



# WORKCOVER BOARD AND WORKSAFE TASMANIA STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2024 - 2028



An initiative of the WorkCover Tasmania Board delivered by WorkSafe Tasmania



# Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, we would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people; the traditional owners of the land upon which we live and work.

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# From the Minister



## The Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP

There is more to life than work; this is the underlying principle that informs our commitment to improving work health and safety outcomes for all Tasmanians. Robust work health and safety culture that includes relevant and meaningful processes for workers compensation and injury management is essential to our state's success. More importantly, it benefits people in our workplaces, whether they be employer or worker.

This Strategic Plan 2024-28 is an important collaborative approach to work health and safety management in Tasmania. We want to develop safer and healthier workplaces, support people affected by workplace injuries, and build a positive health, safety and injury management culture.

During the past decade, there have been significant changes to our state's work landscape and evolution in our understanding of the impact that work and workplaces have on all aspects of our health. There is greater recognition of the impact of mental health in all aspects of our life and while some progress has been made in addressing mental health injuries in the workplace, there is still much more work to be done in this area to ensure Tasmanian workers are not only safe in body but safe in mind. The plan reflects this by addressing mental health and wellbeing as well as prevention and management of physical injuries.

As Minister, I am grateful to all those who took part in the consultation process used to develop this plan; we all gain when we share our collective desire to improve outcomes in our state. This strategic plan is no exception.

As proud Tasmanians, we know our state is the best place in Australia to work, rest and play. Within the strong framework this plan provides, we will continue to work together to make our workplaces safe, healthy and supportive of all of our workers and employers.

## From the Chair



**Ginna Webster,**  
Chair, WorkCover Tasmania Board

The WorkCover Tasmania Board is pleased to endorse the Strategic Plan 2024-28, recognising in particular the emphasis on a collaborative and consultative approach to its development.

The Board exists to ensure a fair and equitable workers compensation scheme, good return to work outcomes and safer workplaces for all Tasmanian workers. The Board does this by:

- overseeing Tasmania's workers compensation scheme and monitoring the performance of scheme participants
- promoting prompt and effective injury management
- promoting safe and healthy workplaces by providing health and safety guidance.

The Board also provides advice to the Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs on workers compensation and rehabilitation, and on work health and safety matters.

All of this work is strengthened by the Board working with workers, employers, medical practitioners, licensed insurers, self-insurers, workplace rehabilitation providers and others as we move towards safer and healthier workplaces and work culture across our state.

## From the Executive Director



**Robyn Pearce**  
Executive Director, WorkSafe Tasmania

WorkSafe Tasmania is proud to endorse this Strategic Plan 2024-28 that sets a clear focus for our activities over the next five years. The plan benefits from the collaborative approach taken to inform and prioritise its goals, actions and measures, bringing together the shared wisdom, experience and knowledge of a full range of stakeholders.

Importantly, this development process has resulted in a strong plan that is evidence-based and mindful of national trends while also integrating the unique requirements of the Tasmanian context. I look forward to working with workers, employers, unions, insurers, medical practitioners and others as we strive to achieve the targets that we have set ourselves.

Tasmanians have a long history of working together across our communities. We aim to ensure this continues as we make our state's workplaces safer, support our injured workers, and continue to build a collaborative health, safety and injury management culture.

# Working together to meet our strategic goals

The WorkCover Tasmania Board and WorkSafe Tasmania 2024-2028 Strategic Plan builds on the initiatives implemented through the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan and aligns with key national strategies. It acknowledges that while we have reduced harm caused to workers and improved our regulatory frameworks, there is still more work to be done.

The Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2033 sets out persistent and emerging issues facing workplaces across Australia, from managing psychosocial hazards to protecting vulnerable workers. There is also a need for all jurisdictions to support small businesses to develop new responses to risks such as artificial intelligence, hybrid work, more complex supply chains, climate change, and continuing demographic shifts.

## Our unique challenges

In Tasmania, some work health and safety challenges are magnified and we also face some unique and significant additional challenges.



A greater proportion of our state's workers are on casual contracts than in the rest of Australia.



Tasmania is experiencing growth in platform labour hire, especially in the healthcare and disability sectors.



One in 2 Tasmanians of working age do not have the literacy and numeracy skills they need for work and life.



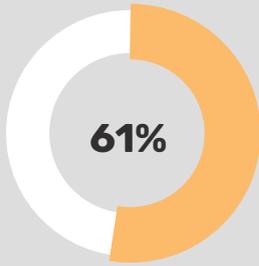
Around 1 in 3 people employed in Tasmania experience insecure, non-standard work arrangements, including casual, independent contractor or fixed term contracts.



