494 | 481 | 598 |
| Mental diseases | 334 | 313 | 422 | 514 |
| Fractures | 263 | 226 | 233 | 255 |
| Musculoskeletal & connective tissue diseases | 121 | 150 | 143 | 199 |
| Intracranial injuries | 63 | 67 | 68 | 105 |
| Infectious & parasitic diseases | 16 | 1 | 39 | 79 |
| Other injuries | 52 | 41 | 39 | 36 |
| Unspecified claims | 21 | 28 | 25 | 35 |
| Burn | 22 | 27 | 24 | 33 |
| Neoplasms (cancer) | 1 | 5 | 6 | 29 |
| Digestive system diseases | 17 | 17 | 8 | 22 |
| Respiratory system diseases | 10 | 3 | 8 | 12 |
| Nervous system & sense organ diseases | 32 | 24 | 16 | 11 |
| Skin & subcutaneous tissue diseases | 12 | 13 | 8 | 11 |
| Circulatory system diseases | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Other diseases | 2 | 21 | 2 | 2 |
| Injury to nerves & spinal cord | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Sprains and strains (traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury) continued to be the leading injury for claims lodged from the WA Public Sector (49.0%), and the overall scheme (48.6%) in 2023/24p.

Lost-time claims by bodily location of injury/disease

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Upper limbs | 960 | 844 | 899 | 1,052 |
| Lower limbs | 757 | 697 | 729 | 804 |
| Trunk | 565 | 428 | 477 | 519 |
| Multiple locations | 495 | 411 | 437 | 434 |
| Non-physical locations | 334 | 313 | 422 | 514 |
| Head | 259 | 247 | 268 | 309 |
| Neck | 40 | 56 | 51 | 75 |
| Systemic locations | 23 | 23 | 61 | 99 |
| Unspecified locations | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Lost-time claims proportions by bodily location of injury/disease 2023/24p

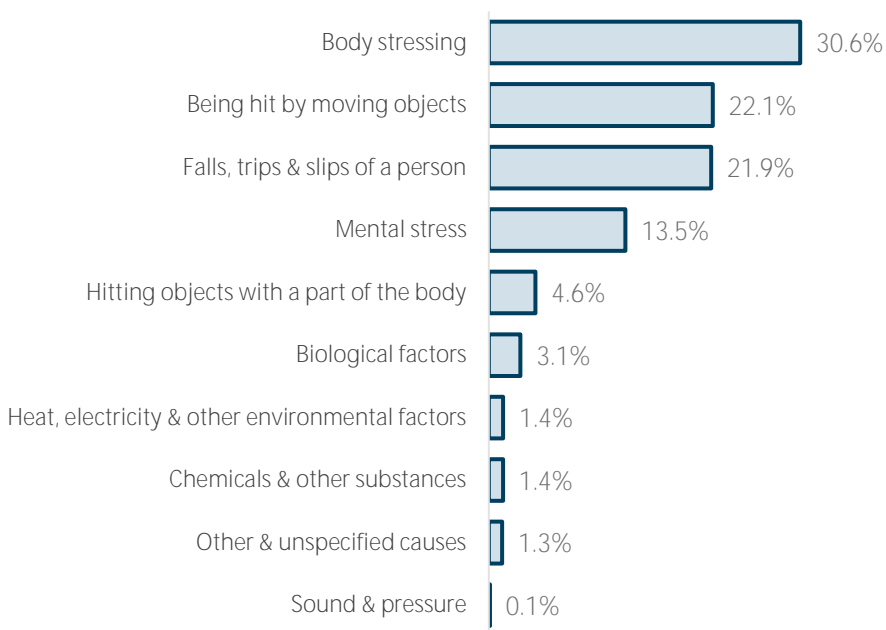


Upper and lower limb injuries accounted for around **half** of total claims lodged in 2023/24p.

