



WA PUBLIC SECTOR CLAIMS REPORT

WA Public Sector
in the Western Australian
Workers Compensation Scheme

November 2023



Corporate Services
Business Intelligence Services
2 Bedbrook Place
Shenton Park WA 6008

 workcover.wa.gov.au

 communications@workcover.wa.gov.au

 Advice & Assistance: 1300 794 744

WorkCover WA is the government agency responsible for overseeing the WA workers compensation and injury management scheme. WorkCover WA undertakes a range of educational, advisory, enforcement and performance monitoring activities to ensure the WA workers compensation scheme is fair, accessible and cost-effective for all participants.

WA Public Sector Claims Report
2019/20 to 2022/23p

Published: November 2023

Data was extracted on 2 November 2023

© WorkCover WA, Government of Western Australia

There is no objection to this publication being copied in whole or part, provided there is due acknowledgment of any material quoted from the publication.

Table of Contents

About this report	4
WA Public Sector at a glance	5
Claim numbers	
Claims by lost-time	6
Frequency rate	6
Claims by days lost	7
Claim payments	
Direct compensation payments	8
Service payments	8
Claim costs	
Total claim costs	10
Proportion by days lost	10
Average claim costs	10
Claims by industry division	
Claim numbers by lost-time	11
Lost-time claims by days lost	13
Return to work status	14
Claimant characteristics	
Age group	15
Occupation	16
Injury/disease attributes	
Nature of injury/disease	17
Bodily location of injury/disease	18
Mechanism of incident	19
Agency of injury/disease	20
Glossary	21
Disclaimer	25

About This Report



Purpose of the report

This report provides insight into claims activity within the Western Australian public sector workers compensation scheme over a four-year period.

WorkCover WA is committed to providing relevant and timely information to stakeholders. The 'p' (i.e. '2022/23p') signifies 'provisional data' - data that is subject to change over time as further information about the claims are received).

These changes are less likely to affect claim numbers but will have more impact on claim payments.

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.

