



WORKPLACE RELATIONS MINISTERS' COUNCIL

Benchmarking of
Commonwealth and State
Workplace Relations
Inquiry and Compliance
Services

1 January–30 June 1999

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and Compliance Services

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Foreword

On behalf of the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council, I am pleased to release the first Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report.

Commonwealth and State governments provide practical, cost effective and accessible workplace relations inquiry and compliance services to employers and employees to enable them to understand fully their employment rights and responsibilities and to take advantage of the opportunities available under relevant legislation, awards and agreements.

Since 1996, the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council has agreed to a number of initiatives directed at improving the delivery of workplace relations services. For instance, one-stop shop arrangements for workplace relations inquiry and compliance services are now successfully operating in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

Another initiative was the decision in 1997 to benchmark workplace relations inquiry and compliance services. As part of the benchmarking process, a series of key performance benchmarks have been developed and agreed by all jurisdictions.

The information produced through benchmarking already has, and will continue to, assist jurisdictions to learn from each other those approaches that can lead to improved service delivery. Accordingly, I expect that, over time, benchmarking will not only lead to improved services, but also result in greater national consistency in terms of service levels.

Benchmarking is an evolutionary process that builds on the ongoing experience of participants. The performance benchmarks developed to date, measure performance in relation to process activity. The next step in the benchmarking process will be to develop some qualitative measures for workplace relations information and compliance services, so that we can measure the impact of these process activities.

I consider that the release of the first Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report is an important step towards improving the standard of delivery of Commonwealth and State workplace relations inquiry and compliance services.



The Hon Peter Reith MP

Chair, Workplace Relations Ministers' Council

Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business

March 2000

Executive summary

In November 1997, the Labour Ministers' Council agreed that it would be advantageous for the Commonwealth and the States to move toward benchmarking their workplace relations information and compliance activities to further advance harmonisation of the workplace relations framework.

Since then the Commonwealth and all State jurisdictions have agreed to a common set of definitions, a range of timeliness and cost indicators and a common survey instrument to gauge client satisfaction with the quality of service. While differing approaches to information and compliance activities make comparisons difficult in some instances, all jurisdictions have approached the exercise constructively and with a view to using the results of benchmarking as a tool to improve service delivery.

The Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report summarises the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999.

Inquiry services

Jurisdictions provide a range of services to clients seeking information on award entitlements and other related matters. For the purpose of this report inquiries include matters handled over the counter, operator assisted calls, calls to Interactive Voice Response Units, message bank services, correspondence, claim forms, emails and faxes.

- There were 933 399 inquiries nationally in the reporting period.

In terms of the agreed indicators, benchmarking indicates:

- average queuing times for telephone inquiries were between 30 seconds and up to 4.38 minutes, with two jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for three minutes or less
- on average, advisers spend between 3.11 minutes seconds and four minutes per telephone inquiry
- between 66 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries were finalised in five working days:
 - a written inquiry has been defined as direct correspondence, including faxes and emails, which is received and answered by the relevant area—two jurisdictions achieved the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days
- cost per telephone inquiry was between \$2.63 and \$3.65:

- jurisdictions have defined ‘cost’ as salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading, workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax—superannuation is excluded

Client surveys indicate that across the jurisdictions:

- 85–98 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices
- 88–99 per cent of clients considered the information provided was easy to understand
- 93–100 per cent of clients agreed that advisers conducted themselves in a professional manner

Compliance services

Compliance services contribute to the enforcement of awards, agreements and legislation. All jurisdictions provide assistance to employees who believe they have been underpaid in terms of their wages and conditions. For the purposes of benchmarking, compliance cases include both investigations arising from claims and those initiated as part of targeted campaigns.

- There were 15 089 cases dealt with nationally in the reporting period.

In terms of the agreed indicators, the benchmarking report indicates:

- the average time (in months) to finalise a case was between 1.7 months and 5.5 months
- 34–88 per cent of cases were finalised in 90 days, with one jurisdiction meeting the national benchmark of 80 per cent of cases finalised within 90 days
- the average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions was between \$429 and \$896

Client surveys indicate that across the jurisdictions between:

- 79 per cent and 92 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the inspectors handled the matter professionally
- 83 per cent and 95 per cent of clients considered the information provided was relevant
- 79 per cent and 95 per cent of clients agreed that the information was provided in a timely and efficient manner

Next steps

The Workplace Relations Ministers' Council will be provided with an annual benchmarking report for each financial year. Continued benchmarking will enable future reports to provide trend analysis regarding workplace relations information and advisory services.

To date, benchmarking has focussed almost exclusively on indicators that measure performance in relation to process activity rather than the outcome of that activity. The development of more qualitative indicators of performance and outcome measures is considered a crucial next step in enhancing the potential benefits of benchmarking. This work will also provide an opportunity to develop indicators regarding educative activities.

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Introduction

There are six jurisdictions in Australia established by different Commonwealth and State legislation. Since 1996-97 the Commonwealth has been responsible for workplace relations in Victoria following the referral of industrial relations powers by that State.

In November 1997, the Labour Ministers' Council agreed to move toward benchmarking their inquiry and compliance case activities to further advance harmonisation of the workplace relations framework. Ministers agreed that jurisdictions develop a consistent set of performance indicators for benchmarking purposes.

Purpose of benchmarking

The main purpose of benchmarking is to improve service delivery by facilitating the exchange of information and ideas between jurisdictions on alternative approaches to information and compliance activities. It should result in continuous improvement by identifying efficiencies and options to lift performance. Jurisdictions will be able to draw on each other's experiences to improve their own systems and practices.

A further goal of benchmarking is to assist the workplace relations harmonisation process. Since benchmarking establishes common performance standards, it will lead over time to greater national consistency in service provision. However, jurisdictions recognise that there will always be structural differences in service delivery reflecting the service context and the broader framework within which they operate.

Benchmarking is an evolutionary process that builds on the experience of participants over time. Options to improve performance will continue to be identified as trends emerge from the reporting data. In addition, it is expected that jurisdictions will need to build on the current performance framework to meet changing requirements.

Development of the performance framework

In early 1998 jurisdictions agreed that the key activities to benchmark were information, compliance and educative activities. They identified a range of common indicators for the first two activities to provide data on timeliness, cost and quality. It was agreed that indicators for educative activities would be considered at a later stage.

The first challenge confronting jurisdictions was to define common terminology applying to activities to enable similar data to be collected. Although all jurisdictions agreed on a common set of definitions regarding activities, these definitions do not always sit easily with the sometimes different approaches across jurisdictions as can be seen in the following examples.

- **Commencement of a compliance case:** In New South Wales and Tasmania the parties have 28 days to settle the matter themselves before an investigation is commenced. Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia count all complaints as cases but

the Commonwealth counts only those determined to be a case after a preliminary examination.

- **Case duration:** Where appropriate, New South Wales may advise employees to take their case to small claims, whereas the Commonwealth does this towards the end. Western Australia requires proof of payment before a case is finalised but this is not always the case for the Commonwealth. In Queensland, if the department sustains a breach but does not achieve voluntary compliance it will send a 21 day letter to the claimant seeking confirmation that they wish to proceed.
- **Estimating costs:** The Commonwealth has calculated costs for the States where it has contracted out its services based on the average cost per inquiry or compliance case specified in the contract multiplied by the level of activity. New South Wales figures include salary related costs only and contain no deductions to take into account participation in other activities not directly related to the inquiry or compliance. Queensland compliance figures do not recognise the costs associated with running a network of 20 geographically diverse offices.

States also faced the problem of reconciling their own reporting codes to the benchmarking terms. For example the benchmarking term ‘sustained’ covers six Western Australian codes, ‘not sustained’ covers five codes and there are three additional codes that could fall into either category depending on the circumstances.

Once common definitions were agreed, jurisdictions developed common performance indicators to measure timeliness and cost and a common survey instrument to gauge client satisfaction with the quality of service.

The indicators developed are:

- average queuing time in minutes for telephone inquiries
- average time spent on calls by advisers
- average cost per telephone inquiry answered
- average time taken to finalise a compliance case
- average cost incurred per finalised case

The client survey measures levels of client satisfaction with the service. Questions seek client feedback on the quality of information provided and the professionalism of staff.

Jurisdictions have agreed to the following benchmarks:

- 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for three minutes or less
- 90 per cent of requests finalised as a written inquiry in five working days
- 80 per cent of compliance cases finalised within 90 days of commencement of investigation

Data qualifications

The figures provided in this report originate from a range of departmental reporting systems, including manual systems, and in some cases are based on estimates.

