

WORKPLACE RELATIONS MINISTERS' COUNCIL

Benchmarking of Commonwealth and
State Workplace Relations Inquiry
and Compliance Services

1 July 2000 – 30 June 2001

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Foreword

On behalf of the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council, I am pleased to release the third Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report, covering the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001.

Commonwealth and State governments provide advisory and compliance services to employers and employees about their employment rights and responsibilities, and choices, under relevant legislation, awards and agreements.

In 1997, the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council agreed to benchmark advisory and compliance activities and processes to help improve the quality and levels of service delivery in each jurisdiction and the consistency of service delivery between jurisdictions.

This third report summarises the performance of all jurisdictions against agreed benchmarks for the reporting period. It broadly shows stable or slightly improved performance by jurisdictions as a whole compared with their performance in earlier reporting periods.

I also acknowledge the communication and information sharing occurring behind the scenes that is also helping to maintain and improve service quality and consistency.

In the end, the client benefits from this joint commitment and effort and I congratulate everyone concerned for this commitment to quality service delivery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Abbott', with a long horizontal line extending to the left above the name.

Tony Abbott MHR

Chairman, Workplace Relations Ministers' Council
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
20 June 2002

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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.

The first Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report was released by the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council in March 2000. It summarised the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999. A subsequent report released in January 2001 summarised performance against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

This report – the second full annual report - provides a summary of the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001.

Inquiry Services

Jurisdictions provide a range of services to clients inquiring about their award obligations and entitlements and related matters. There were 2,015,876 inquiries nationally in the reporting period, compared with 2,143,426 inquiries in 1999-2000 (see Table 1 page 11).

In terms of the agreed indicators, this report indicates:

- Average queuing times for telephone inquiries were between 53 seconds and three minutes three seconds, with no jurisdiction meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for three minutes or less (see Figure 2 page 15)
- On average, advisers spent between two minutes 53 seconds and four minutes 21 seconds per telephone inquiry (see Figure 3 page 15)
- Between 57 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries were finalised in five working days, with four jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries being finalised in five working days (see Figure 4 page 16)
- The cost per telephone inquiry was between \$2.05 and \$5.29 (see Figure 5 page 17).

Client surveys indicate that across jurisdictions:

- Between 80 per cent and 96 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices.
- Between 80 per cent and 97 per cent of clients considered the information provided was easy to understand.
- Between 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients agreed that advisers conducted themselves in a professional manner.

Compliance Services

All jurisdictions provide assistance to employees who believe they have been underpaid their wages or conditions of employment. There were 23,815 claims dealt with nationally in the reporting period, compared with 26,899 claims during 1999-2000 (see Table 4 page 19).

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

- The average time (in months) to finalise a case was between 1.3 months and 5 months (see Figure 8 page 23)
- Between 43 per cent and 90 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 (see Figure 9 page 24)
- The average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions was between \$598 and \$855 (see Figure 10 page 24).

Client surveys indicate that across jurisdictions:

- Between 80 per cent and 96 per cent of clients surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that inspectors handled the matter professionally
- Between 80 per cent and 97 per cent of clients considered the information provided was relevant
- Between 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients agreed that information was provided in a timely and efficient manner.

Trends

In comparison with previous reporting periods, performance against most advisory service indicators has remained relatively stable. While there was a decline in achievement against the telephone queuing time benchmark, jurisdictions continued to reduce the average queuing time for calls.

In comparison with previous reporting periods, performance against most compliance service indicators has remained steady or improved. Performance against the percentage of cases finalised within 90 days of receipt of the claim has been mixed with improvements by two jurisdictions and a drop in performance by two jurisdictions. There has been some improvement in the average cost per case finalised and there also seems to be some improvement in client satisfaction ratings.

Introduction

There are seven jurisdictions in Australia established by Commonwealth and State legislation. In 1996 the Victorian Government referred a range of industrial relations matters to the Commonwealth. Since January 1997 the Commonwealth has been responsible for most workplace relations issues in Victoria. Victoria retains responsibility for long service leave legislation and those other matters not referred to the Commonwealth under the *Commonwealth Powers (Industrial Relations) Act 1996 (Vic)*.

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.

The first Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report was released by the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council in March 2000. It summarised the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999. A subsequent report released in January 2001 summarised performance against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

This report – the second full annual report - provides a summary of the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. In addition to issues covered in earlier reports, a new section has been included on Internet service activity.

Purpose of benchmarking

The main purpose of benchmarking is to improve service delivery by sharing information and ideas about 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 not simply about identifying differences in performance but also about examining the reasons for the differences and learning from them.

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.

The benchmarking framework

Jurisdictions have agreed that the key activities to benchmark are advisory, compliance and educative activities. They have agreed on a set of common definitions and indicators for the first two activities to provide data on timeliness, cost and quality.

The glossary at page 26 of the report lists the agreed definitions. These definitions do not always sit easily with the sometimes different approaches across jurisdictions. This is highlighted in the commentary on the results.

The indicators developed by jurisdictions focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of information and compliance services. In particular, the cost indicators address efficiency (ie, the ratio of inputs to outputs) while the timeliness and client feedback measures provide a broad indication of service quality from the client's perspective.

The current indicators 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.

Jurisdictions have also agreed on a common client survey instrument to measure 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 inquirers queuing for three minutes or less
- 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days
- 80 per cent of compliance cases finalised within 90 days of the date of receipt of the claim.