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

WA Public Sector at a glance | 2022/23p


Labour force

 164,657
State government employees¹

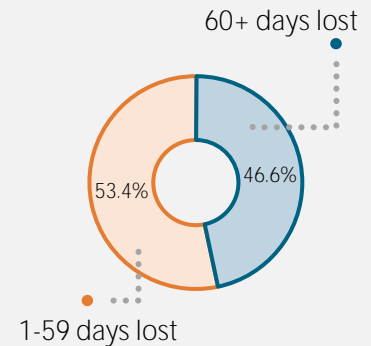
 10.5%
of the WA labour force²

Claims


 4,855
workers compensation claims lodged

 71.7% of claims
involved at least one
day/shift off work

Days lost



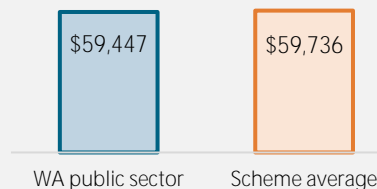
Top industries

 44%
Education and training

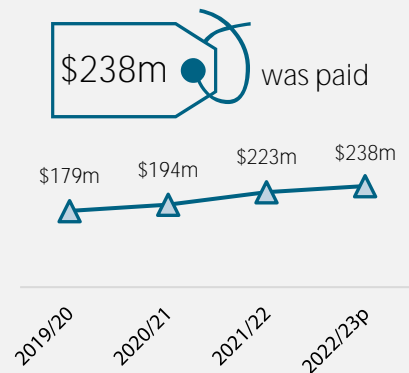
 25%
Health care and social
assistance

Average claim cost


On par with the scheme
average



Claim payments



Payment type

 26.5%
Service payments

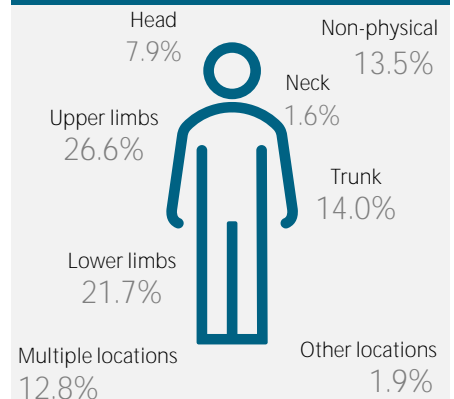
73.5%
Direct compensation

The most common injury

Traumatic joint/ligament &
muscle/tendon injury

 53.5%

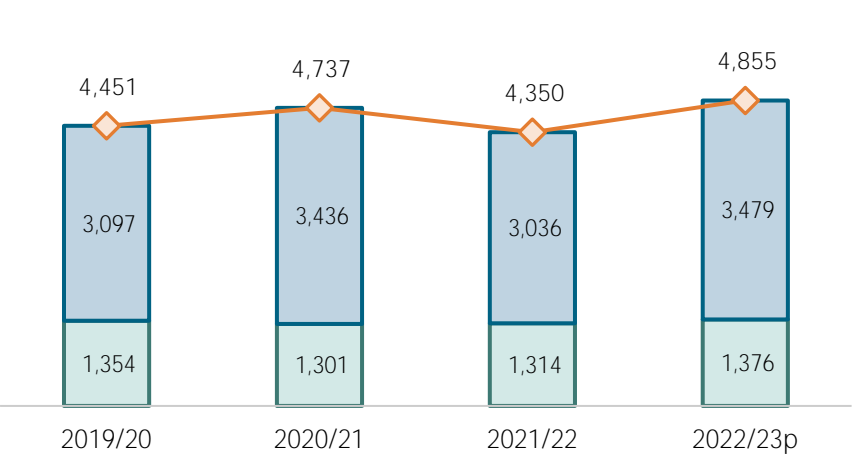
Bodily location



¹ Source: Western Australian public sector quarterly workforce report, June 2023 - Public Sector Commission

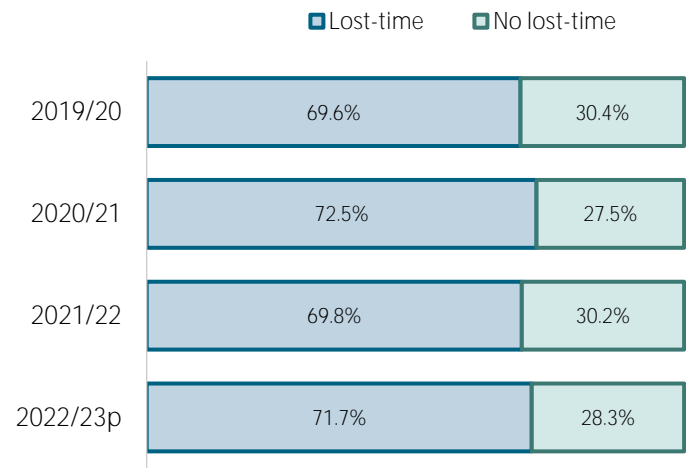
² Source: Labour Force, Australia, September 2023 - Australian Bureau of Statistics

Claim numbers number of claims lodged by lost-time



- All claims
Total claims in the WA Public Sector increased (+9.1%) over four years.
- Lost-time claims
Lost-time claims averaged 3,262 claims per year between 2019/20 and 2022/23p.
- No lost-time claims
Claims with no time off work averaged 1,336 claims per year over four years.

Claim numbers proportion of claims lodged by lost-time

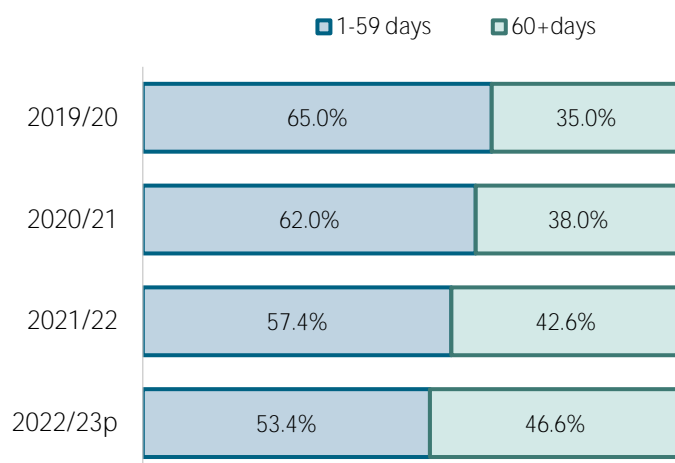


In 2022/23p, the WA Public Sector accounted for 18.6% of total claims lodged in the WA workers compensation scheme.