Jurisdictions have experienced problems reporting against the indicators, as verified in the following examples, and are working towards developing reporting systems that extract the required data

- Queensland inquiry line statistics are available only in relation to the department's Wageline service covering the greater Brisbane area. This service is estimated to handle approximately 65 per cent of the inquiries workload and is considered a suitable indicator for the whole of the State. Statistics in relation to all 20 offices in Queensland will be provided as technology to capture this information becomes available in the regional centres. Cases finalised statistics were only available from the Lutwyche, Mt Gravatt and Southport offices for the reporting period. Average time in months will become available with the implementation of a new wage complaint tracking system in October.
- Queensland and Western Australia were not able to provide data on turnaround time for written inquiries for the whole period.
- Commonwealth telephone systems have not been able to provide all the data required. It is expected that upgrades will allow better reporting in the future.
- During 1998–99 the New South Wales Department of Industrial Relations commenced the progressive implementation of a new information technology platform and database for compliance file management and reporting. Whilst the implementation and much of its functionality in relation to compliance claims and cases were completed by 30 June 1999, the full range of its reporting functionality is yet to become operational. Accordingly, data currently available is reliant on other reporting systems which does not allow the comprehensive data sought or required.
- In Tasmania, both the inquiry and compliance areas deal concurrently with industrial award matters and concerns relating to occupational health and safety, dangerous goods and workers' compensation. Tasmania is investigating production of a reporting model that will allow cost and timeliness data to be extracted and reported separately.

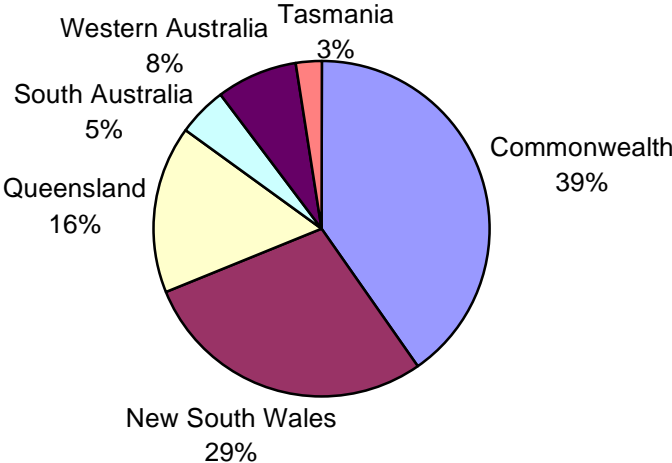
Performance results

Inquiry services

Jurisdictions provide a range of services to clients seeking information on award entitlements and other workplace relations matters. For the purpose of this report inquiries include matters handled over the counter, operator assisted calls, calls to Interactive Voice Response Units, correspondence, claim forms, emails and faxes.

There were 933 399 inquiries nationally in the reporting period. A breakdown of the workload is provided in Figure A.

Figure A. Percentage of inquiries by jurisdiction



In terms of the agreed indicators, benchmarking indicates:

- average queuing times for telephone inquiries range from 30 seconds up to 4.38 minutes, with two jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for three minutes or less
- on average, advisers spend between 3.11 minutes and four minutes per telephone inquiry
- between 66 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries are finalised in five working days:
 - a written inquiry has been defined as direct correspondence, including faxes and emails, which is received and answered by the relevant area—two jurisdictions achieved the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days
- cost per telephone inquiry ranges between \$2.63 and \$3.65

- jurisdictions have defined ‘cost’ as salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading, workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax—superannuation is excluded

Client surveys indicate that across the jurisdictions:

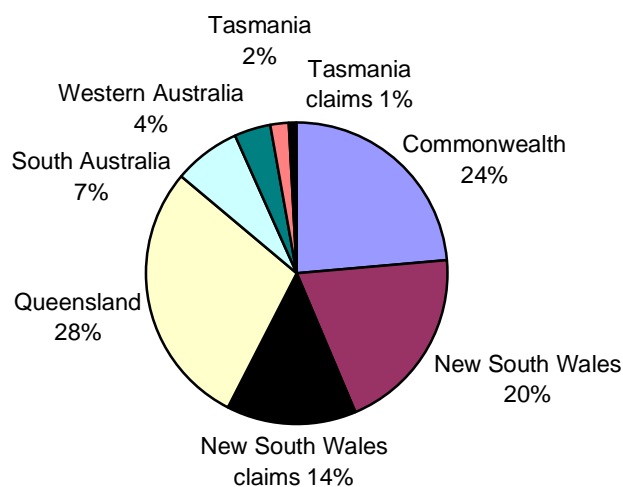
- 85–98 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices
- 88–99 per cent of clients considered the information provided was easy to understand
- 93–100 per cent of clients agreed that advisers conducted themselves in a professional manner

Compliance services

Compliance services contribute to the enforcement of awards, agreements and legislation. All jurisdictions provide assistance to employees who believe they have been underpaid in terms of their wages and conditions. For the purposes of benchmarking, compliance cases include both investigations arising from claims and those initiated as part of targeted campaigns.

There were 15 089 cases dealt with in the period. The compliance workload covers both cases finalised and cases on hand at the end of the period. A breakdown of the workload is provided in Figure B. Note that NSW and Tasmania have a 28 day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector. The black areas reflect ‘28 day’ claims settled by voluntary compliance, not proceeded with or on hand at the end of the reporting period.

Figure B. Percentage of claims/cases by jurisdiction



In terms of the agreed indicators, the report indicates:

- the average time (in months) to finalise a case ranges from 1.7 months to 5.5 months
- between 34 per cent and 88 per cent of cases are finalised in 90 days, with one jurisdiction meeting the national benchmark of 80 per cent of cases finalised within 90 days
- the average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions ranges from \$429 to \$896

Client surveys indicate that across the jurisdictions between:

- 79 per cent and 91 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the inspectors handled the matter professionally
- 83 per cent and 95 per cent of clients considered the information provided was relevant
- 79 per cent and 95 per cent of clients agreed that information was provided in a timely and efficient manner

Outcomes from the benchmarking process

All jurisdictions support the benchmarking of inquiry and compliance activities and have participated fully in the provision of statistical data. To date the main benefit from the process is that it has provided jurisdictions with an opportunity to assess different approaches to service delivery. Comments from particular jurisdictions are listed below. All, with the exception of Tasmania, are positive about the outcomes from the process so far.

Commonwealth

The benchmarking project has provided the Commonwealth with a model for reporting and monitoring federal service delivery in the different States. The Commonwealth intends to develop its own reporting framework to include more analysis of data, development of trend information and comparisons. It is expected that this will assist federal service providers, whether departmental offices or State departments, to identify areas they can improve relative to other providers and to learn what they are doing that may explain the differences.

New South Wales

The benchmarking process has:

- allowed the department to adopt an objective framework for ongoing monitoring of the performance of compliance and information activities
- created a framework for effective forecasting of demand for services and resource implications of this demand

- enabled the department to adopt a customer-focused approach to the evaluation of its compliance and information services
- enabled enhanced cost/benefit analyses of the effects of targeted compliance and information strategies through education
- encouraged the assessment and adoption of relevant performance benchmarks in other areas of the department
- allowed the department to focus on more cost-effective means of service delivery

Queensland

Specific positives from the benchmarking process include:

- proposals to improve the Department of Employment Training and Industrial Relations Internet site design and usage in line with other States
- proposals to produce brochures for school leavers in relation to 'trial' employment
- agreement in principle to work with South Australia and Western Australia on a single interface between several databases (for example, award databases, association membership lists)
- initiation of plans to obtain a computer program to automatically fax information to clients as occurs in other States

South Australia

Direct benefits (by setting and using the benchmarks):

- development of benchmarks has coincided with (and helped drive) internal Key Performance Indicator development
- the department's performance against the benchmarks has validated the efficiency, timeliness and quality of its workplace relations service delivery
- the client surveys were the first comprehensive surveys of compliance and telephone customers undertaken by the department's workplace services area (in either its workplace relations or occupational health and safety programs)
- agreeing on the benchmarks has caused the department to reflect on the key steps in its workplace relations advisory and compliance processes

Indirect benefits (of regular information exchanges)

In June 1999, two South Australian staff travelled to New South Wales to review their workplace relations processes and see which, if any, could be adopted in South Australia.