Lost-time claims by mechanism of incident

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Body stressing | 1,162 | 952 | 1,095 | 1,168 |
| Being hit by moving objects | 716 | 641 | 725 | 840 |
| Falls, trips & slips of a person | 939 | 819 | 792 | 834 |
| Mental stress | 334 | 313 | 422 | 514 |
| Hitting objects with a part of the body | 133 | 130 | 136 | 175 |
| Biological factors | 41 | 32 | 66 | 119 |
| Heat, electricity & other environmental factors | 28 | 28 | 27 | 54 |
| Chemicals & other substances | 50 | 64 | 49 | 53 |
| Other & unspecified causes | 29 | 40 | 32 | 50 |
| Sound & pressure | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Lost-time claims proportions by mechanism of incident 2023/24p

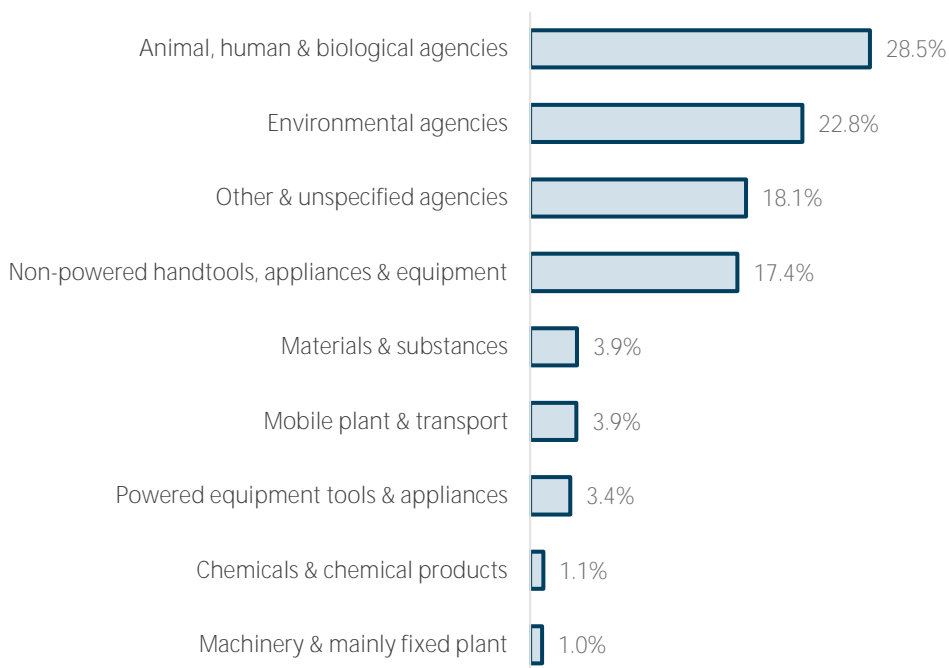


The number of claims resulting from mental stress was higher in the WA public sector (13.5%) than the rest of the scheme (2.3%) in 2023/24p.

Lost-time claims by agency of injury/disease

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24p |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Animal, human & biological agencies | 881 | 756 | 909 | 1,084 |
| Environmental agencies | 913 | 840 | 839 | 869 |
| Other & unspecified agencies | 460 | 410 | 551 | 690 |
| Non-powered handtools, appliances & equipment | 675 | 531 | 574 | 662 |
| Materials & substances | 173 | 147 | 144 | 150 |
| Mobile plant & transport | 129 | 139 | 135 | 148 |
| Powered equipment tools & appliances | 134 | 123 | 117 | 128 |
| Chemicals & chemical products | 34 | 48 | 41 | 42 |
| Machinery & mainly fixed plant | 36 | 26 | 37 | 38 |
| Total claims | 3,435 | 3,020 | 3,347 | 3,811 |