Jurisdictions agreed to defer focusing on educative activities until sufficient quality and consistency of service is achieved for advisory and compliance activities.

Some caution should be exercised when comparing trends between reports from 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 with the first report, as it covered only the last six months of 1998-99.

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 are continuing to work towards developing reporting systems that reliably extract the required data.

Some jurisdictions continue to face problems reporting against the full range of benchmarking measures due to operational involvement in other matters such as occupational health and safety, dangerous goods and workers' compensation and due to the capacity of their information systems to fully report against all indicators.

Performance results

Inquiry services

Jurisdictions provide a range of services to clients inquiring about their award obligations and entitlements and related 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 2,015,876 inquiries nationally in the reporting period, compared with 2,143,426 inquiries nationally during 1999-2000. A breakdown of workload by jurisdiction is provided in *Figure 1* (see page 12).

In terms of the agreed indicators, benchmarking indicates:

- Average queuing times for telephone inquiries ranged between 53 seconds and three minutes three seconds, with no jurisdiction meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquirers queuing for three minutes or less
 - compared with between 41 seconds and six minutes 43 seconds during 1999-2000, with three jurisdictions meeting the benchmark; and
 - between 30 seconds and four minutes 38 seconds during January to June 1999, with two jurisdictions meeting the benchmark
- On average, advisers spent between two minutes 53 seconds and four minutes 21 seconds per telephone inquiry
 - compared with between three minutes five seconds and four minutes 20 seconds during 1999-2000; and
 - between three minutes 11 seconds and four minutes during January to June 1999

- Between 57 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries were finalised in five working days, with four jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days
 - compared with between 87 per cent and 97 per cent during 1999-2000, with four jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark; and
 - between 66 per cent and 99 per cent during January to June 1999, with two jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark.

(A written inquiry is defined as direct correspondence, including faxes and emails, which is received and answered by the relevant area)

- The cost per telephone inquiry ranged between \$2.05 and \$5.29
 - compared with between \$2.62 and \$4.35 during 1999-2000; and
 - between \$2.63 and \$3.65 during January to June 1999.

(Cost is defined 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:

- Between 80 per cent and 96 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices
 - compared with between 77 per cent and 98 per cent during 1999-2000; and
 - between 85 per cent and 98 per cent during January to June 1999
- Between 80 per cent and 97 per cent of clients considered the information provided was easy to understand
 - compared with between 88 per cent and 98 per cent during 1999-2000; and
 - between 88 per cent and 99 per cent during January to June 1999
- Between 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients agreed that advisers conducted themselves in a professional manner
 - compared with between 90 per cent and 100 per cent during 1999-2000; and
 - between 93 per cent and 100 per cent during January to June 1999.

In comparison with previous reporting periods, performance has remained relatively stable against most indicators. While there was a decline in achievement against the telephone queuing time benchmark, jurisdictions continued to reduce the average queuing time for calls.

Compliance services

All jurisdictions provide assistance to employees who believe they have been underpaid their wages and conditions of employment. For the purposes of benchmarking, such compliance cases include both investigations arising from claims lodged by employees and those initiated as part of targeted workplace inspection campaigns in industries where claims commonly arise.

There were 23,815 claims/cases dealt with in the period, compared with 26,899 during 1999-2000. The compliance workload covers both matters finalised and matters on hand at the end of the period. A breakdown of workload by jurisdiction is provided in Table 4 (see page 19).

Note that NSW and Tasmania have a 28-day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector. Western Australia and the Commonwealth have a 21-day period and South Australia has trialled the use of such a procedure. Claims settled during the cooling off period have been included in *Figure 2*.

In terms of the agreed indicators, the report indicates:

- The average time to finalise a case ranged from 1.3 months to 5 months
 - compared with between 2.2 months and 3.7 months during 1999-2000; and
 - between 1.7 months and 5.5 months during January to June 1999
- Between 43 per cent and 90 per cent of cases were finalised within 90 days of receipt of the claim, with one jurisdiction meeting the national benchmark of 80 per cent of cases finalised within three months
 - compared with between 43 per cent and 77 per cent of cases during 1999-2000, with no jurisdictions meeting the benchmark; and
 - between 34 per cent and 88 per cent of cases during January to June 1999, with one jurisdiction meeting the benchmark
- The average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions ranged from \$519 to \$855
 - compared with between \$561 and \$1011 during 1999-2000; and
 - between \$429 and \$896 during January to June 1999.

Client surveys indicate that across jurisdictions:

- Between 80 per cent and 96 per cent of clients surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that inspectors handled the matter professionally

- compared with between 78 per cent and 95 per cent during 1999-2000; and
- between 79 per cent and 92 per cent during January to June 1999
- Between 80 per cent and 97 per cent of clients considered the information provided was relevant
 - compared with between 79 per cent and 95 per cent during 1999-2000; and
 - between 83 per cent and 95 per cent during January to June 1999
- Between 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients agreed that information was provided in a timely and efficient manner
 - compared with between 69 per cent and 94 per cent during 1999-2000; and
 - between 79 per cent and 95 per cent during January to June 1999.

In comparison with previous reporting periods, performance against most compliance service indicators has remained steady or improved. Performance against the percentage of cases finalised within 90 days of receipt of the claim has been mixed with improvements by two jurisdictions and a drop in performance by two jurisdictions. There has been some improvement in the average cost per case finalised and there also seems to be some improvement in client satisfaction ratings.