In particular, the New South Wales 28 day ‘pre-investigation’ process in which complainants are asked to self-resolve their problem was considered. Although this was not adopted, the exchange has actively assisted staff’s thinking about continuous improvement issues.

Staff and managers are now questioning both the efficiency and effectiveness of the South Australian workplace relations processes in comparison with what is occurring in other States. Although the benchmarks do not yet look at workplace relations outcomes, the exchange of inter-jurisdiction data is starting to generate some thinking in this direction.

Western Australia

For Western Australia the main benefit from the exercise is that the establishment of national benchmarks has provided an opportunity to assess where there are areas for improvement and to find out what systems or procedures other jurisdictions have in place which may account for the differences.

The exercise has also helped establish a network of contacts and the opportunity to share information on operational, staffing and resource management in both the advisory and compliance areas.

Tasmania

Tasmania considers comparisons between multifunction administrations (such as Tasmania) and single function jurisdictions to be inappropriate. For example, Workplace Standards Tasmania inspectors are expected to give priority to intervening in unsafe (work or dangerous goods) situations over reports of non-compliance with award payments. This priority situation skews response times for dealing with non-safety issues, and may incorrectly indicate inefficiency in award work.

Tasmania’s preference is that the Departments of Workplace Relations Advisory Committee benchmarking group develop measures to indicate ‘hotspots’ or problem sectors, for instance the number of inquiries/breaches by industry sector or award. This approach should allow for data to then be used for targeting future activity. From Tasmania’s point of view the main benefit from the process is that a communication and information-sharing network has been established.

Future directions

Jurisdictions have introduced new systems to eliminate the existing gaps in terms of data integrity. They will further refine the reporting framework to ensure performance comparisons are appropriate. It is expected that any additional refinements to the existing indicators will be minor and that future reports will be able to provide trend analysis for different indicators.

The current indicators measure performance in relation to process activity rather than the impact or outcome of that activity. Jurisdictions recognise that it is difficult to establish

the causal link between what agencies do and what happens in industry. The policies of different States will also have a significant bearing on outcomes making them very difficult to measure. Nevertheless, the development of qualitative or outcome measures is considered to be a crucial next step.

Options currently under consideration include:

- examination of systemic issues—for example, monitoring compliance levels for different industry sectors
- assessing the effectiveness of targeted compliance and education campaigns, in particular whether they have raised community awareness and helped prevent breaches of legislation and awards—for instance, jurisdictions could report on compliance levels in industry before and after campaigns
- obtaining feedback from the wider community in addition to regular clients. It is considered important to test jurisdictions' assumptions against relevant external indicators, recognising that there are other service providers
- developing quality measures for different service elements—for example, assessing the accuracy of information provided to clients, human resource development, client access levels and targeting of delivery—that is the right service in the right place

As a starting point jurisdictions have agreed to exchange information on how they are measuring service effectiveness with a view to providing a basis for further consideration of these issues by the Departments of Workplace Relations Advisory Committee working party.

Annex

Introduction

This Annex provides performance information for each jurisdiction, statistical data sheets and benchmarking definitions enabling comparisons between jurisdictions.

The contextual and performance information has been tabulated in pie or bar charts. A brief summary of the data presented and comments from the jurisdictions are provided with each chart. A black line has been inserted in the bar charts to indicate benchmarks where relevant. Jurisdictions have also provided comments on figures in the data sheets.

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Inquiries performance

Table 1. Inquiries workload January – June 1999

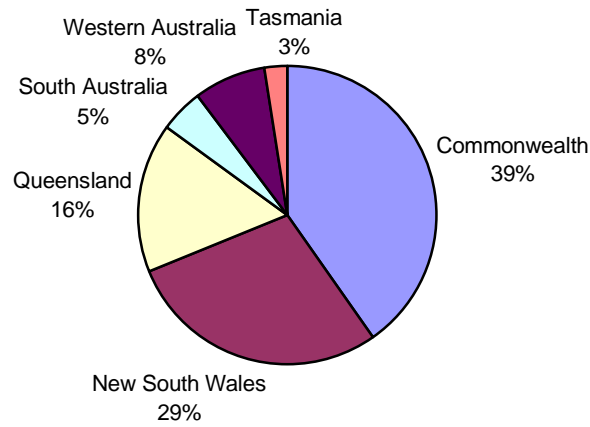
	Cwth	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas
Inquiries handled						
(a) Telephone						
Telephone inquiry service	334 766	196 275 ¹	81 229	42 165	72 152	23 761
Other telephone	26 838	60 000 ²	58 760	390	-	-
Total telephone	361 604	256 275 ³	139 989	42 555	72 152	23 761
(b) Counter						
Total counter	7 291	Not counted ⁴	9 592	418	435	192
(c) Written inquiries/email						
Total written inquiries received	5 834	10 869 ⁵	1 598	447	315	72
(d) Total inquiries						
Total inquiries handled	374 729	267 144 ⁶	151 179	43 420	72 902	24 025
TES calls not answered						
Abandoned	2 085	48 513 ⁷	7 809	4 740	10 756	1 788
Other	-	115 055 ⁸	-	-	-	-
Total TES calls not answered	2 085	163 568 ⁹	7 809	4 740	10 756	1 788

Comments on Table 1

New South Wales

1. Count of calls answered by the department's central inquiry service. Does not include inquiries answered by the department's contact centres, publications and sales unit, Industrial Inspectors, Licensing, Legal Services and Women's Equity Bureau.
2. Count of calls to the recorded information services operated by the department's central inquiry service only.
3. See notes 1 and 2.
4. Figures are not collected on this activity.
5. Composed of faxes sent manually, calls to the "Fax-back" service and letters. Does not count email inquiries, ministerial-level correspondence, and promotional material.
6. See notes 1, 2, 4 and 5.
7. Note that these callers have access to recorded information services, and may be abandoning the telephone call in order to access the alternative services.
8. Includes calls made to the service out-of-hours, and those unable to access telephone queues during period of peak congestion.
9. See notes 7 and 8.

Figure 1. Inquiries workload



Summary of Figure 1

Figure 1 summarises the inquiries workload by jurisdiction. It includes matters handled over the counter, operator assisted calls, calls to Interactive Voice Response Units, message bank services, correspondence, claim forms, emails and faxes. There were 933 399 inquiries in the period 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999.

Table 2. Inquiry service costs and performance information

	Cwth	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas
Inquiry service costs						
Total full time equivalents	See note	24.2 ¹	20	7.4	11.87	
Total costs	\$1 098 660	\$798 630 ²	\$368 000	\$155 184	\$211 238	See note
Performance information						
(a) Timeliness						
Average queuing time in minutes	3.00	4.38 ³	2.33	0.30	2.09	0.36
per cent inquiries queuing ≤ 3.00 minutes	est 70	est 40 ⁴	90	89	87	95
Average time spent on calls in minutes	4.00	3.20 ⁵	3.11	3.16	3.50	3.44
per cent requests finalised in five days	66	95 ⁶	-	99	-	79
(b) Cost						
Average cost per phone inquiry	\$3.04	\$3.12 ⁷	\$2.63	\$3.65	\$2.93	See note

Comments on Table 2

Commonwealth

Comparable staffing figures are not available because the Commonwealth has contracted out its inquiry services in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

New South Wales

1. This is average number of officers available to the telephone inquiry service, plus immediate supervisors.
2. This figure is actual salaries paid during period, without on -costs.
3. Note that during this period, callers receive a recorded message of approximately 2.45 minutes duration, outlining major entitlements and sources of information.
4. Estimate only at this stage. Technology to record this benchmark has been introduced from July 1999.
5. Actual time spent speaking to an operator does not include any time on hdd or receiving messages.
6. Performance influenced by strict adherence to department's Commitment to Service Guidelines.
7. See notes 1 and 2.