Claim numbers number of claims lodged by days lost

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
0 days	1,354	1,301	1,314	1,376
1 - 4 days	791	754	623	586
5 - 19 days	686	780	600	614
20 - 59 days	535	595	521	659
60 - 119 days	358	388	380	505
120 - 179 days	194	246	222	388
180+ days	533	673	690	727
Total claims	4,451	4,737	4,350	4,855

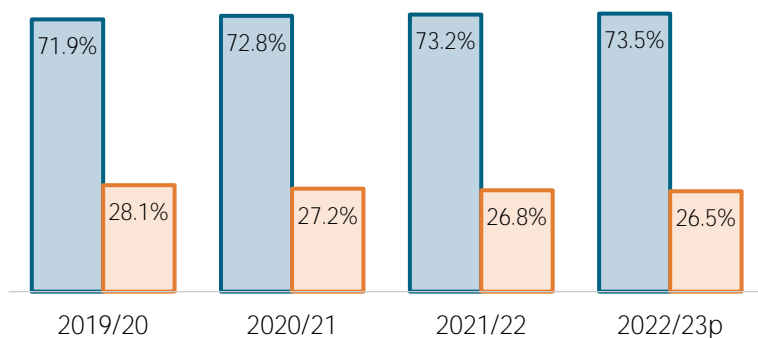
Lost-time claims proportions by days lost



In 2022/23p, the proportion of long duration claims in the WA Public Sector (46.6%) was on par with the rest of the scheme (45.4%)

WA Public Sector

Total claim payments proportions by payment group

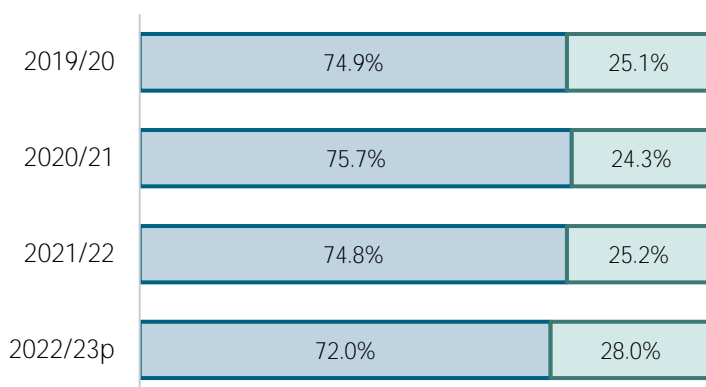


Direct compensation
payments made directly to the worker (either by income replacement or lump sums).



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

Direct compensation payments proportions by payment type

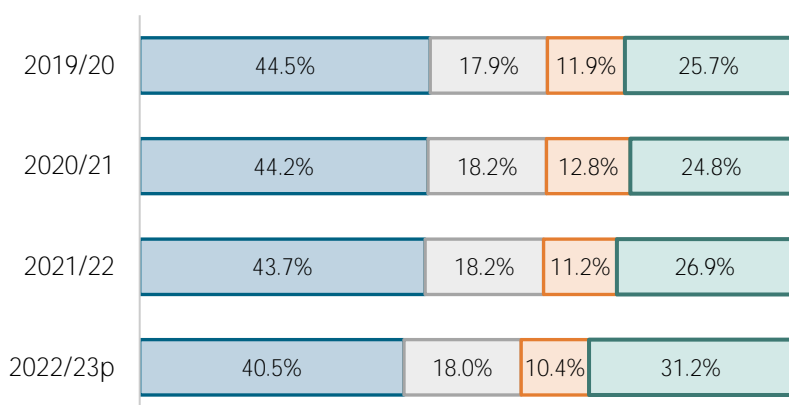


Income payments
accounted for around three-quarters of direct compensation payments over four years.



Lump sums
as a proportion of direct compensation payments ranged from 24.3% to 28.0% between 2019/20 and 2022/23p.

Service payments proportions by payment type



Medical & hospital



Allied health



Workplace rehabilitation



Legal & miscellaneous

Claim payments (\$million adjusted)