Summary of education initiatives

All jurisdictions deliver educative services to increase employers' knowledge of awards, agreements and workplace relations legislation, and to encourage employers to use the flexibilities provided by these instruments. While the working group has developed measures for advisory and compliance activities, it has not yet developed educative activity measures. Their development is subject to the need to maintain for a while longer a focus on advisory and compliance process activities. As a starting point, jurisdictions have undertaken to circulate information on their educative programs. A summary of this activity follows.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth delivers public seminars on such topics as dismissal rights and obligations, making federal certified agreements, workplace relations for the Job Network, and workplace relations on the Internet. The Commonwealth also develops a number of information products to support its seminar programme. Last year, these included:

- The revision of *Hiring or Firing: Are you Complying?* – a handbook aimed particularly at small businesses
- The revision of an information pamphlet for employers on time and wages records and payslips - providing a simple, easy to read summary of Federal Government regulations

- The development of a number of new publications including *OWS Services*, *Guide to Dismissal for Employees*, *How to make a Federal Certified Agreement*, and *Guide to Dismissal for Employers*.

Queensland

Queensland has conducted general industrial relations education and compliance activities in the fruit and vegetable growing industry, hospitality industry, security industry and the real estate industry during this financial year.

Western Australia

Education and compliance campaigns have been conducted in the hotel and tavern industry. DOPLAR has worked closely with key industry stakeholders and unions to raise awareness of award obligations and to provide direct assistance to employers to get things right “upfront” followed by a compliance campaign to identify and ensure rectification of award and agreement breaches. A total of 94 seminars have been conducted state-wide to an audience of 2081 to raise awareness of awards and labour relations laws.

South Australia

Local research has suggested that there is support for and the need for training in mediation as an extension of the voluntary resolution process we are presently trialling for resolving underpayment of wages. In July 2001, two Workplace Services staff visited the NSW office of DEWRSB to examine the operation of the service offered by that agency. We are particularly interested in the staff training and accreditation aspects of its operation.

Tasmania

In Tasmania, Workplace Standards promoted awareness in industrial relations matters by attending workshops and speaking directly at local schools and educational institutions. Other educational activities included participation in business expos, one on one consultations and articles in journals.

Summary of Online Services

Jurisdictions are increasingly using the Internet as an alternative method of providing information services to customers. The Benchmarking Working Group includes discussion of the delivery of these services as a regular topic at working group meetings.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth hosts two public websites concerned with federal industrial instruments:

- OSIRIS contains the text of all federal awards, certified agreements, decisions, variations and summaries of decisions, and is used by a wide variety of clients seeking information on award and agreement conditions and wage rates.
- Wagenet provides a number of briefing documents, highlights the more common federal awards and contains summaries of around 20 key awards. The focus of this site

is employers and employees who have little knowledge of the industrial relations system. Wagenet passes the user to OSIRIS when they require the full award or agreement text, has referrals (including email) to WageLine call centre staff for more complex questions, and links with the websites of other jurisdictions.

Wagenet and especially OSIRIS are heavily used. OSIRIS averages around 30,000 page requests per day and receives an average of about 1400 different visitors per day, while Wagenet activity seems to be around one tenth of OSIRIS.

The Commonwealth is redeveloping both Wagenet and OSIRIS into a single product with the aim of providing clients with easier access to federal industrial instruments. A key component of the project is enhancing and developing better linkages with sites maintained by other jurisdictions.

Queensland

There were 952,705 Internet page views (excluding internal page views) recorded on Queensland's Wageline this financial year compared with 381,390 last year, an increase of over 100%.

Incoming telephone calls have decreased by approximately 5.8% during the period but emails have also more than doubled to 3836 for the year. These emails take much longer to answer and often result in reply emails containing further more in depth enquiries.

Western Australia

Enhancements have been made to the website so that clients can obtain easy access to information. Approximately 182,000 users visited the website during 2000-2001, with the majority of users visiting the wages and conditions section. Annual leave and sick leave calculators were launched in the last quarter. The on-line newsletter has proven to be a great success with 754 current subscribers.

The new online enquiry form which allows clients to email enquiries has contributed to the 163% increase in correspondence received.

South Australia

SA currently uses Webtrends to monitor user sessions and the number of downloads on our Internet site (Eric) but does not distinguish between internal and external user statistics. There were 107553 hits on IR related pages in 2000/2001 with an increasing level of user access over the last three quarters, and a corresponding increase in the number of e-mail inquiries during the reporting period. However there was no significant reduction in the level of telephone inquiries compared to 1999/2000.

Tasmania

Most IR information is not kept on the Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) website. It is either on the Printing Authority of Tasmania site (All Awards) or The Law site www.thelaw.tas.gov.au (All legislation) or on the site of the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations. WST is awaiting a project proposal to give all these sites a common window and navigation structure. This project is expected to commence this calendar year.