Western Australia

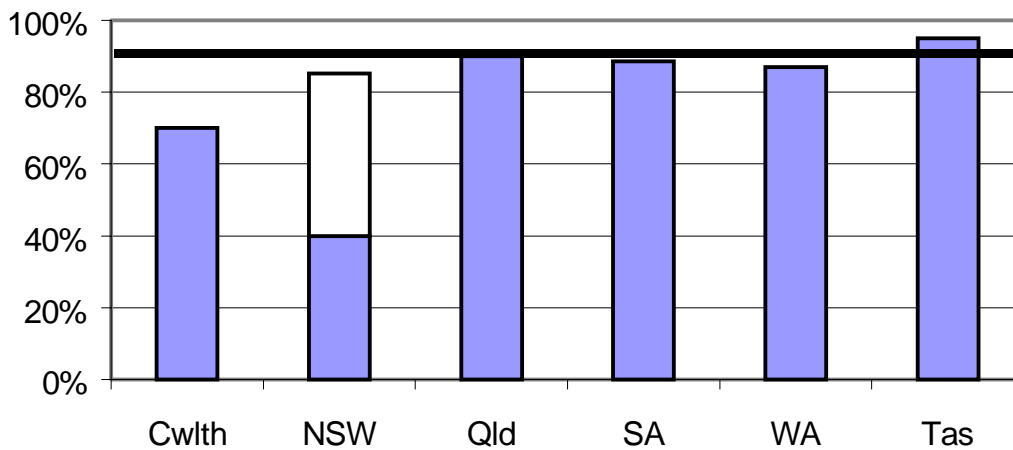
Costings only include Wageline operators and their direct supervisors.

Tasmania

Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) operates a single telephone enquiry line that deals with industrial award inquiries and inquiries concerning occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers' rehabilitation and compensation.

While the cost of running this service is known, WST has had no use for a disaggregation of that cost into the component functions of the service. It certainly does not have this information historically. Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will commence production of a model that will allow this cost to be extracted and reported upon separately.

Figure 2. Percentage of inquiries queuing three minutes or less



Summary of Figure 2

Queuing times average between 30 seconds and 4.38 minutes. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 90 per cent queuing three minutes or less (represented by the black line). Queensland and Tasmania met the benchmark.

Comments on Figure 2

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth percentage queuing time is an estimate based on data from Victoria, NSW, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

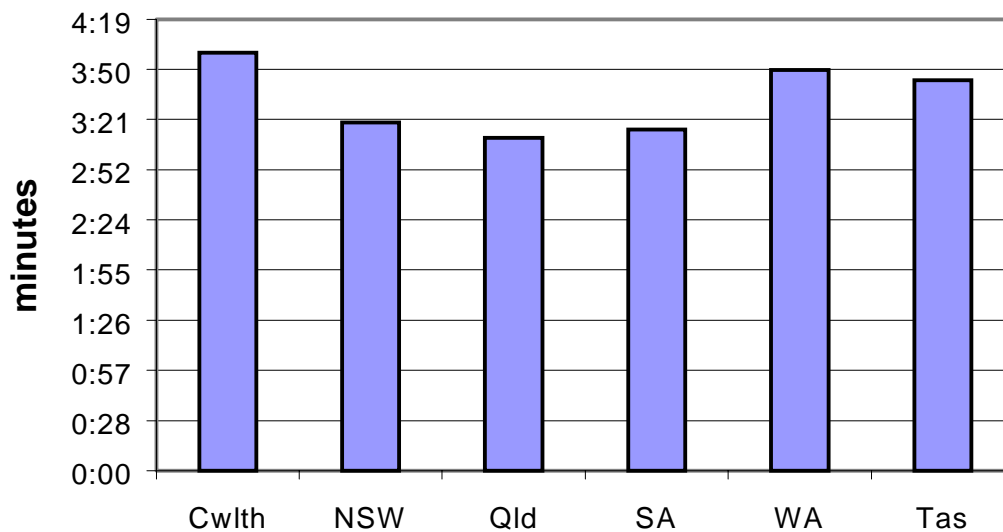
New South Wales

Note that during this period, callers receive a recorded message of approximately 2.45 minutes duration, outlining major entitlements and sources of information. The shaded area shows an estimate of the percentage of calls queuing three minutes or less adjusted for the period of the recorded message.

Queensland

Queensland statistics are available only in relation to DETIR's Wageline service covering the greater Brisbane area. This service is estimated to handle approximately 65 per cent of the inquiries workload and is considered a suitable indicator for the whole of the State. Statistics in relation to all 20 offices in Queensland will be provided in this regard as technology to capture this information becomes available in the regional centres in October 1999.

Figure 3. Average length of time spent on calls by operators



Summary of Figure 3

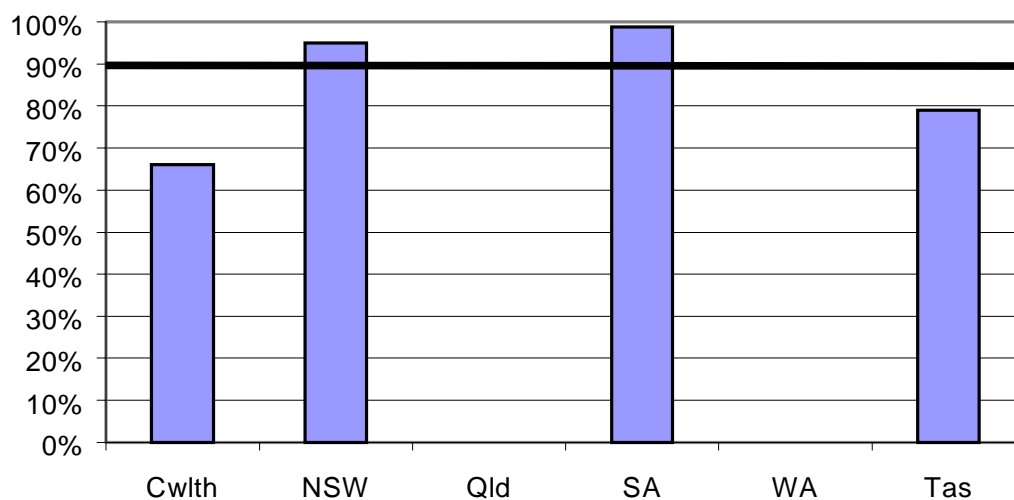
On average advisers spend between 3.11 minutes and 4.00 minutes per inquiry.

Comments on Figure 3

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth figure is an estimate based on data from Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. Commonwealth telephone systems have not been able to provide the data required. It is expected that upgrades will allow better reporting in the future.

Figure 4. Percentage of requests finalised as written inquiries in five working days



Summary of Figure 4

Turnaround times for written inquiries range from 66 to 99 per cent finalised in five working days. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 90 per cent (represented by the black line).

Comments on Figure 4

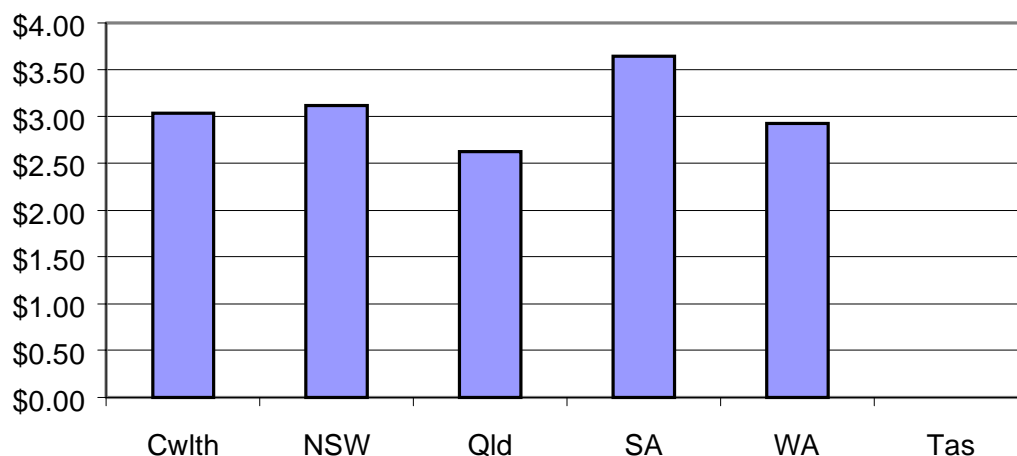
Queensland

Not available. Queensland reports finalising 97 per cent in 14 working days.

Western Australia

Reporting systems were not put in place until 1 July 1999 to record turn-a-round time for correspondence under five days.

Figure 5. Average cost per telephone inquiry



Summary of Figure 5

Jurisdictions have defined ‘salary’ as salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading, workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax. Superannuation is excluded. Cost per inquiry ranges between \$2.63 and \$3.65.

Comments on Figure 5

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth figure is based on total salary reduced by 14.7 per cent which is the current superannuation average used by the department. Figures for the contracted States are based on the average cost per inquiry specified in the contract multiplied by activity levels.

Queensland

Inquiry costs include the estimated full time equivalent costs of staff across the State who answer inquiries. Staff in many offices spend their time performing other tasks in addition to answering inquiries and therefore some part salaries have been included to obtain the full time equivalents.