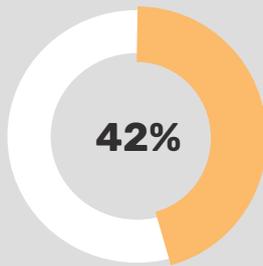
While the percentage of Tasmanians who speak a language other than English is lower than the national average, this number increased by 80% between the 2016 and 2021 ABS Census.

General health is also poorer in Tasmania than nationally. Our state has an ageing workforce, with higher levels of smoking and obesity, and lower levels of physical activity and nutritional intake.

Self-reported rates of depression and anxiety have significantly increased in Tasmania in the past 10 years, and the number of mental health claims is rising. Tasmania has a smaller mental health workforce per capita than the national average, and access to medical and health services in Tasmania continues to be a **challenge**.



61% of Tasmanians work full time, but this varies by industry.



42% of Tasmanian workers are aged over 45 years.

**Improving Tasmania's work health and safety outcomes and injury management requires a commitment from all of us to adopt effective improvement strategies within our spheres of control. This is clearly supported by available data, as well as information we were given by stakeholders as we developed this strategic plan.**



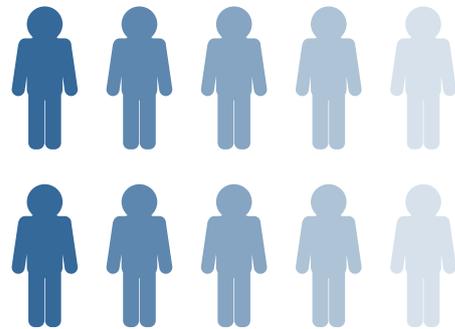
### FUTURE CHALLENGES at a glance

**8.7%**

of Tasmanians speak a language other than English at home.

**2nd lowest**

rate of literacy of all states, the lowest for women.



There are approximately **250,000 people** employed in Tasmania, across **19 industry divisions**.



## Our unique opportunities

Our state's key strength is our relatively small size, which means we can build good relationships with stakeholders and 'get the whole system in the room'. This gives us the opportunity to make that system more person-led, less adversarial, and better able to address the rise in psychosocial injuries in particular.

### Two thirds of mental stress injuries

in 2022 were caused by either work pressure or work related harassment and/or workplace bullying.



**36%**

Work pressure was the leading cause of Mental stress injury in 2022.



This is an increase from the 20% of Mental stress injuries attributed to Work pressure in 2013.

### There were over **2.5** times as many work pressure injuries in 2022 as occurred in 2013



**31%**

of mental stress injuries were work related harassment and/or workplace bullying.



**71%**

Work related harassment and/or workplace bullying.

The WorkSafe vision and the goals articulated in this strategic plan provide a framework that all stakeholders can use as they develop their own work health and safety strategies and targets.

## 1. Being accountable



The WorkCover Tasmania Board will monitor performance against this strategic plan's goals and regularly report on progress towards achieving our targets. Doing this will make sure we remain transparent and accountable for our actions and their outcomes.

The Board will continue to engage with stakeholders and fund further initiatives to improve Tasmania's workers compensation and injury management schemes. The Board will also support education and advice to improve work health and safety performance in our workplaces.

WorkSafe Tasmania, as the independent regulator, will develop annual plans that focus not only on compliance monitoring and enforcement, but also on improving work health and safety awareness and education within Tasmanian workplaces.

## 2. Next steps



As the next step in this process, the Board and WorkSafe will develop annualised operational plans to support implementation of the actions outlined under each goal. This strategic plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and that measures are appropriate.

### This strategic plan aligns with:

- Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy
- National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management
- National Return to Work Strategy
- Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Rethink 2020 (Tasmanian mental health strategy)



# Our Vision

Safe and healthy work for everyone

## Mission

- We are dedicated to making work in Tasmania safe and healthy, and supporting those who are harmed at work in their recovery for life and work.
- We do this through information, education, advice, compliance monitoring and enforcement.
- Our approach is 'person-led' – where we recognise that workers know what's best for them and are able to meaningfully contribute to decisions that affect them.

We act with integrity, respect and accountability, and we use the following principles to guide our decisions, actions and relationships.

## Principles

- Leadership**  
 We lead a safety culture through attitudes and behaviours that positively value work health and safety processes, experiences and outcomes.
- Innovation**  
 We promote and support innovative thinking and ideas to help businesses adapt to changing work environments.
- Collaboration**  
 We are inclusive, genuine in our engagement, and we work together to build trust and achieve positive outcomes.
- Transparent**  
 We are approachable, we communicate clearly and ensure open access to appropriate information.
- Proactive**  
 We bring a whole-system perspective, are future-focused, evidence-based, and apply risk-based regulation.

# Our strategic goals

## OUR GOALS

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

## HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

### Goal 1

Safer and healthier workplaces



More people in Tasmanian workplaces are safe and healthy at the end of the working day.

Industry use of higher order controls to design safe and healthy work is the norm.