Annex

Introduction

This Annex provides performance information for each jurisdiction, including 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 is 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 2000-2001

	Cwlth	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas
Inquiries handled						
(a) Telephone						
Telephone inquiry service	696,607	351,915	565,717	128,948	76,533	46,089
Other telephone			49,544		15,637	1,382
Total telephone	696,607	351,915	615,261	128,948	92,170	47,471
(b) Counter						
Total counter	11,901		19,704	2,091	2,420	318
(c) Written inquiries/email						
Total Written inquiries received	10,475	26,145	5,983	2,208	1,763	496
(d) Total inquiries						
Total inquiries handled	718,983	378,060	621,244	133,247	96,353	48,285
TES calls not answered						
Abandoned	17,162	66,106	37,978	29,742	7,354	4,104

Comments on Table 1

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth implemented a new claims management tracking system (CLAIMS) in January 2001. Due to the way the system operates the Commonwealth now treats some correspondence previously classified as written inquiries as claims.

In Victoria employees are either covered by federal awards or agreements or, as result of the referral of most State workplace relations powers to the Commonwealth, a safety net of entitlements under Schedule 1A of Part XV of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The Commonwealth does not collect data on whether inquiries relate to Schedule 1A or to federal awards or agreements. However, it is estimated that around 65% of all inquiries in Victoria relate to *Schedule 1A*. Total Commonwealth activity in Victoria comprised 410,917 telephone inquiries, 6,418 counter inquiries and 5,710 written inquiries.

New South Wales

The New South Wales Award Enquiry Service (AES) currently only provides a phone service and responses to written correspondence via letter e-mail or fax. The AES does not provide counter service. The compliance division provides all counter service.

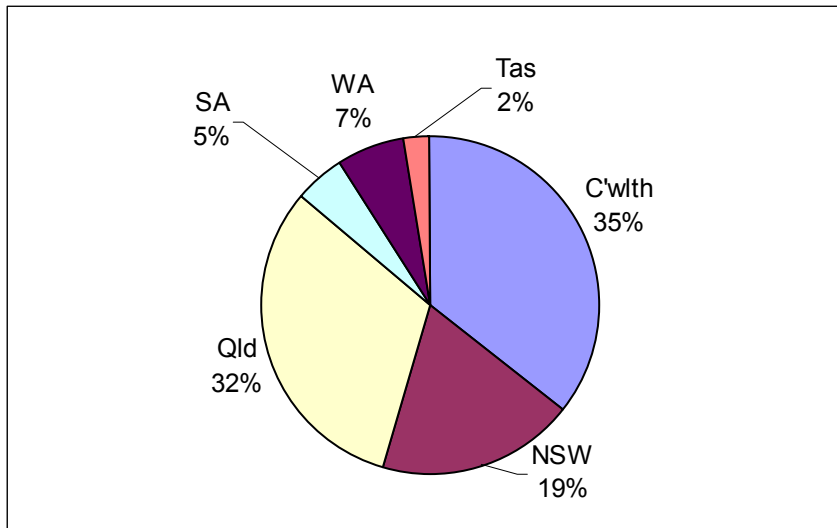
On 1 July 2000 the New South Wales Department of Industrial Relations launched an enhanced website called Awards On-line and new database called DIRECTA. Implementation of this new technology provided easier access to information for staff and the clients of the AES.

This new technology has impacted on the complexity of calls received by the AES. The reduction in the number of calls received and the increase in call duration evidence this directly after the implementation

Western Australia

The number of pieces of correspondence increased by 163% from the 1999/2000 financial year. Around 90% of written enquiries are received via the Internet and it is expected that this trend will continue.

Figure 1: Percentage of inquiries by jurisdiction



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 was a total of 2,015,876 inquiries during 2000-2001.

Table 2: Inquiry service costs and performance information 2000-2001

	Cwlth	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas
Inquiry service costs						
Total full time equivalents	(1)	40	41	8.07	7.4	
Total costs	\$2,019,462	\$2,000,000	\$1,545,062	\$348,967	\$315,616	See note 1
Performance information						
(a) Timeliness						
Average queuing time in minutes	1min 48sec	2min 28 sec	1min 19sec	3min 3sec	1min 17sec	53 sec
per cent inquiries queuing ≤ 3.00 minutes	79	83	78	66	86	89
Average time spent on calls in minutes	3 min 42 sec	3min 6 sec	2min 53sec	4min 2sec	3min 7sec	4min 21sec
Per cent written inquiries finalised in five days	91	91	94	57	99	See note 2
(b) Cost						
Average cost per phone inquiry	\$2.53	\$5.29	\$2.05	\$2.71	\$4.12	See note 1

Comments on Table 2

Commonwealth

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

Commonwealth costs cover service delivery, including provision of counter and written inquiry services, in New South Wales, Victoria and the territories. They do not include costs of service delivery in the contracted States because of difficulties in isolating those costs.

The average cost per telephone inquiry is estimated from average unit costs for federal service delivery in all States.

In Victoria the Commonwealth does not collect data on whether inquiries relate to Schedule 1A or federal awards or agreements. Overall for Victoria the average queuing time for telephone callers was two minutes, 73.5% of callers queued for less than three minutes, the average time spent on calls was three minutes 42 sec, and 90% of written inquiries were finalised in five working days.

New South Wales

The AES was reviewed in December 2000, resulting in a new structure being recommended. The new structure commenced implementation in May 2001, which has impacted on the number of staff available to answer inquiries.

Queensland

Average cost per phone enquiry does not include any on costs or management costs.

Western Australia

An increasing number of clients are using the web to access information on wage rates and conditions. More complex queries are being directed to Wageline, which is reflected in the average time spent on calls.