Tasmania

Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) operates a single telephone inquiry line that deals with industrial award inquiries and inquiries concerning occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers' rehabilitation and compensation. While the cost of running this service is known, WST has had no use for a disaggregation of that cost into the component functions of the service. It certainly does not have this information historically. Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will investigate production of a model that will allow this cost to be extracted and reported upon separately.

Table 3. Client survey results - inquiry services*

Question	Cwth (per cent)	NSW (per cent)	Qld (per cent)	SA (per cent)	WA (per cent)	Tas (per cent)
Q1 Knowledge increased						
Strongly agree	43	62	44	27	42	59
Agree	52	34	50	59	43	39
Undecided	4	0	0	9	7	2
Disagree	0	4	0	4	7	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	6	2	1	0
Q2 Easy to understand						
Strongly agree	47	57	31	32	55	53
Agree	47	42	57	63	33	45
Undecided	4	0	6	3	2	2
Disagree	2	1	0	2	9	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	6	1	1	0
Q3 Staff were professional						
Strongly agree	74	63	50	48	72	63
Agree	23	35	44	45	26	34
Undecided	0	0	6	5	2	3
Disagree	2	2	0	2	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Not all percentages add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Comments on Table 3

Commonwealth

Survey results for Question 1 were drawn from 250 callers (100 from Victoria and NSW and 50 from Queensland). Results for Questions 2 and 3 were drawn from 243 callers.

New South Wales

Results for client satisfaction drawn from January 1999 Customer Survey of AES telephone enquiry system, involving 329 callers to the service.

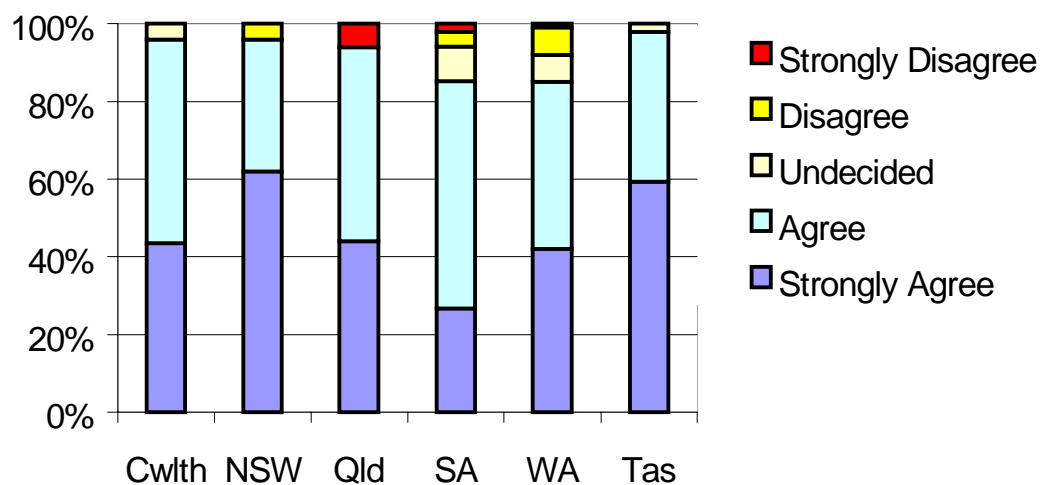
South Australia

Survey results were drawn from 184 callers for Question 1 and 191 callers for Questions 2 and 3.

Tasmania

Survey results were drawn from 150 callers.

Figure 6. Client feedback on whether information increased callers' knowledge



Summary of Figure 6

Clients were asked if the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices. Between 85 per cent and 98 per cent of those surveyed indicated a positive response with between 27 per cent and 62 per cent strongly agreeing that the information provided increased their awareness in relation to the issues raised.

Comments on Figure 6

Queensland

Survey sample returns were very small this period distorting effective percentages significantly. This comment also applies to Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7.. Client feedback on whether information was easy to understand

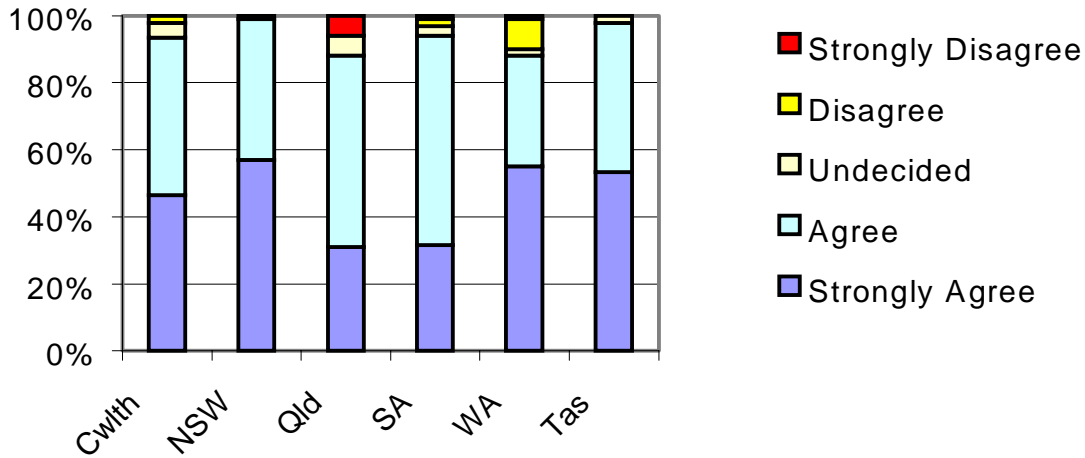
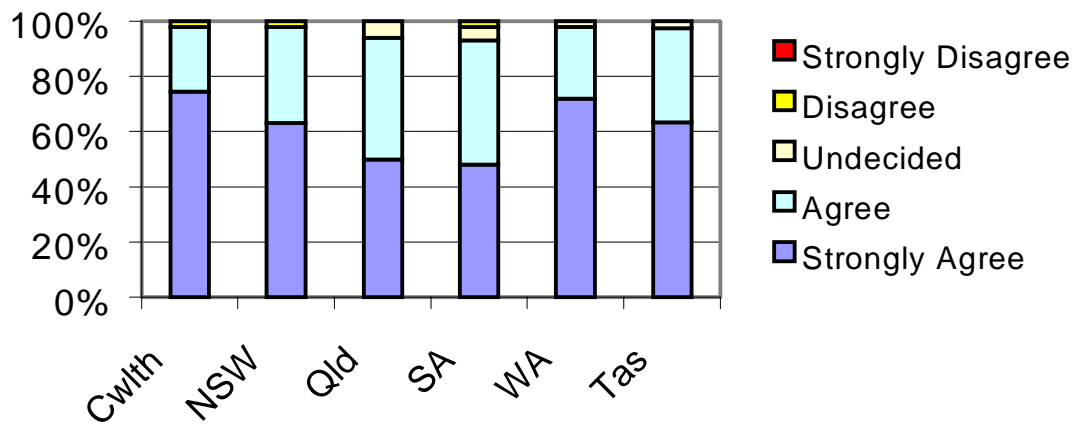


Figure 8. Client feedback on the professionalism of operators



Summary of Figures 7 and 8

The client survey asked callers if the information provided was easy to understand and if staff conducted themselves in a professional manner. Figure 7 shows that between 88 per cent and 99 per cent of survey respondents provided a positive response to the first question and Figure 8 shows that between 93 per cent and 100 per cent of respondents answered positively to the second.

Comments on Figure 8

Tasmania

The Tasmanian survey asked clients if staff conducted themselves in an impartial manner.