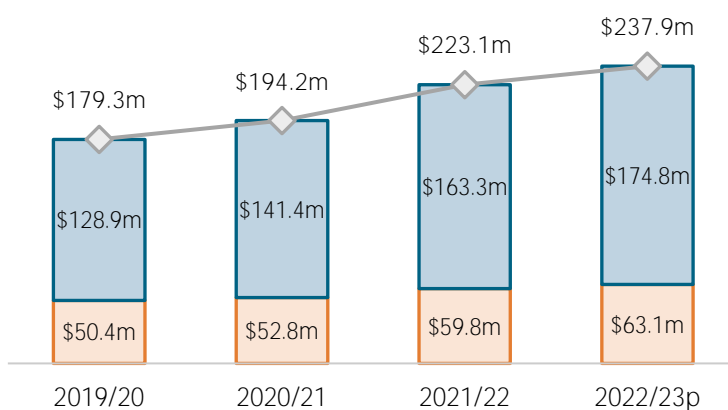
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
DIRECT COMPENSATION				
Income payments	\$96.5m	\$107.1m	\$122.2m	\$125.8m
Lump sums	\$32.4m	\$34.4m	\$41.1m	\$49.0m
SERVICE PAYMENTS				
Service payments	\$22.5m	\$23.3m	\$26.2m	\$25.6m
Medical & hospital	\$9.0m	\$9.6m	\$10.9m	\$11.3m
Allied health*	\$6.0m	\$6.8m	\$6.7m	\$6.6m
Workplace rehabilitation	\$12.9m	\$13.1m	\$16.1m	\$19.7m
Total claim payments	\$179.3m	\$194.2m	\$223.1m	\$237.9m



Total claim payments are adjusted 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 \$128.9 million to \$174.8 million over four years.



Service payments increased from \$50.4 million in 2019/20 and stands at \$63.1 million in 2022/23p.



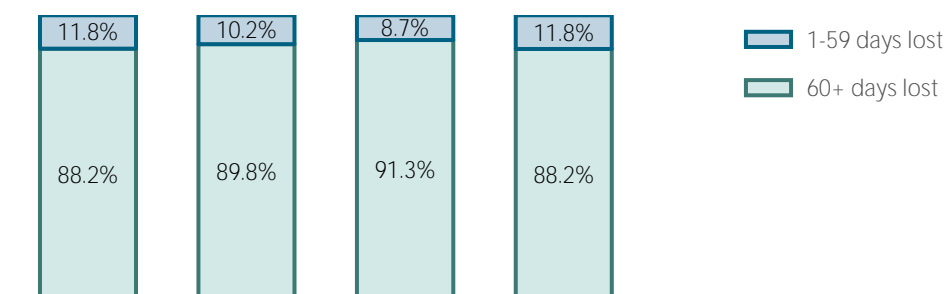
Payments for claims in the WA Public Sector in 2022/23p totalled \$237.9 million, accounting for 20.0% of total scheme payments.

Claim costs* total claim costs by days lost

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
1-59 days lost	\$21.8m	\$22.0m	\$18.6m	\$24.4m
60+ days lost	\$163.5m	\$193.8m	\$194.1m	\$182.4m
Total claims	\$185.4m	\$215.9m	\$212.7m	\$206.8m

* 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

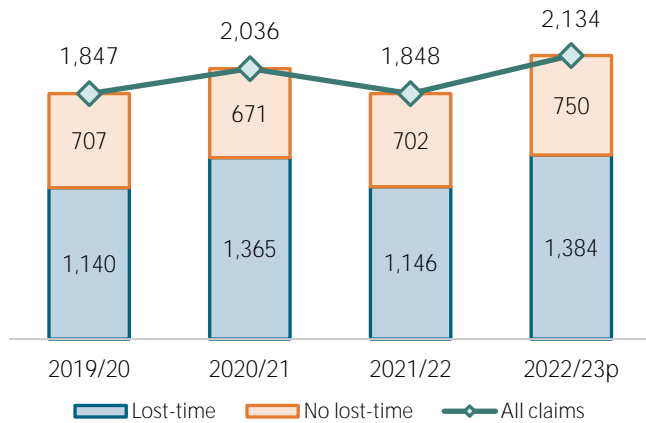
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
1-59 days lost	\$10,844	\$10,352	\$10,647	\$13,140
60+ days lost	\$150,730	\$148,303	\$150,234	\$112,586
Total claims	\$59,851	\$62,827	\$70,050	\$59,447



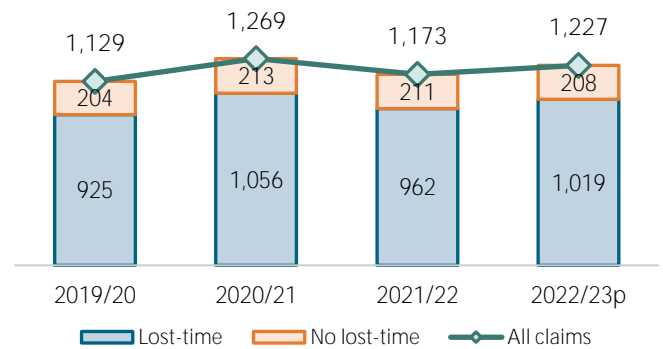
The average claim cost for WA Public Sector was \$59,447 in 2022/23p, on par with the scheme average of \$59,736.

