

WORKPLACE RELATIONS MINISTERS' COUNCIL

Benchmarking of Commonwealth and
State Workplace Relations Inquiry
and Compliance Services

1 July 1999 – 30 June 2000

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Foreword

On behalf of the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council, I am pleased to release the second Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report, which covers the period 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

Commonwealth and State governments provide workplace relations advisory and compliance services to employers and employees regarding their employment rights and responsibilities, and opportunities, under relevant legislation, awards and agreements. In South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, the Commonwealth contracts the State Government to deliver these federal services in order to provide a one-stop shop for clients.

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.

The first report summarised the performance of all jurisdictions against agreed benchmarks for the period 1 January 1999 to 30 June 1999. The report also recommended that, as a next step, jurisdictions try to measure their success in achieving outcomes, as well as measuring the efficiency of their processes and activities.

The second report builds on the first by summarising the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed efficiency benchmarks for the ensuing 12 months, and by providing some limited trend data. With regard to the measurement of outcomes, jurisdictions felt that, after having considered the options, they should spend more time improving operational performance against the existing benchmarks before focusing on the development of outcomes indicators and benchmarks.

I am pleased with the results of the benchmarking process to date, particularly the increased level of communication and co-operation between jurisdictions and the joint commitment to achieve benchmarks. It highlights the potential for the further harmonisation of workplace relations services across the country.



The Hon Peter Reith MP

Chairman, Workplace Relations Ministers' Council

Federal Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business

January 2001

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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.

The Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report 1999-2000 summarises the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for a full financial year.

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. Visits to Internet information sites such as Wagenet have not been included in this report although they are becoming an increasingly important source of information for clients on award entitlements and related matters. They will be included in the next report.

?? There were 2 143 426 inquiries nationally in the reporting period.

In terms of the agreed indicators, benchmarking indicates:

?? average queuing times for telephone inquiries were between 41 seconds and up to 6.43 minutes, with three jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for 3 minutes or less

- compared with average queuing times of between 30 seconds and up to 4.38 minutes during January to June 1999, with two jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark;

?? on average, advisers spent between 3.05 minutes and 4.20 minutes per telephone inquiry

- compared with advisers spending on average between 3.11 minutes and four minutes per telephone inquiry during January to June 1999;

?? between 87 per cent and 97 per cent of written inquiries were finalised in five working days, with three jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days

- compared with between 66 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries being finalised in five working days during January to June 1999, and three jurisdictions achieved the national benchmark
- a written inquiry has been defined as direct correspondence, including faxes and emails, which is received and answered by the relevant area; and

?? the cost per telephone inquiry was between \$2.62 and \$4.35

- compared with costs of between \$2.63 and \$3.65 during January to June 1999
- 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, between:

?? 77 per cent and 98 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices

- compared with 85–98 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999;

?? 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients considered the information provided was easy to understand

- compared with 88-99 of surveyed clients during January to June 1999; and

?? 90 per cent and 100 per cent of clients agreed that advisers conducted themselves in a professional manner

- compared with 93–100 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999.

Compliance Services

All jurisdictions provide assistance to employees who believe they have been underpaid their wages or conditions of employment. For the purposes of benchmarking, compliance cases include both investigations arising from claims and those initiated as part of targeted campaigns.

?? There were 26 899 claims 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 2.2 months and 3.7 months
 - compared with averages times of between 1.7 months and 5.5 months during January to June 1999;
- ?? between 43 per cent and 77 per cent of cases were finalised in 90 days, with no jurisdiction meeting the national benchmark of 80 per cent of cases finalised within 90 days
 - compared with 34-88 per cent of cases being finalised in 90 days during January to June 1999, with one jurisdiction meeting the benchmark; and
- ?? the average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions was between \$561 and \$1011
 - compared with an average cost per case during January to June 1999 of between \$429 and \$896.

Client surveys indicate that across the jurisdictions, between:

- ?? 78 per cent and 95 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that inspectors handled the matter professionally
 - compared with 79-92 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999;
- ?? 79 per cent and 95 per cent of clients considered the information provided was relevant
 - compared with 83-95 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999; and
- ?? 69 per cent and 94 per cent of clients agreed that the information was provided in a timely and efficient manner
 - compared with 79-95 per cent of clients during January to June 1999.

Next Steps

The first benchmarking report, released in April 2000, foreshadowed that the next step for the working group was to consider the development of qualitative or outcome measures.