Compliance performance

Table 4. Compliance Workload January – June 1999

	Cwlth	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas
Workload						
(a) Claims						
Outstanding at the start of the period (SOP)	-	1 993 ¹	-	-	-	58
New claims	-	2 596 ²	4 364	-	430	344
Not proceeded with/finalised as a claim	-	n/a ³	-	-	86	58
Voluntary compliance (NSW & Tas only)	-	907 ⁴	-	-	-	43
Claims on hand at the end of the period (EOP) (awaiting action/work in progress)	-	1 555 ⁵	-	-	-	64
Cases to be dealt with	-	2 127	4 364	-	-	237
(b) Cases						
Outstanding at start of the period (SOP)	1 432	1 427 ⁶	747	289	258	111
New cases	2 766	2 127	4 364	-	344	237
Total cases to be dealt with	4 198	3 554	5 111	1 276	602	348
Cases finalised						
(a) Not proceeded with						
Total not proceeded with	278	1 457 ⁷	1 035	69	252	42
(b) Sustained						
Jurisdictional litigation	3	173 ⁸	561	0	2	13
Employee litigation	171	n/a	-	88	-	-
Penalty notice issued	-	27	-	0	-	-
Voluntary compliance	1 488	n/a	2 331	815	163	179
Total sustained	1 662	n/a	2 892	903	165	192
(c) Not sustained						
Total not sustained	723	n/a	389	69	76	33
(d) Cases finalised						
Total cases finalised (NSW includes claims)	2 663	n/a	4316	987	493	267
Cases on hand at End of Period (EOP)						
Total cases on hand EOP	1 535	n/a	795	289	109	81

Comments on Table 4

New South Wales

- ¹. During the reporting period, the NSW Department of Industrial Relations commenced the progressive implementation of a new information technology platform and database for compliance file management and reporting. The Compliance Information Management System (CIMS) will allow a comprehensive database of information to be developed which will assist in identifying future education and compliance activities; establish standard and innovative reporting functionality; and allow the full integration of prosecution activities and outcomes in the same IT platform.

Whilst the implementation and much of its functionality in relation to compliance claims and cases were completed by 30 June 1999, the full range of its reporting functionality is yet to become operational. Accordingly, data currently available is reliant on other reporting systems, which does not allow the comprehensive data sought or required.

2. See note 1 for current difficulties.
3. Not available - see note 1 for current difficulties.
4. See note 1 for current difficulties.
5. See note 1 for current difficulties.
6. See note 1 for current difficulties.
7. This figure is for all cases finalised. The department is unable currently to provide meaningful data for each of the definitional categories under 'Cases Finalised' —(b) Sustained. See note 1 for current difficulties.
8. See note 1 for current difficulties.

Queensland

Compliance statistics under the headings Cases Finalised, Not Proceeded With, Sustained and Not Sustained were only available from the Lutwyche, Mt Gravatt and Southport offices for the reporting period. These offices handle approximately 45 per cent of the State's compliance work and are considered suitable indicators in the short term on which to extrapolate the State figures from the totals completed in all offices. Computer software is currently being developed to capture more accurate data across all offices and is due to be introduced in October 1999.

South Australia

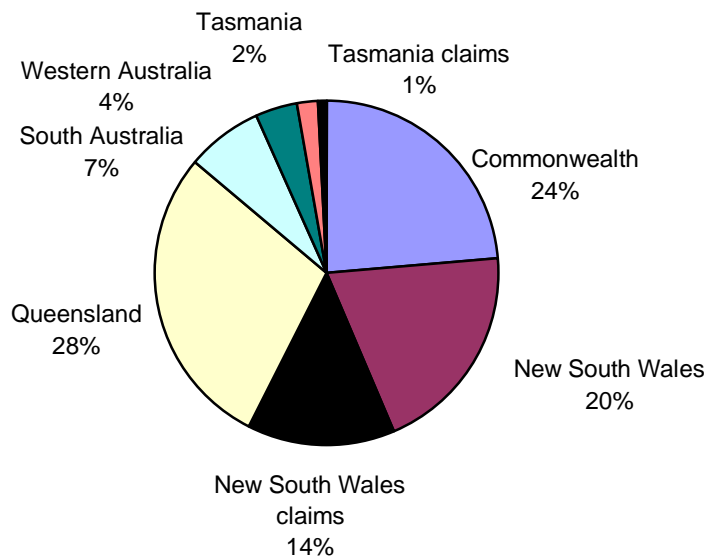
SA does not divide workload into 'claims' and 'cases', so records all compliance work as cases.

Western Australia

The figures reflect 'compliance cases' as per the agreed definition. The branch undertakes a range of other compliance activities eg audits of time and wages records in targeted industry inspection programs which are not included in these figures, but represent a significant aspect of work performed by inspectors.

Note: A compliance case file is only created when breach notices have not been complied with.

Figure 9. Total compliance workload (includes NSW/Tasmanian claims)



Summary of Figure 9

Figure 9 provides a breakdown of the compliance workload by jurisdiction. A compliance case includes both investigations arising from claims and those initiated as part of targeted campaigns. There were 15 089 cases dealt with in the period. This includes both cases finalised and cases on hand at the end of the period.

New South Wales and Tasmania have a 28 day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector. NSW and Tasmania dealt with 2 462 and 165 claims respectively during the reporting period. These totals include '28 day' claims settled by voluntary compliance, not proceeded with or on hand at the end of the reporting period. They are represented by the black area.

Western Australia finalised 86 matters as a claim (as part of targeted campaigns representing about 12 per cent of WA's workload). These matters have not been included in the chart.

Figure 10. Breakdown of finalised cases



Summary of Figure 10

A compliance case is regarded as sustained when an officer is satisfied that at least one breach has occurred. Sustain rates for the reporting period range from 33 to 92 per cent.

As noted previously, New South Wales and Tasmania establish a 28 day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector.

Comments on Figure 10

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth only counts cases involving monetary breaches as sustained cases.

New South Wales

The department is unable currently to provide meaningful data for each of the definitional categories under ‘Cases Finalised’.

Table 5. Compliance service costs and performance information

	Cwlt	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas
Compliance service costs						
Total Full-time Equivalents (FTE)	See note	62 ¹	74	22	22.89	
Total salary and on costs (less super)	\$1 403 144	\$1 500 000 ²	\$1 850 000	\$493 378	\$441 567	See note 1
Performance information						
(a) Timeliness						
Average time to finalise a case (months)	3.7	Est 5.5 ³		53.34 days	3.6	See note 2
Per cent finalised in 90 days of commencement of investigation	34	Est 55 ⁴	79	88	64	
(b) Cost						
Average cost per case finalised	\$527	n/a ⁵	\$429	\$500	\$896	

Comments on Table 5

Commonwealth

Comparable staffing figures are not available because the Commonwealth has contracted out its compliance services in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

New South Wales

- ^{1.} The figure of 62 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff comprises 6 Senior Industrial Inspector positions, 44 Industrial Inspector positions, and 12 operational and administrative support staff positions.

No ‘deduction’ to this provided figure has been made to account for participation in activities not related to compliance cases, e.g. education, provision of industrial information. Nor does it account for the provision of indirect or ancillary support by other department staff, e.g. legal advice, processing of cheques for clients.

- ^{2.} These figures are an approximation of salary costs only expended for the 62 FTE staff identified in note 1 for the periods mentioned.

Again, ‘no deduction’ to this provided figure has been made to account for participation in activities not related to compliance cases eg education, provision of industrial information. Nor does it account for the provision of indirect or ancillary support by other department staff, e.g. legal advice, processing of cheques for clients.

- ^{3.} Estimated only. The department is unable currently to provide definitive data for this performance indicator—see note 1 on page 22 for current difficulties.

4. Estimate only. The department is unable currently to provide definitive data for this performance indicator—see note 1 on page 22 for current difficulties.
5. It would be inappropriate, or misleading, to calculate the average cost per ‘case’ finalised on the provided Compliance Service Costs. This data has made no deduction or allowance for activities associated with resolutions obtained in Voluntary Compliance of ‘claims’, or participation in other activities not related to compliance cases eg education, provision of industrial information.

Tasmania

1. Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) operates a single inspectorate that deals with industrial award inquiries and inquiries concerning occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers’ rehabilitation and compensation.

While the cost of running this service is known, WST has had no use for a disaggregation of that cost into the component functions of the service. It certainly does not have this information historically. Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will commence production of a model that will allow this cost to be extracted and reported upon separately.

2. Workplace Standards Tasmania inspectors deal concurrently with industrial award cases and the employer's obligations and concerns regarding occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers’ rehabilitation and compensation.

While the date of complaint received and the date of finalisation of that complaint are known, to use this figure as the time to finalise a case would artificially inflate the time taken to resolve the case as it takes no account of the time spent with the employer addressing other issues within the bailiwick of the inspectorate.

Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will commence production of a model that will allow the time spent and cost to be extracted and reported upon separately.