Claim numbers by lost-time per industry division

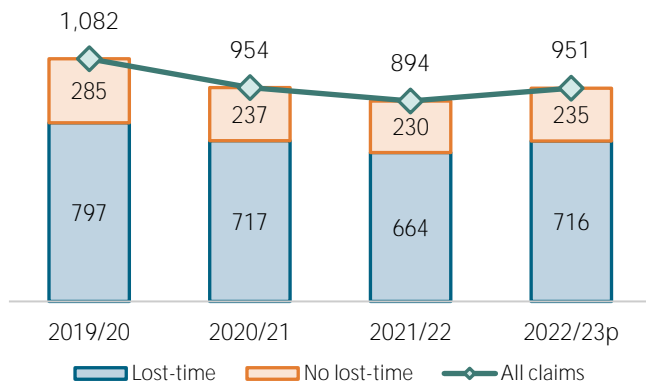
Education and training



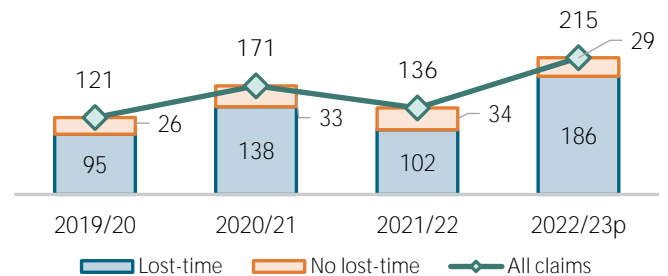
Health care and social assistance



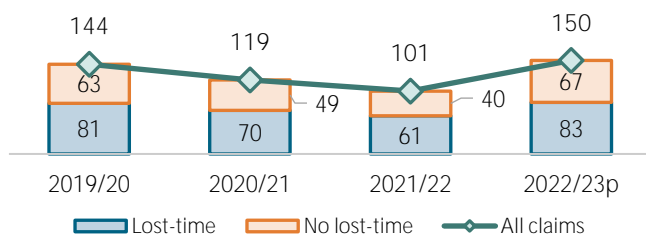
Public administration and safety



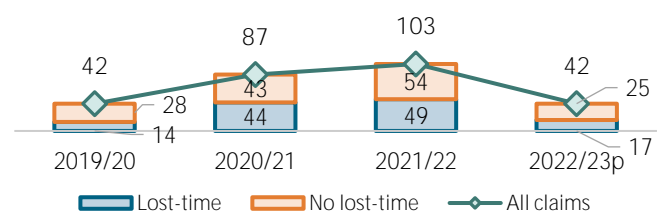
Transport, postal and warehousing



Arts and recreation services



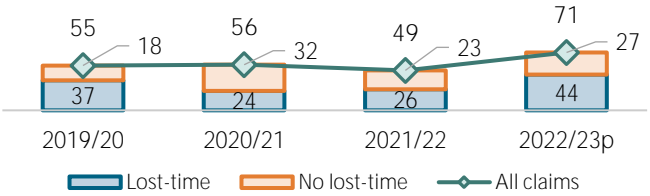
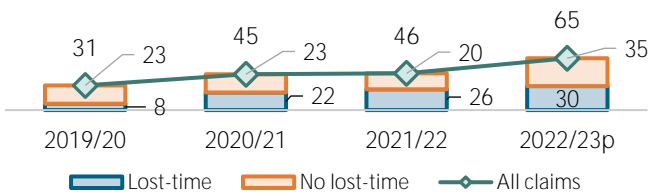
Agriculture, forestry and fishing



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	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

Work status rate lost-time claims

Return to work rate	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
at 1 month	71.8%	70.5%	61.0%	58.2%
at 3 months	83.3%	81.2%	74.2%	71.2%
at 6 months	89.2%	86.7%	82.6%	78.1%
at 12 months	91.6%	90.0%	86.3%	n/a

* 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.



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.