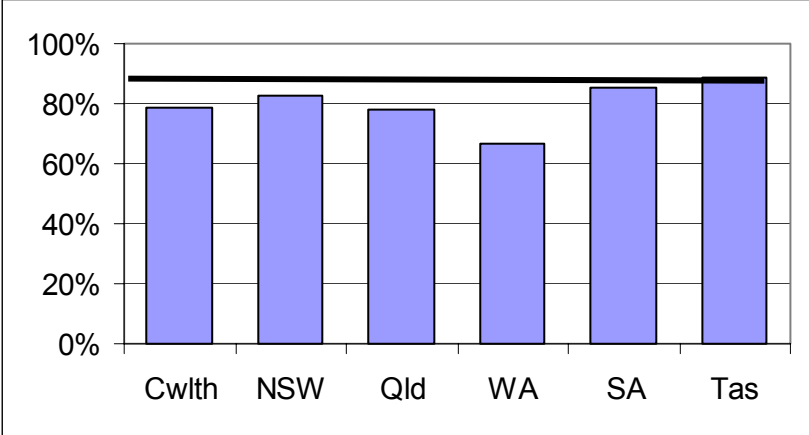
South Australia

Costs include 0.5 of a manager's time.

Tasmania

- ¹. Due to the multi-task nature of Helpline (Workers' Compensation, OHS, Shop trading hours business and employment registration, IR,etc.) no separate costs recorded.
2. Information not available. The departmental response measure is 10 days.

Figure 2: Percentage of inquirers queuing 3 minutes or less



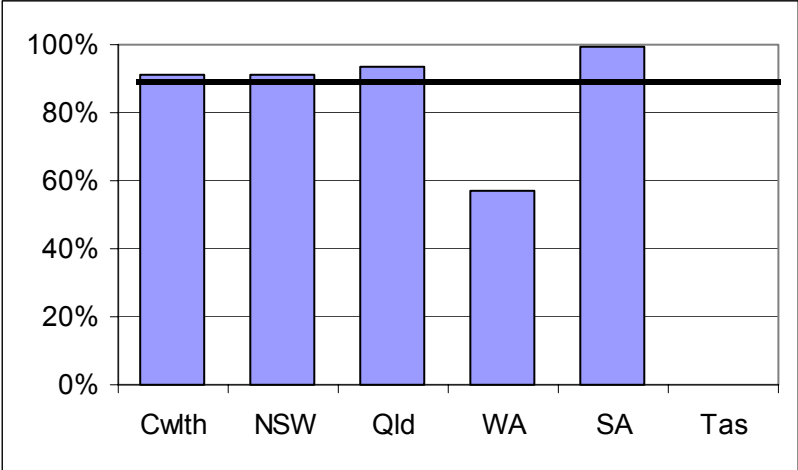
Summary of Figure 2

Queuing times averaged between 53 seconds and 3 minutes 3 seconds. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 90 per cent of clients queuing 3 minutes or less (represented by the black line). No jurisdictions met the benchmark.

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



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



Summary of Figures 3 & 4

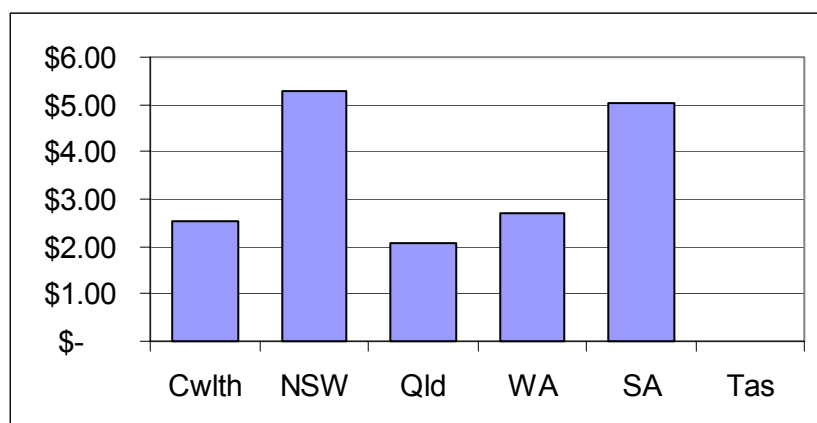
On average, advisers spent between 2 minutes 53 seconds and 4 minutes 21 seconds per inquiry. Turnaround times for written inquiries ranged from 57 to 99 per cent finalised in five working days. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries being finalised within five working days (represented by the black line). Four jurisdictions met the benchmark.

Comments on Figures 3 & 4

Tasmania

Information not available. Departmental response measure 10 days.

Figure 5: Average cost per telephone inquiry



Summary of Figure 5

Jurisdictions have defined ‘salary’ cost as salary, overtime, meal allowances, higher duties, leave loading, workers' compensation, recreation leave expenses and payroll tax. Superannuation is excluded. The average cost per telephone inquiry ranged between \$2.05 and \$5.29

Table 3: Client survey results - inquiry services* 2000-2001

Question	Cwlth (per cent)	NSW (per cent)	Qld (per cent)	WA (per cent)	SA (per cent)	Tas (per cent)
Q1 Knowledge increased						
Strongly agree	43	81	72	37	35	Note 1
Agree	53	7	8	47	51	
Undecided	3	1	5	9	4	
Disagree	1	8	3	6	3	
Strongly disagree		3	2	2	0	
Q2 Easy to understand						
Strongly agree	57	84	57	43	31	
Agree	40	11	23	46	58	
Undecided	2	1	5	2	5	
Disagree	1	3	2	7	1	
Strongly disagree		1	3	1	0	
Q3 Staff were professional						
Strongly agree	63	76	72	57	31	
Agree	34	19	19	41	57	
Undecided	3	0	6	1	4	
Disagree		4	2	2	1	
Strongly disagree		1	1	0	0	

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

Comments on Table 3

New South Wales

The AES is currently involved in the Australian Quality Council Benchmarking (of call centres) exercise, whereby clients were surveyed with the above results.