Figure 11. Average time in months to finalise a case

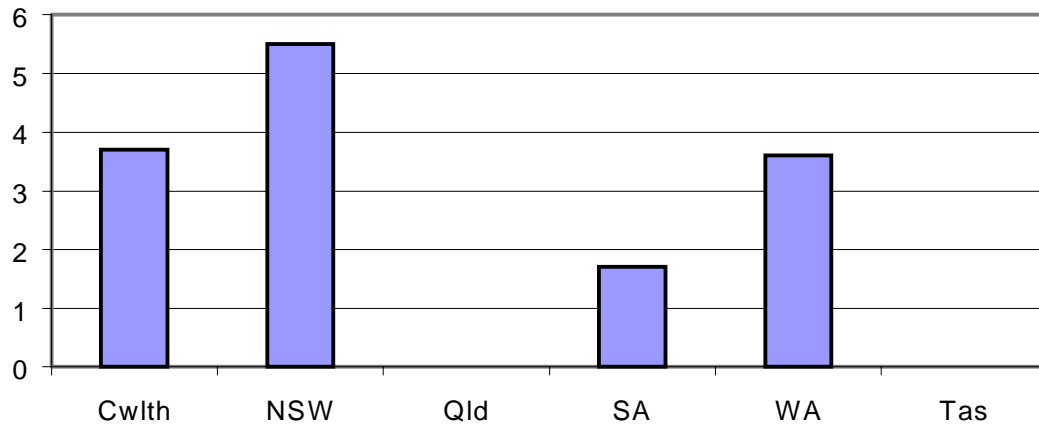
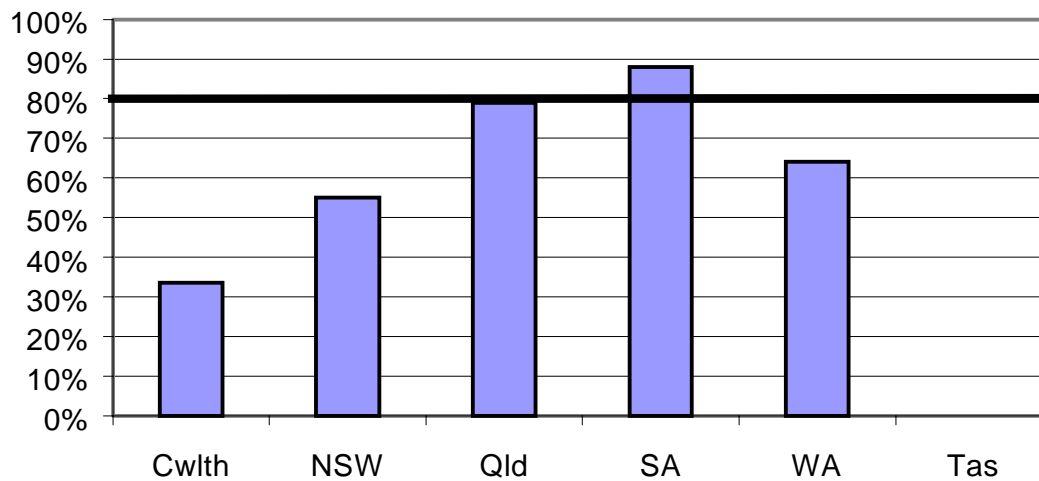


Figure 12. Percentage of cases finalised in 90 days



Summary of Figures 11 and 12

The average time in months to finalise a case ranges between 1.7 months and 5.5 months. Percentage of cases finalised in 90 days ranges from 34 to 88 per cent. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 80 per cent (represented by the black line).

Comments on Figure 11 and 12

New South Wales

During the current financial year, the NSW Department of Industrial Relations commenced the progressive implementation of a new information technology platform and database for compliance file management and reporting. Whilst the implementation and much of its functionality in relation to compliance claims and cases were completed by 30 June 1999, the full range of its reporting functionality is yet to become operational. Accordingly, data currently available is reliant on other reporting systems which does not allow the comprehensive data sought or required.

Queensland

Cases finalised statistics were only available from the Lutwyche, Mt Gravatt and Southport offices for the reporting period. Average time in months will become available with the implementation of a new wage complaint tracking system in October 1999.

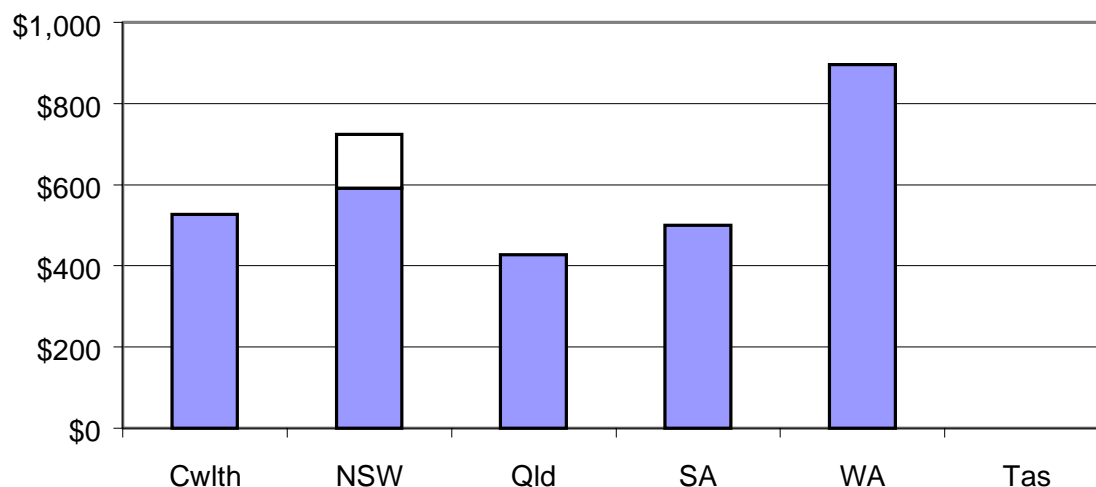
Tasmania

Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) inspectors deal concurrently with industrial award cases and the employer's obligations and concerns regarding occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers' rehabilitation and compensation.

While the date of complaint received and the date of finalisation of that complaint are known, to use this figure as the time to finalise a case would artificially inflate the time taken to resolve the case as it takes no account of the time spent with the employer addressing other issues within the bailiwick of the inspectorate.

Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will commence production of a model that will allow the time spent to be extracted and reported upon separately.

Figure 13. Average cost per case finalised



Summary of Figure 13

Jurisdictions have defined 'salary' as salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading (includes transfer in), workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax. Superannuation is excluded.

The average cost ranges between \$429 and \$896.

Comments on Figure 13

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth figure is based on total salary reduced by 14.7 per cent which is the current superannuation average used by the department. Figures for the contracted States are based on the average cost per case specified in the contract multiplied by activity levels.

New South Wales

The solid column includes the 907 matters finalised during the pre-investigation period.

Queensland

Compliance costs have been calculated to include the salaries of field staff plus 15 per cent on costs but do not include the salaries of managers who provide support to these staff in the performance of their duties and administer the organisation in which they work. The costs are not inclusive of motor vehicle, office space and equipment, electricity, telephone calls, cleaning and other miscellaneous expenses incurred in the general running of a network of 20 geographically diverse offices.

Western Australia

Compliance costs have been based on salaries, as defined, of all inspectors and their direct supervisors.

Tasmania

Workplace Standards Tasmania operates a single inspectorate that deals with industrial award inquiries and inquiries concerning occupational health and safety, dangerous goods, workers' rehabilitation and compensation.

While the cost of running this service is known, WST has had no use for a disaggregation of that cost into the component functions of the service. It certainly does not have this information historically. Now that reporting arrangements have been agreed WST will investigate production of a model that will allow this cost to be extracted and reported upon separately.

Table 6. Client survey results - Compliance services*

Questions	Cwth (per cent)	NSW (per cent)	Qld (per cent)	SA (per cent)	WA (per cent)	Tas (per cent)
Q1 - Staff were professional						
Strongly agree	47	27		40	34.5	
Agree	44	60		40	44.5	
Undecided	5	0		5	6.5	
Disagree	2	13		7	9.5	
Strongly disagree	2	0		7	5	
Q2 - Information was relevant						
Strongly agree	39	31		36	29.5	
Agree	47	64		47	62	
Undecided	9	0		5	2.5	
Disagree	3	5		4	6	
Strongly disagree	2	0		8	0	
Q3 - Information was timely						
Strongly agree	39	31		38	32	
Agree	42	64		41	47	
Undecided	11	0		6	1	
Disagree	8	5		5	13	
Strongly disagree	0	0		9	7	

* Not all percentages add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Comments on Table 6

Commonwealth

Commonwealth survey results are based on 184 returns (105 in Victoria, 50 in Queensland and 29 in NSW).