The working group has examined the options available, including those put forward in the first report.

Members considered that it was too soon to make major changes to the reporting framework since some jurisdictions still faced problems in meeting existing data requirements and benchmarks. It was felt that the collection of additional statistical information should be considered after there has been further sharing of information and improved performance against existing benchmarks.

Introduction

There are six jurisdictions in Australia established by different Commonwealth and State legislation. Since 1996/97 the Commonwealth has been responsible for most 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.

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.

The Benchmarking of Commonwealth and State Workplace Relations Inquiry and Compliance Services Report 1999-2000 summarises the performance of all jurisdictions against the agreed benchmarks for the next full financial year.

Purpose of benchmarking

As was stated in the first report, 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.

Benchmarking is not simply about identifying differences in performance but also about examining the reasons for the differences and learning from them.

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. Development of indicators for educative activities is currently being considered.

The glossary at page 32 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; and

?? average cost incurred per finalised case.

Jurisdictions have also agreed to 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 inquiries queuing for 3 minutes or less;

?? 90 per cent of requests finalised as a written inquiry in five working days; and

?? 80 per cent of compliance cases finalised within 90 days of commencement of investigation.

Some caution should be exercised when comparing trends between the last report and this report since the first report covered only the last six months of 1998-99, while this report covers all of 1999-2000.

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. For example, Queensland now reports State statistics for benchmarking purposes for all of its 20 offices, whereas it was only able to provide inquiry data for the previous report covering the greater Brisbane area.

Two jurisdictions continue to face significant problems in reporting against the benchmarking measures.

?? The New South Wales 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.

?? 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 for each area to be extracted and reported separately.

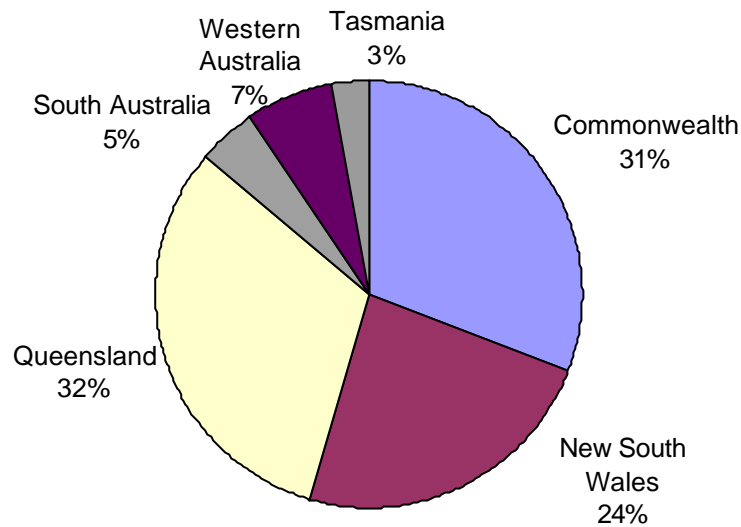
Performance results

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 2 143 426 inquiries nationally in the reporting period. A breakdown of the workload is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage of inquiries by jurisdiction



In terms of the agreed indicators, benchmarking indicates:

?? average queuing times for telephone inquiries ranged from 41 seconds up to 6.43 minutes, with three jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark of 90 per cent of telephone inquiries queuing for 3 minutes or less

- compared with average queuing times of between 30 seconds and up to 4.38 minutes during January to June 1999, with two jurisdictions meeting the agreed national benchmark;

?? on average, advisers spent between 3.05 minutes and 4.20 minutes per telephone inquiry

- compared with advisers spending on average between 3.11 minutes and four minutes per telephone inquiry during January to June 1999;

?? between 87 per cent and 97 per cent of written inquiries were finalised in five working days, with three jurisdictions achieved the national benchmark of 90 per cent of written inquiries finalised in five working days

- compared with between 66 per cent and 99 per cent of written inquiries being finalised in five working days during January to June 1999, and two jurisdictions achieving the national benchmark

- a written inquiry has been defined as direct correspondence, including faxes and emails, which is received and answered by the relevant area; and