Western Australia

The client survey results are ascertained by a contracted market research organisation surveying 50 employee and employer clients on a quarterly basis.

South Australia

Because some responses were nil, the results do not add up to 100. These are preliminary results from the 2000/2001 survey.

Tasmania

Tasmania did not conduct a client survey during the year in review. Due to considerable inconsistencies in the method of conducting the client survey, Tasmania did not see great value in conducting a survey until agreement has been reached regarding the survey methodology.

Compliance Performance

Table 4: Compliance Workload 2000-2001

	Cwlth	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas
Workload						
(a) Claims						
Outstanding at the start of the period (SOP)		793 ¹	0			47
New claims	7,161	4,334	7,896			482
Not proceeded with/finalised as a claim	783	See Note 1				98
Voluntary compliance		1,820				66
Claims on hand at the end of the period (EOP) (awaiting action/work in progress)		690				53
Cases to be dealt with		2,612	7,896			312
(b) Cases						
Outstanding at start of the period (SOP)	1,688	603	2,024	96	317	84
New Cases	6,378	2,612	7,896	736	1,069	312
Total Cases to be dealt with (23,815)	8,066	3,215	9,920	832	1,386	396
Cases Finalised						
(a) Not proceeded with						
Total not proceeded with	1,158	See Note 2	912	142	140	57
(b) Sustained						
Jurisdictional litigation	36	557	340	33	0	14
Employee litigation	264	See Note 1		0	166	0
Penalty Notice issued		See Note 3		0	3	0
Voluntary compliance	3,642	2,326 ²	5,276	552	651	257
Total sustained	3,942	2,770 ²	5,616	585	820	271
(c) Not sustained						
Total not sustained	1,439	See Note 3	806	9	229	38
(d) Cases finalised						
Total cases finalised (NSW & Commonwealth include claims)	6,539	4,590	7,334	736	1,189	366
Cases on hand at End of Period (EOP)						
Total cases on hand EOP	1,527	445	2,586	96	197	30

Comments on Table 4

The Commonwealth, New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania have a pre-investigation process in which complainants are asked to try and self-resolve their problem first. South Australia is trialling such a process. This period is 28 days in New South Wales and Tasmania and 21 days in Western Australia, South Australia and the

Commonwealth. This explains why Queensland and South Australia do not have any entries in part (a) under Workload of the above table.

New South Wales

¹ The NSW Department of Industrial Relations continues the implementation of a new information technology platform and database for compliance file management and reporting. The Compliance Information Management System (CIMS), when completed, will allow innovative reporting functionality which will allow more definitive analysis and provision of information for the identified benchmarking measures. Data currently available is reliant on other reporting systems that do not allow the comprehensive data required.

² The total for 'not proceeded with' included with figures provided for 'voluntary compliance' and hence 'total sustained'. See Note 1 concerning difficulties in 'separating' such data currently.

³ Unable to provide at this stage.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth implemented a new claims management tracking system (CLAIMS) in January 2001. The Commonwealth now treats some correspondence previously classified as written inquiries as claims.

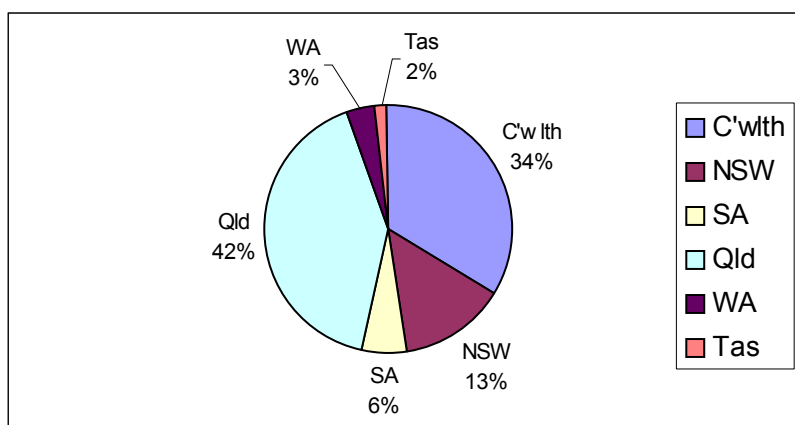
The Commonwealth has introduced a process of mediation to complement prosecution or small claims court procedures as a means of rectifying breaches. The 10 cases successfully finalised using this method are included under Voluntary Compliance.

In Victoria employees are either covered by federal awards or agreements or, as result of the referral of most State workplace relations powers to the Commonwealth, a safety net of entitlements under Schedule 1A of Part XV of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The following table provides the break-up of compliance activity in Victoria.