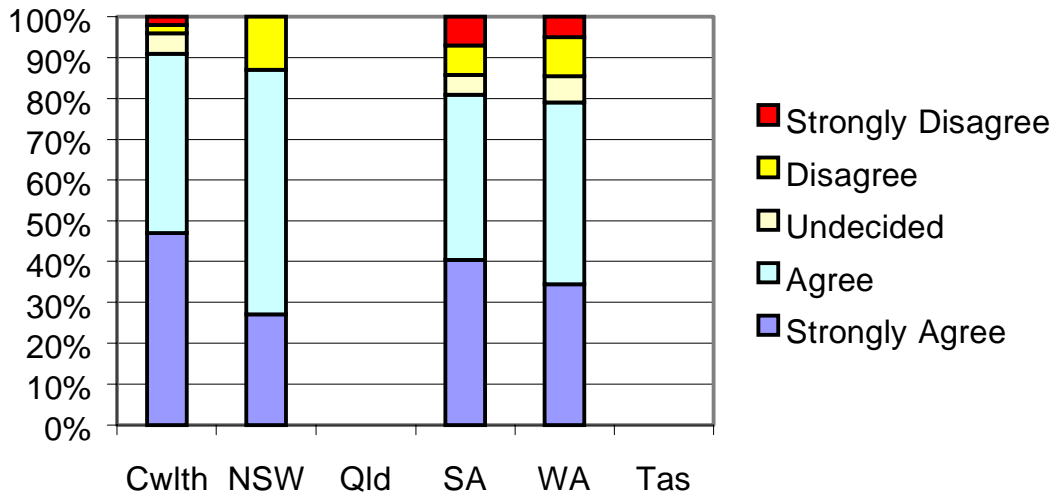
New South Wales

Results based on random sampling of compliance claims and cases resolved during June 1999 (sample pool size - 100).

South Australia

Survey results represented for compliance questions 1, 2 and 3 were drawn from 139, 138 and 128 respondents respectively.

Figure 14. Client feedback on the professionalism of staff



Summary of Figure 14

Clients were asked if staff handled the matter professionally. Between 79 per cent and 91 per cent of callers responded positively, and between 27 per cent and 47 per cent indicated strong satisfaction with the conduct of staff.

Comments on Figure 14

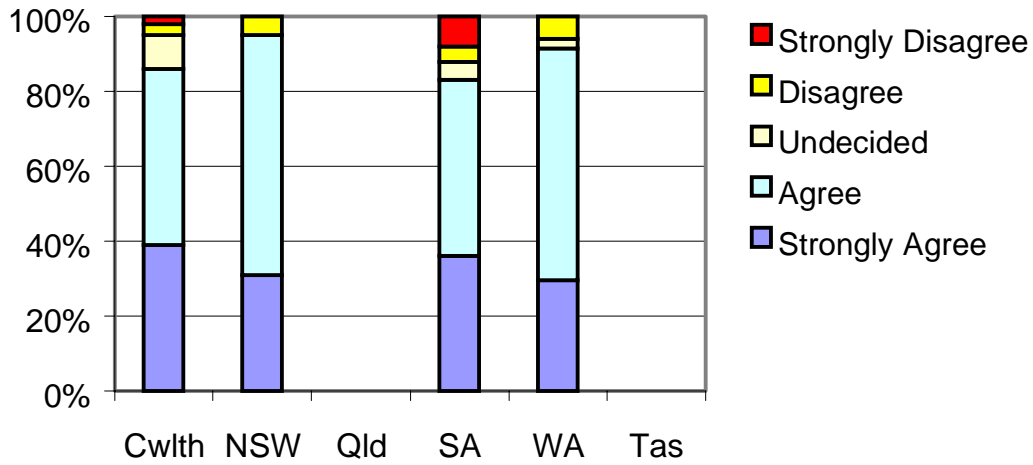
Queensland

Queensland State compliance figures are not available for the period January to June 1999 but will be available in the agreed format for the next report.

During the reporting period clients were asked how they would describe the standard of service. The results were as follows:

Standard of service	Percentage of employers	Percentage of employees
Very good	66	68
Good	24	18
Satisfactory	8	10
Poor	1	3
Very poor	1	1

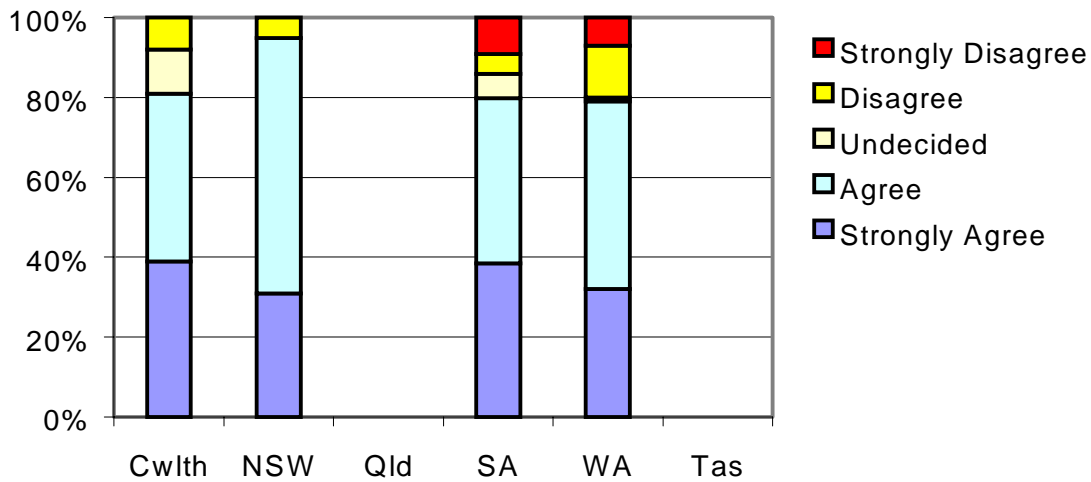
Figure 15. Client feedback on the relevance of the information



Summary of Figure 15

The survey asked clients if the information provided by departmental staff was relevant. Between 83 percent and 95 per cent of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 16. Client feedback on the timeliness of the information



Summary of Figure 16

Between 79 per cent and 95 per cent of respondents considered that the information was provided in a timely and efficient manner.

Glossary

<i>Abandoned</i>	A caller decides not to proceed with a telephone inquiry in any way.
<i>Breach</i>	A provision in an award, agreement or relevant industrial relations legislation has not been complied with as determined by an inspector/adviser.
<i>Claim received</i>	The department receives written advice from a client that a possible breach has occurred.
<i>Client</i>	A person or organisation seeking information, advice or assistance from the department and those to whom the department seeks to provide a service.
<i>Compliance case</i>	Investigation initiated by the department as a result of a claim received or of its own volition. Concurrent multiple breaches involving a single client are counted as a single case.
<i>Cost</i>	Staffing costs including salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading (includes transfer in), workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax. Superannuation is excluded.
<i>Date of receipt</i>	The date correspondence is received by the department.
<i>Finalised compliance case</i>	<p>A compliance case is regarded as finalised when it reaches one of the following resolutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not sustained (i.e. where evidence does not indicate there has been a breach)• Not proceeded with (see definition below)• Sustained and one of the following outcomes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ voluntary compliance (see definition below)➤ the employee has been advised of their right to litigate their claim➤ department litigation approved➤ Penalty Notice issued
<i>Interactive Voice Response Unit</i>	Telephone message tape and interactive recorded information.

<i>Inquiry</i>	An inquiry is a request for information, advice or assistance about the provisions of an award, agreement or industrial relations legislation. It includes matters handled over the counter, operator assisted calls, calls to Interactive Voice Response Units, correspondence, claim forms, emails and faxes. One inquiry might cover several questions.
<i>Investigation</i>	The process of assessing a claim, interviewing a appropriate parties, providing reports and collecting evidence for prosecution action, if appropriate.
<i>Jurisdictional litigation</i>	Court action initiated by the department in order to secure a prosecution for an alleged breach or an offence under the Act.
<i>Not proceeded with</i>	A claim received has one of the following outcomes: the employee withdraws their claim; the matter does not fall within the relevant jurisdiction, insolvency, the department withdraws from the claim/case, death of employer/employee.
<i>Queuing time</i>	Duration in minutes that a caller waits to talk to an operator.
<i>Sustained</i>	A compliance case is regarded as sustained when an officer is satisfied that at least one breach has occurred.
<i>Voluntary compliance</i>	An outcome of a claim received where the employer has voluntarily paid an agreed amount to the employee(s).
<i>Written inquiry</i>	Direct correspondence, including faxes and email inquiries, which is received and answered by the relevant area.