Zero fatalities arising from the carrying out of work.

Reduction of serious injury frequency rate:

- By 10% overall
- By 10% for mental health injuries

No new cases of accelerated silicosis.

### Goal 2

Supporting people affected by workplace injuries



People are supported to minimise the impact of, and maximise their recovery from, physical and mental workplace injuries.

Support is provided through an early intervention approach in a fair and sustainable compensation system.



1% improvement in claim duration levels in categories <12 weeks (wks) lost & 2% improvement in categories 12 weeks+:

- 57% <6 weeks
- 43% 6 weeks+
- 24% 12 weeks+
- 11% 26 weeks+
- 5% 52 weeks+

5% increase in the 'durable return to work' score (to 85%).

3.3% increase in the 'work role functioning' score (to 85%).

0.2-point increase in the 'perceived fairness' score (to a score of 4/5).

4.5% increase in the 'employer response' score (to 74%).

### Goal 3

Building a collaborative health, safety and injury management culture



Tasmanians work together to build safer and healthier workplaces.



2% improvement in the health, safety and injury management culture key measures.



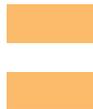
# Goal 1: Safer and healthier workplaces

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



More people in Tasmanian workplaces are safe and healthy at the end of the working day.

Industry use of higher order controls to design safe and healthy work is the norm.



## HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS



Zero fatalities arising from the carrying out of work.

Reduction of serious injury frequency rate:

- By 10% overall
- By 10% for mental health injuries.

No new cases of accelerated silicosis.

# We will work towards Goal 1 by taking these actions

## 1.

Collaborate with priority industries and industry sector stakeholders to implement innovative approaches to create safer and healthier workplaces. These priority areas include:

- health care and social assistance
- public administration and safety
- agriculture
- transport
- construction
- mining.

## 2.

Develop and implement a regulatory statement that clarifies roles, approach and priorities for compliance and enforcement.

## 3.

Develop an integrated approach to design and delivery of fit-for-purpose, targeted harm reduction initiatives.

## 4.

Develop programs to support integration of higher order risk controls in health and safe work design.

## 5.

Support small businesses to build confidence and capability in their understanding and management of health and safety risk by making safety measures as simple as possible.

### Notes about measures

Fatality measures include both worker and bystander deaths that occur due to the carrying out of work.

Financial year 2022–23 data is used as the baseline for injury frequency targets.

The serious injury frequency rate is the average number of serious injuries during 1,000,000 working hours across the financial year.



# 7,021

injuries in Tasmania  
IN 2022

Serious injury frequency rate  
increased slightly

from **9.8 to 10.2**

serious injuries per million  
hours worked  
OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

# 15% DECREASE

in injury numbers in the  
last ten years

# 23%

 (highest number) of all  
serious injuries recorded in

## Health Care and Social Assistance industry

Almost 1 in 4 workers seriously injured  
in 2022 worked in Health Care and Social  
Assistance

# 85

 Fatalities reported in  
ten years (2013 - 2022)

Number of worker  
fatalities per industry

# 16

Agriculture, Forestry  
and Fishing

# 10

Transport, Postal  
and Warehousing

# 10

Construction

# 9

Other Industries

# 5

Retail

# 5

Mining

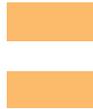
# Goal 2: Supporting people affected by workplace injuries

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



People are supported to minimise the impact of, and maximise their recovery from, physical and mental workplace injuries.

Support is provided through an early intervention approach in a fair and sustainable compensation system.



## HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS



1% improvement in claim duration levels in categories <12 weeks (weeks) lost & 2% improvement in categories 12 weeks+:

- 57% <6 weeks
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5% increase in the 'durable return to work' score (to 85%).

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0.2-point increase in the 'perceived fairness' score (to a score of 4/5).

4.5% increase in the 'employer response' score (to 74%).

### ▶ The people

#### 55–64 year olds

reported the highest serious injury frequency rate of all age groups

Occupations with the highest percentage of serious injuries

**11%** Miscellaneous Labourers



**9%** Personal Carers and Assistants



**5%** Cleaners and Laundry Workers



# We will work towards Goal 2 by taking these actions

## 1.

Establish and promote a 'person-led' approach to injury management and return to work in Tasmania.

## 2.

Develop an awareness and education program aimed at addressing and reducing the stigma associated with workers compensation and return to work following injury.

## 3.

Create opportunities to improve return to work outcomes, including:

- innovative models across industry sectors and communities
- more efficient claims management
- encouraging early intervention and referral
- increasing the confidence and capability of everyone involved in return to work.

## 4.

Improve support during workers compensation and incident investigation processes for everyone who is affected, particularly families of workers who have died in a workplace incident and workers who have been seriously injured at work.



### STIGMA PERSISTS

# 39%

of claimants felt they would be treated differently.