Table 4A: Compliance Workload - Victoria 2000-2001

	Schedule 1A	Federal Awards	Total Victoria
Workload			
(a) Claims			
New claims	2061	1337	3398
Not proceeded with/finalised as a claim	1	66	67
(b) Cases			
Outstanding at start of the period (SOP)	755	434	1189
New Cases	2060	1271	3331
Total Cases to be dealt with	2815	1705	4520
Cases Finalised			
(a) Not proceeded with			
Total not proceeded with	516	254	770
(b) Sustained			
Jurisdictional litigation	0	3	3
Employee litigation	13	4	17
Voluntary compliance	1240	603	1843
Total sustained	1253	610	1863
(c) Not sustained			
Total not sustained	395	523	918
(d) Cases finalised			
Total cases finalised	2164	1387	3551
Cases on hand at End of Period (EOP)	651	318	969

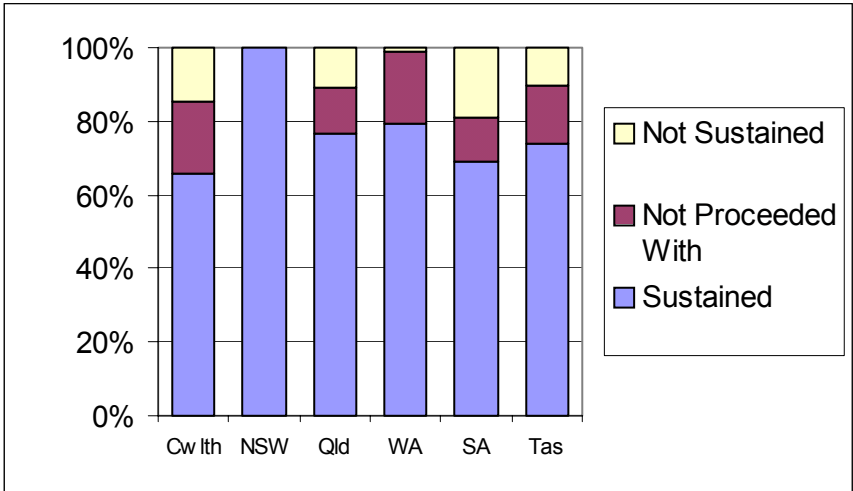
Figure 6: Total compliance workload



Summary of Figure 6

Figure 6 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 23,815 claims/cases dealt with in the period. This includes both matters finalised and matters on hand at the end of the period.

Figure 7: Breakdown of finalised cases



Summary of Figure 7

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 ranged from 66 to 100 per cent.

Table 5: Compliance Service Costs & Performance Information 2000-2001

	Cwlth	NSW	Qld	WA	SA	Tas
Compliance service costs						
Total Full-time Equivalents (FTE)	Note 1	61 ¹	80	12.46	19	Note 1
Total salary and on costs (less super)	\$3,046,593	\$3,003,579 ¹	\$4,024,597	\$620,376	\$919,578	
Performance information						
(a) Timeliness						
Average time to finalise a case (months)	3.5	5 ²	2.9	1.3	2.03	Note 2
Per cent finalised in 90 days of receipt of claim	64	43 ²	74	90	71	
(b) Cost						
Average cost per case finalised	\$598	See Note 1	\$519	\$843	\$773	

Comments on Table 5

Commonwealth

¹ Comparable staffing figures are not available because the Commonwealth has contracted out its inquiry services in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

Commonwealth costs cover service delivery, including targeted compliance work, in New South Wales, Victoria and the Territories. They do not include costs of service delivery in the contracted States because of difficulties in isolating those costs.

The average cost per case finalised is estimated from average unit costs for federal service delivery in all States.

Commonwealth information systems are not currently able to report on performance against Schedule 1A activity in Victoria. However, overall in Victoria the Commonwealth averaged 4.5 months to finalise a claim and finalised 51% of claims within 90 days of receipt.

New South Wales

¹ The figure of 62 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff comprises six (6) Senior Industrial Inspector positions, forty four (44) Industrial Inspector positions, and twelve (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. Nor does it account for the provision of indirect or ancillary support by other department staff eg. Legal advice, processing of cheques for clients.

² Estimate only due to current data collection difficulties. Includes claims finalised.

³ Includes claims finalised, as almost all cases proceed from claims via the voluntary compliance process.

Queensland

Average cost per case finalised does not include any on costs or management costs.

Western Australia

Average cost includes the cost of the management structure for the Fair Workplaces Division.

South Australia

Total and average salary costs include the cost of other IR compliance activities undertaken by the inspectorate. Separate costs are not available at this stage. No management costs are included.

Tasmania

Note 1: Due to the multi-task nature of Inspectorate (Workers Compensation, OHS, Shop trading hours, Business and employment registration IR etc. no separate costs are recorded.

Note 2: Due to the multi-task nature of Inspectorate (Workers Compensation, OHS, Shop trading hours, Business and employment registration IR etc. no separate costs are recorded. Often Inspectors are developing relationships with businesses and deal simultaneously with IR and OHS matters. Exact times for each activity are not recorded.