?? the cost per telephone inquiry ranged between \$2.62 and \$4.35

- compared with costs of between \$2.63 and \$3.65 during January to June 1999

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

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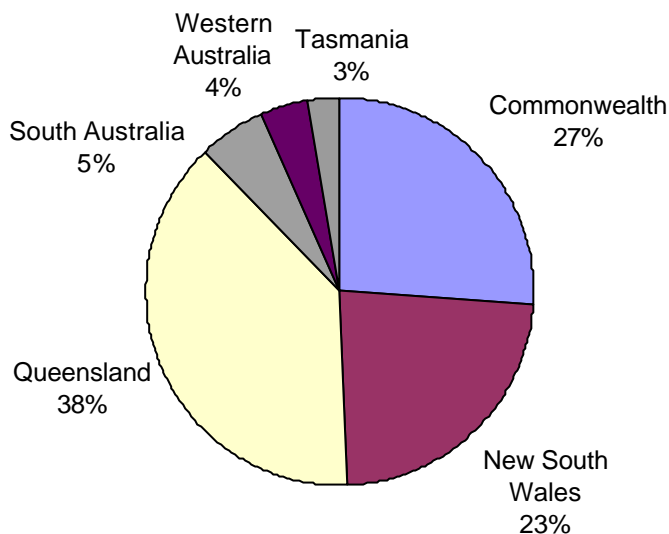
- ?? 77 per cent and 98 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the information provided to them increased their knowledge of their obligations, rights and employment choices
 - compared with 85–98 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999;
- ?? 88 per cent and 98 per cent of clients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

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, compliance cases include both investigations arising from claims and those initiated as part of targeted campaigns.

There were 26 899 claims/cases dealt with in the period. The compliance workload covers both matters finalised and matters on hand at the end of the period. A breakdown of the workload is provided in Figure 2. Note that NSW and Tasmania have a 28-day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector. Western Australia has a 21-day period. Claims settled during the cooling off period have been included in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of claims/cases by jurisdiction



In terms of the agreed indicators, the report indicates:

- ?? the average time (in months) to finalise a case ranged from 2.2 months to 3.7 months
 - compared with average times of between 1.7 months and 5.5 months during January to June 1999;
- ?? between 43 per cent and 77 per cent of cases were finalised within 90 days of commencement of investigation, with no jurisdiction meeting the national benchmark of 80 per cent of cases finalised within 90 days
 - compared with 34-88 per cent of cases being finalised in 90 days during January to June 1999, with one jurisdiction meeting the benchmark; and
- ?? the average cost per case finalised across the jurisdictions ranged from \$561 to \$1011
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- ?? 78 per cent and 95 per cent of clients surveyed agreed that the inspectors handled the matter professionally
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 - compared with 83-95 per cent of surveyed clients during January to June 1999; and
- ?? 69 per cent and 94 per cent of clients agreed that information was provided in a timely and efficient manner
 - compared with 79-95 per cent of clients during January to June 1999.

Options for measuring effectiveness

The first benchmarking report, released in April 2000, foreshadowed that the next step for the working group was to consider the development of qualitative or outcome measures.

The current indicators largely measure performance of process activity (ie, they are efficiency measures) rather than the impact or outcome of that activity. However, the client survey measures do provide some indication of outcomes for clients.

The working group has examined the options available, including those put forward in the first report.

Members considered that it was too soon to make major changes to the reporting framework since some jurisdictions still faced problems in meeting existing data requirements and benchmarks. It was felt that the collection of additional statistical information should be considered after there has been further sharing of information and improved performance against existing benchmarks.

The working group therefore agreed to:

- ?? maintain a focus on comparing the differences between jurisdictions' processes to assist in improving performance; and
- ?? at an appropriate stage, examine the benchmarking framework [] to ensure an appropriate balance between efficiency and outcome measures.

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 will be subject to the points made in the previous section, particularly 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 has been included in this report.

Commonwealth

During the year, 41 'Hiring or Firing' seminars were attended by 3197 people. The seminars were designed to help employers, particularly small business people, understand their obligations and opportunities under the current workplace relations framework. The seminars included information on legislative provisions and key issues relating to the employment relationship.

In addition, three one-day workshops for recruitment consultants and managers were conducted in the Sydney area, with 64 people attending the sessions. Recruitment consultants were targeted because of the high numbers of calls they make to the Wageline service. Feedback from workshop participants was extremely positive; with all attendees saying that the information was clear and presented logically, with 87 per cent feeling that the seminar had been value for money.

The Commonwealth also initiated investigations that resulted in the recovery of \$596 580 for 3 099 employees in the hospitality industry.