# 21%

thought they would be fired.

# 14%

were discouraged from making a claim.

## Return to work survey

February 2019 to 31 January 2021

# 79%

OF WORKERS SURVEYED

returned to work at the time of the survey (national 81%)

# 92%

OF WORKERS

returned to work at some time since their injury (on par with national)



10% assessed as having likely serious mental illness



20% experiencing high levels of financial stress



45% have one or more co-morbidities



8% have three or more co-morbidities

### Notes about measures

All measures are overarching measures of worker experience taken from the National Return to Work Survey, with the 2021 National Return to Work Survey used as the baseline year for establishing targets.

The timely return to work rate is the incidence rate of accepted claims with time loss at 13 weeks, 26 weeks and 52 weeks post injury.

The durable (current) return to work rate is the percentage of workers with time loss claims back at work for at least 3 months who were working at the time of the survey.

The work role functioning score is the average Work Role Functioning Questionnaire score in workers who had returned to work indicating few limitations on their work function.

The perceived fairness score is the average score on the perceived justice of the compensation process scale for all workers out of a total score of 5 across 4 domains of perceived justice.

The employer response score is the percentage of workers agreeing that their employer supported them following their injury.



## Goal 3:

# Building a collaborative health, safety and injury management culture

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### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

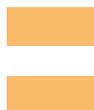


Tasmanians work together to build safer and healthier workplaces.

### HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS



2% improvement in the health, safety and injury management culture key measures.



## We will work towards Goal 3 by taking these actions

### 1.

Develop and implement a mechanism to measure improvements in system-wide work health and safety culture.

### 2.

Improve accessibility and navigation of work health and safety and workers compensation processes, including the development of a single online navigation service for workers, particularly those with vulnerabilities, and employers.

### 3.

Develop the capability to capture, analyse, share and respond to work health and safety and injury management trends, research and lessons learned from incidents and lived experience.

### 4.

Facilitate regular collaboration forums for stakeholders to identify emerging issues and solutions, and facilitate a culture of sharing and engagement.

### 5.

Partner with industry, unions and government to support start-up businesses to integrate work health and safety and injury management into their systems and culture.

#### Notes about measures

A benchmark for measuring improvements in health, safety and injury management culture in Tasmania will be established in the first three years of this strategic plan.



## INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN

The workforce in Tasmania is broken into 19 industry divisions.

Half of the state's workforce are employed in one of these four industries:



**Health Care and Social Assistance**



**Retail Trade**



**Education and Training**



**Accommodation and Food Services**

## School Education

is the largest employing industry group in the state



# Who we are and what we do

The WorkCover Tasmania Board provides strategic oversight to Tasmania's work health, safety and injury management schemes. It is supported in this by WorkSafe Tasmania and involves workers, employers, medical practitioners, licensed insurers, self-insurers, unions and others to ensure Tasmania has:

- a fair and equitable, efficient and affordable workers compensation scheme
- good return to work outcomes
- safer workplaces for all Tasmanian workers.

The Board monitors the performance of the scheme and provides ongoing advice to government on opportunities for improvement. It also funds WorkSafe Tasmania to deliver initiatives and programs with stakeholders to improve performance and regulate the workers compensation scheme.

WorkSafe Tasmania is the independent work health and safety regulator, providing education and advice to employers and workers, monitoring for compliance and taking enforcement action when needed.

The Board and WorkSafe Tasmania make sure that people who are impacted by our decisions are at the centre of our decision-making and that people with lived experience inform our responses and actions.

## How we developed this strategic plan

More than 70 people, including representatives from unions, insurers, employers, and the medical, legal and government sectors, provided invaluable insights that contributed to the development of this strategic plan.

Industry groups, peak bodies, Tasmanian companies and WorkSafe Tasmania staff members also provided input throughout the plan's development.

Consultation methods included a face-to-face workshop, targeted consultations, a series of online consultations, and the collection of responses to a consultative draft.

All stakeholders were also given the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategic Plan before it was finalised by the Board.

# Administered legislation

## Work health and safety

*Dangerous Goods (Road and Rail Transport) Act 2010*

*Explosives Act 2012*

*Mines Work Health and Safety (Supplementary Requirements) Act 2012*

*Security-sensitive Dangerous Substances Act 2005*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2012*

*Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012*

## Compensation schemes

*Asbestos-Related Diseases (Occupational Exposure) Compensation Act 2011*

*Workers' (Occupational Diseases) Relief Fund Act 1954*

*Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*

## Workplace relations

*Construction Industry (Long Service) Act 1997*

*Industrial Relations Act 1984*

*Industrial Relations (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2009*

*Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993 [Part 7]*

*Long Service Leave (State Employees) Act 1994*

*Long Service Leave Act 1976*

*Shop Trading Hours Act 1984*

*Statutory Holidays Act 2000*

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