Lost-time claims proportions by agency of injury/disease 2023/24p



| TERM | DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Act | This report is based on the <i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i> , as it was in effect during the period covered by this report (up to 30 June 2024). Future reports will reflect the changes introduced by the new <i>Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023</i> , which took effect from 1 July 2024. |
| Age | Chronological age (in years) of the worker at the date of injury or disease. |
| Agency of injury or disease | The object, substance or circumstance that was principally involved in or most closely associated with the circumstances which ultimately led to the most serious injury or disease. A comprehensive list of this classification is available from <i>Safe Work Australia Type of Occurrence Classification System 3rd edition</i> (safeworkaustralia.gov.au). |
| Bodily location | The part of the body affected by the most serious injury or disease. A comprehensive list of this classification is available from <i>Safe Work Australia Type of Occurrence Classification System 3rd edition</i> (safeworkaustralia.gov.au). |
| Claimant | A person who lodges a claim in the WA workers compensation scheme. |
| Claim costs | An estimate of costs for unfinalised claims, and total cost of finalised claims attributed to the year in which a claim was lodged. Due to the evolving nature of claims, data is subject to change particularly the most recent year. Claim costs are not adjusted for inflation. |
| Claims data | Information pertaining to workers compensation claims is reported to WorkCover WA by approved insurers and self-insurers. Information is collated based on the financial year in which a claim was lodged with the insurer. For the purposes of this report, certain types of claims were excluded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ lost-time journey claims between home and work ▲ asbestos-related diseases, including mesothelioma and pneumoconiosis, caused by asbestos exposure ▲ duplicated or disallowed (by an insurer). <p>Due to the evolving nature of claims, data is subject to change particularly the most recent year.</p> |
| Claim payments | Categories are based on WorkCover WA's Guidelines for Completing Form WC 101. Claim payments are in contrast with claim costs as they do not reflect liabilities incurred but not yet paid. Claim payment information is collated based on the financial year during which payment was made, regardless of when the claim was lodged with the insurer. In this report, claim payments are reported both in adjusted and unadjusted formats. In relation to the former, payments are adjusted for inflation to allow for meaningful comparisons over time. |
| Days lost | The number of hours off work divided by the number of hours usually worked each day. If the claim is finalised, actual hours off work are used, otherwise if the claim is not finalised, estimated hours off work are used. |
| Direct compensation | Payments made directly to the worker either by income replacement (payments made for absences from work) or lump sums under the <i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i> such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ redemption payments made under Schedule 1 ▲ specific injury payments made under Schedule 2 ▲ fatal payments including funeral expenses ▲ common law and other Acts payments. |

| TERM | DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Frequency rate | The number of lost-time claims per million hours worked and indicates the prevalence of workers compensation claims. It is based on the number of hours worked by employed persons in Western Australia as supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. |
| Industry | Based on the <i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006</i> published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The ANZSIC system groups together businesses that carry out similar economic activities and structured into a hierarchy of units reflecting different levels of description (abs.gov.au). |
| Long duration claims | Workers compensation claims for which the injury or disease results in an absence from work of at least 60 days or shifts. |
| Lost-time claims | Claims for which the injury or disease results in an absence from work of at least one day or shift. |
| Mechanism of incident | The action, exposure or event that best describes the circumstances that resulted in the most serious injury or disease. The full list of this classification is available from <i>Safe Work Australia's Type of Occurrence Classification System 3rd edition</i> (safeworkaustralia.gov.au). |
| Nature of injury or disease | The most serious injury or disease suffered by the worker. The full list of this classification is available from <i>Safe Work Australia's Type of Occurrence Classification System 3rd edition</i> (safeworkaustralia.gov.au). |
| Occupation | Based on the <i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)</i> published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It is a skill-based classification which encompasses all occupations in the Australian workforce (abs.gov.au). |
| Service payments | Service payments under the <i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i> include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. medical and hospital payments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ medical practitioner and specialist payments (consultation and treatment expenses rendered by general practitioners and medical specialists) ▲ hospital expenses (hospital accommodation and hospital treatment) 2. allied health payments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ other treatment and appliance payments (comprises payments made under clauses 17(1)(3), (4), (5) and (6) of Schedule 1 of the Act, other than medical and hospital expenses) 3. workplace rehabilitation payments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ workplace rehabilitation payments (comprises payments made under clause 17 (1a) of Schedule 1 of the Act in respect of counselling, occupational training, work assessment, aids and appliances) 4. legal and miscellaneous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ legal expenses (comprises the cost of legal advice and representation incurred by approved insurers or exempt employers, witness fees and the costs of these services incurred by the worker where the approved insurer or exempt employer is ordered to meet the costs) ▲ miscellaneous (includes general items that do not fit in any other category, for example travelling, meals and lodgings, under clause 19 of Schedule 1). |
| Worker | As defined in Section 5 of the <i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i> , a worker is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) any person to whose service any industrial award or industrial agreement applies; and b) any person engaged by another person to work for the purpose of the other person's trade or business under a contract with him for service, the remuneration by whatever means of the person so working being in substance for his personal manual labour or services. |