Figure 8: Average time to finalise a case (in months)

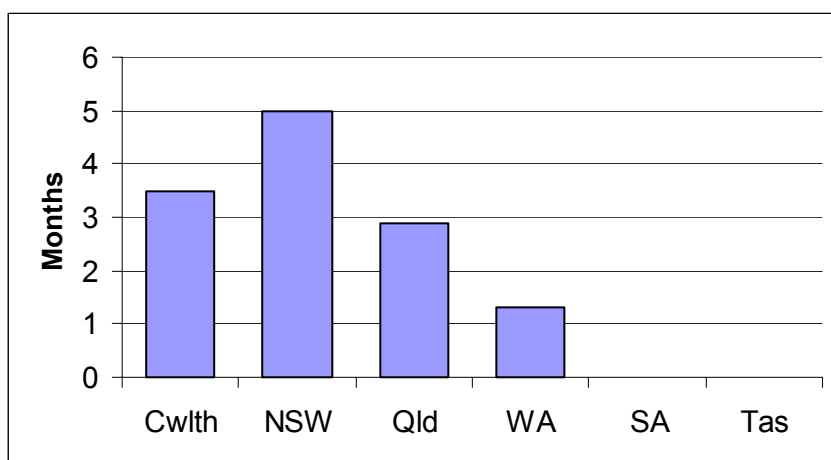
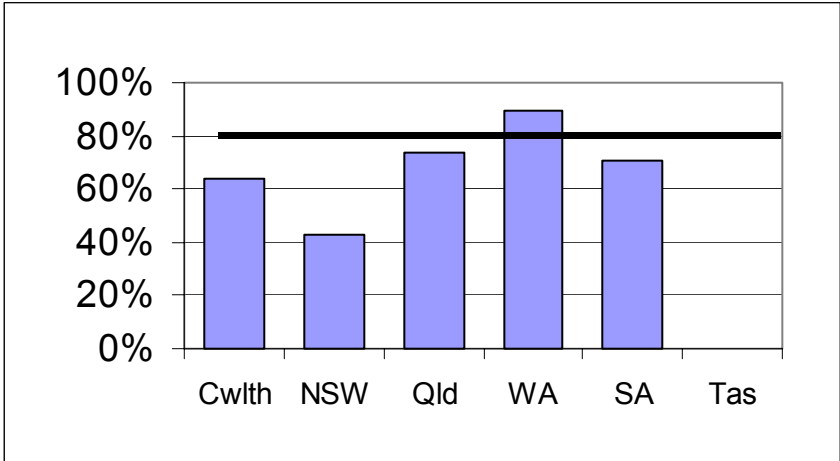


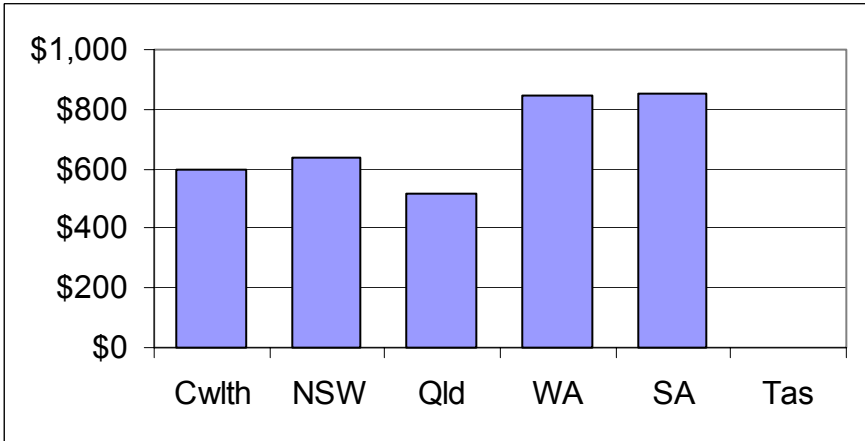
Figure 9: Percentage of cases finalised in 90 days from date of receipt of claims



Summary of Figures 8 and 9

The average time in months to finalise a case ranged between 1.3 months and 5 months. The percentage of cases finalised in 90 days ranged from 43 to 90 per cent. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 80 per cent of cases being finalised within 90 days of receipt of the claim (represented by the black line). One jurisdiction met the benchmark.

Figure 10: Average cost per case finalised



Summary of Figure 10

Jurisdictions have defined ‘salary’ cost 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 per case finalised ranged between \$598 and \$855.

Table 6: Client Survey Results - Compliance Services* 2000-2001

Questions	Cwth (per cent)	NSW (per cent)	Qld (per cent)	WA (per cent)	SA (per cent)	Tas (per cent)
Q1 - Staff were professional						
Strongly Agree	65		52	27	35	Note 1
Agree	32		42	52	38	
Undecided			4	4	15	
Disagree	3		1	9	5	
Strongly Disagree			1	8	5	
Q2 - Information was relevant						
Strongly Agree	55		42	22	33	
Agree	42		49	61	47	
Undecided			6	6	9	
Disagree	3		3	7	4	
Strongly Disagree			0	4	5	
Q3 - Information was timely						
Strongly Agree	53		43	25	37	
Agree	44		41	50	41	
Undecided			6	5	8	
Disagree	3		3	12	4	
Strongly Disagree			2	8	9	

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

Comments on Table 6

Western Australia

The client survey results are ascertained by a contracted market research organisation surveying 50 employer and 50 employee clients on a quarterly basis.

South Australia

Because some responses were null, the results do not add up to 100. These are preliminary results from the 2000/2001 survey.

Tasmania

¹ Tasmania did not conduct a client survey during the year in review.

Glossary

<i>Abandoned</i>	A caller decides not to proceed with a telephone inquiry after having been connected and while waiting in a queue for a live operator.
<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 (ie 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; or➤ 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 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 but not proceeded with 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.