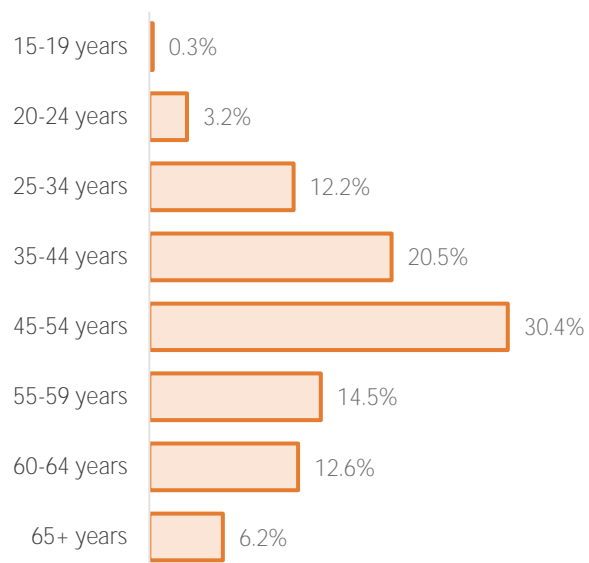


In 2021/22, 86.3% of claimants in the WA Public Sector returned to work at some capacity 12 months from claim lodgement. This is slightly below the total scheme (87.3%).

Lost-time claims by age group

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
15-19 years	7	8	9	10
20-24 years	86	90	80	111
25-34 years	332	394	372	425
35-44 years	602	707	611	714
45-54 years	978	1,077	914	1,057
55-59 years	526	582	474	506
60-64 years	390	394	391	439
65+ years	176	184	185	217
Total claims	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

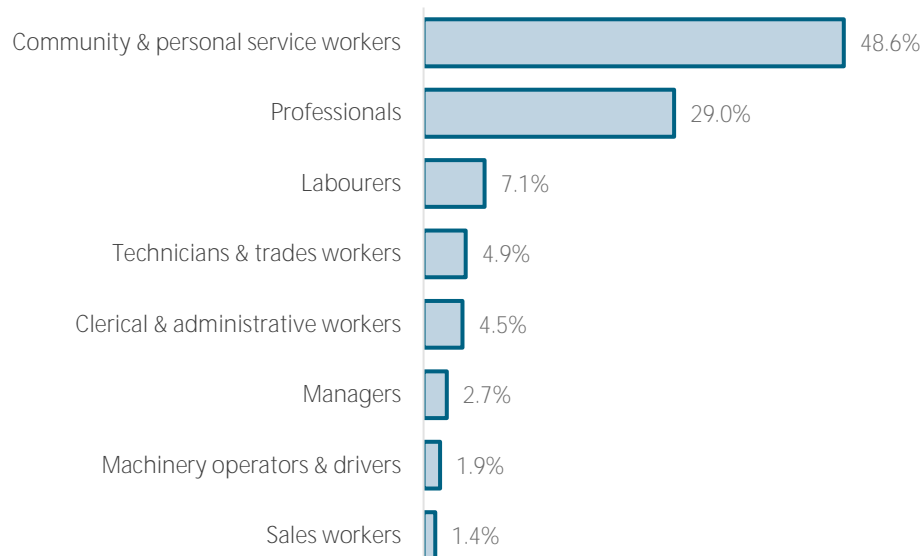
Lost-time claims proportions by age group 2022/23p



Lost-time claims by occupation

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
Community & personal service workers	1,429	1,608	1,430	1,691
Professionals	923	1,030	866	1,009
Labourers	249	285	237	246
Technicians & trades workers	147	170	175	170
Clerical & administrative workers	180	170	167	157
Managers	70	68	68	93
Machinery operators & drivers	72	73	66	66
Sales workers	27	32	27	47
Grand Total	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

Lost-time claims proportions by occupation 2022/23p



Carers & aides and protective service workers

accounted for over 90% of 'Community & personal service workers'.

Lost-time claims by nature of injury/disease

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
Traumatic joint/ligament & muscle/tendon injury	1,726	1,965	1,591	1,860
Wounds, lacerations, amputations & internal organ damage	484	502	497	497
Mental diseases	306	336	320	469
Fractures	239	262	228	244
Musculoskeletal & connective tissue diseases	88	121	150	151
Intracranial injuries	71	63	67	71
Other injuries	53	53	41	40
Infectious & parasitic diseases	12	16	1	39
Other claims	26	21	28	25
Burn	25	22	27	23
Nervous system & sense organ diseases	27	32	26	16
Respiratory system diseases	8	10	3	10
Digestive system diseases	14	17	17	10
Neoplasms (cancer)	2	1	5	8
Skin & subcutaneous tissue diseases	13	12	13	8
Other diseases	0	2	19	4
Circulatory system diseases	3	1	2	3
Injury to nerves & spinal cord	0	0	1	1
Total	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

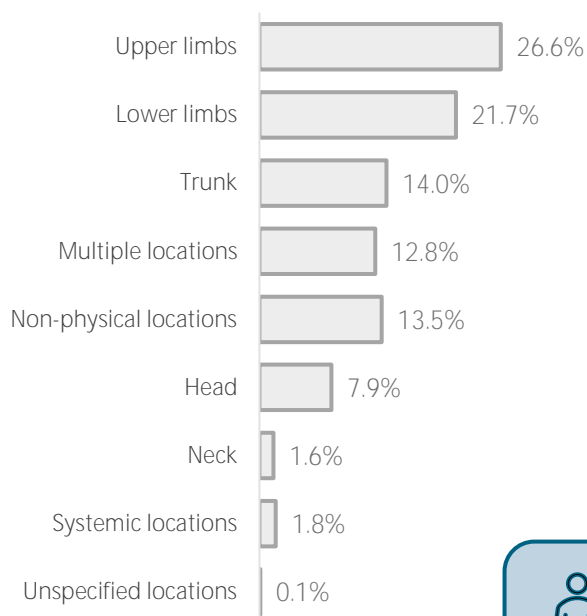


Sprains and strains (traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury) continued to be the **leading** injury type for claims lodged in the WA Public Sector (53.5%), and the overall scheme (49.7%) in 2022/23p.

Lost-time claims by bodily location of injury/disease

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
Upper limbs	876	957	853	927
Lower limbs	672	757	700	754
Trunk	452	568	428	488
Multiple locations	470	493	407	445
Non-physical locations	306	336	320	469
Head	246	259	248	276
Neck	35	41	56	54
Systemic locations	39	23	23	63
Unspecified locations	1	2	1	3
Total claims	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

Lost-time claims proportions by bodily location of injury/disease 2022/23p

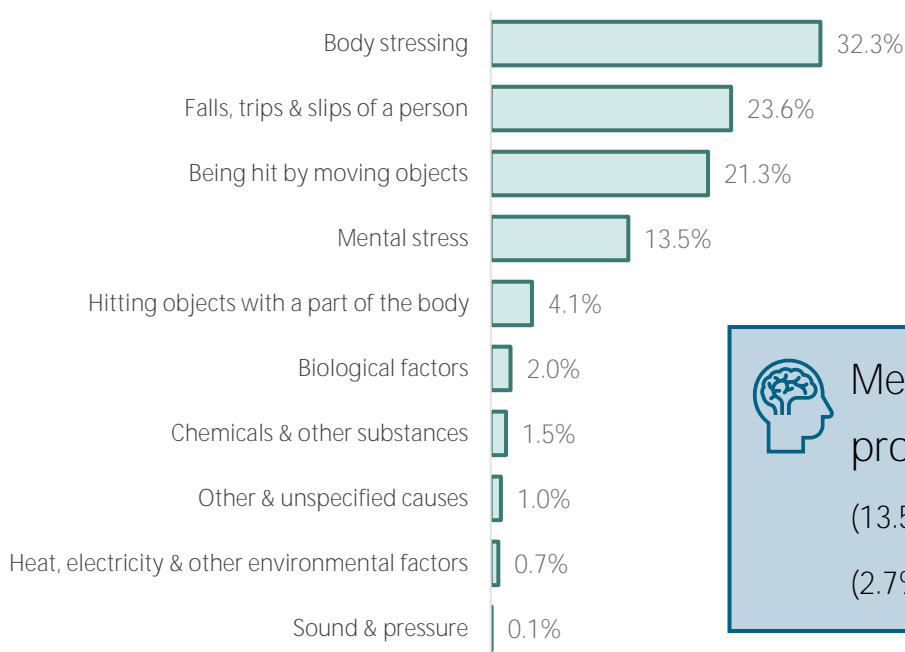


Upper and lower limb injuries accounted for around **half** of total claims lodged in 2022/23p.

Lost-time claims by mechanism of incident

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
Body stressing	986	1,162	959	1,124
Falls, trips & slips of a person	893	938	820	820
Being hit by moving objects	601	715	643	741
Mental stress	305	336	319	469
Hitting objects with a part of the body	143	132	131	141
Biological factors	57	41	32	68
Chemicals & other substances	38	50	62	52
Other & unspecified causes	38	30	40	35
Heat, electricity & other environmental factors	32	29	28	26
Sound & pressure	4	3	2	3
Total claims	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

Lost-time claims proportions by mechanism of incident 2022/23p

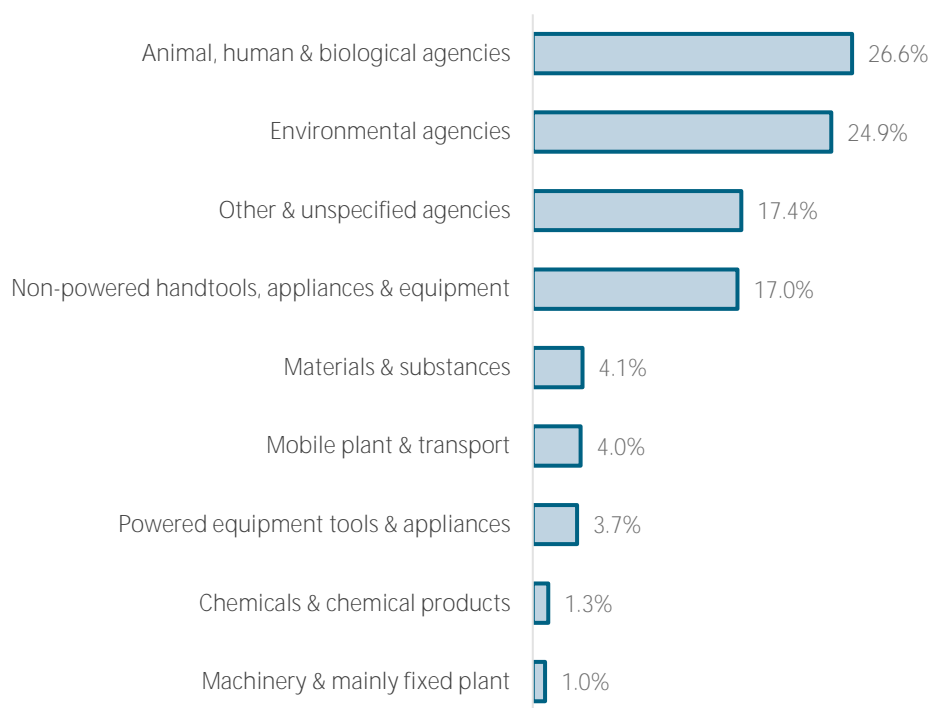


Mental health claims were more prominent in the WA Public Sector (13.5%) than the rest of the scheme (2.7%) in 2022/23p.

Lost-time claims by agency of injury/disease

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23p
Animal, human & biological agencies	768	881	757	925
Environmental agencies	912	913	843	865
Other & unspecified agencies	429	461	417	604
Non-powered handtools, appliances & equipment	574	674	538	593
Materials & substances	118	173	146	144
Mobile plant & transport	137	130	138	139
Powered equipment tools & appliances	99	134	125	128
Chemicals & chemical products	30	34	46	45
Machinery & mainly fixed plant	30	36	26	36
Total claims	3,097	3,436	3,036	3,479

Lost-time claims proportions by agency of injury/disease 2022/23p



Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM
Act	The <i>Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i> .
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	<p>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:</p> <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>

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM
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 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.
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.

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM
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	<p>Service payments include:</p> <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).

Glossary

TERM

DEFINITION / EXPLANATION OF TERM

Worker

As defined in Section 5 of the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981*, a worker is defined as:

- 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.

- 1 **Due to the dynamic nature of workers' compensation claims, the interpretation of data contained** within this report (the data) must be undertaken with some caution. Data users are cautioned to consider carefully the provisional nature of the data before using it for decisions that concern personal or public safety or the conduct of business that involves substantial monetary or operational consequences.
- 2 The accuracy or reliability of the data is not guaranteed or warranted in any way. WorkCover WA has made a reasonable effort to ensure that the data is up-to-date, accurate, complete, and comprehensive at the time of disclosure. This data reflects data reported to this agency by insurers and self-insurers for the reporting periods indicated. Data users are responsible for ensuring by independent verification its accuracy, currency or completeness.
- 3 Neither WorkCover WA, or its agencies or representatives are responsible for data that is misinterpreted or altered in any way. Derived conclusions and analysis generated from this data are not to be considered attributable to WorkCover WA.
- 4 This data is provided as is and in no event shall WorkCover WA, its agencies or representatives be liable for any damages, including, without limitation, damages resulting from lost data or lost profits or revenue, the costs of recovering such data, the costs of substitute data, claims by third parties or for other similar costs, or any special, incidental, punitive or consequential damages, arising out of the use of the data.
- 5 Information concerning the accuracy and appropriate uses of the data or concerning other **workers' compensation data may be obtained by contacting WorkCover WA.**