New South Wales

Industrial Inspectors in recent times have increasingly focussed on preventative measures. While efforts continue to resolve industrial complaints, Industrial Inspectors now participate in a combination of educational and compliance activities. These measures include seminars and information campaigns as well as ‘targeting’ certain industries, occupations or geographical locations for compliance with industrial laws.

The targeting activities undertaken facilitated a greater recognition factor of how it can help both workers and employers, along with their representatives. The Department has made contact and provided information to approximately one thousand (1,000) businesses via various targeting campaigns. The educative aspects of the campaigns conducted were often underpinned by partnerships and good working relations with a number of employer associations, along with TAFE and other government agencies.

Some of the larger educative strategies during the reporting period included the vineyards in the Hunter Valley (with the Hunter Valley Vineyard Association), and the hospitality industry - restaurants - (with Restaurant and Catering NSW) located in the Sydney CBD, Greater Western Sydney, and the South Coast of NSW.

Queensland

On 1 July 1999 the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* took effect making important changes to the industrial relations system.

To promote awareness of the new legislation a number of seminars and workshops were developed and delivered throughout the state during 1999-2000 including:

- ?? 24 seminars giving an overview of the major changes to the Industrial Relations Act at which all attendees were given a detailed handbook on the Act;
- ?? two seminars giving an overview of the Act delivered by video conference to Emerald and Alpha districts;
- ?? two seminars giving an overview of the Act delivered to the Association for Payroll Specialists and to the Australian Society of CPAs/Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia;
- ?? around 30 “Dismissal and Employment Issues” workshops accompanied by detailed handbooks;
- ?? around 20 “Awards and Agreements” workshops accompanied by detailed handbooks and later distribution of the “Awards and Agreements – How they can help your business” booklet; and
- ?? two clothing trades industry seminars featuring the use of interpreters for a number of languages.

DETIR is also a member and provides all secretariat support to the Industrial Relations Education Committee (IREC). IREC is a tri-partite committee including representatives from government, unions and employer organisations. IREC arranges for speakers from DETIR, unions and employer organisations to visit schools, etc to talk on industrial relations topics. IREC also maintains a website featuring a number of fact sheets and articles on industrial relations topics of interest to students.

During 1999, IREC arranged speakers for 141 engagements. In the January to June 2000 period, IREC arranged speakers at a further 63 engagements.

District offices of DETIR also receive direct requests from local schools and educational institutions and supply speakers as requested.

South Australia

In 1999/2000, Workplace services developed and implemented seminars that brought together the resources of Work Cover (SA), the Australian Taxation Office and the Business Centre to increase employers' awareness of their obligations under Industrial Relations Legislation. The excellent response from employers to these has prompted further seminars to be held on a quarterly basis for the next financial year.

Western Australia

In Western Australia, an advisory and education service is provided to private sector clients in metropolitan and regional areas. The Workplace Advisory Service provides information to employers and employees on their options, rights and obligations to improve the flexibility of their business.

In 1999/2000, the Workplace Advisory Service made 7100 contacts with employers, employees and business associations. This service is delivered through one-on-one consultations, seminars to business and industry associations, and articles in journals and newsletters.

In addition, four education and compliance campaigns were conducted during this period. An initial and follow up campaign was conducted in the contract cleaning industry, and follow up campaigns were conducted in the service station and security industries.

Other educational activities included participation in career and business expos and conducting school presentations on request.

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 is 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 1999-2000

| | Cwlth | NSW | Qld | SA | WA | Tas |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Inquiries handled | | | | | | |
| (a) Telephone | | | | | | |
| Telephone inquiry service | 428244 | 324970 | 514662 | 76215 | 143291 | 57142 |
| Other telephone | 206773 | 148626 | 138587 | 16395 | 0 | 0 |
| Total telephone | 635017 | 473596 | 653249 | 92610 | 143291 | 57142 |
| (b) Counter | | | | | | |
| Total counter | 12473 | 0 | 21325 | 3355 | 562 | 266 ¹ |
| (c) Written inquiries/email | | | | | | |
| Total Written inquiries received | 13687 | 30297 | 3636 | 1804 | 762 | 354 ² |
| (d) Total inquiries | | | | | | |
| Total inquiries handled | 661177 | 503,893 | 678210 | 97769 | 144615 | 57762 |
| TES calls not answered | | | | | | |
| Abandoned | 65229 | 148319 | 35895 | 7765 | 8649 | 4046 ³ |

Comments on Table 1

South Australia

Counter enquiries and written enquiries data was not available from two of the four regional offices.

Tasmania

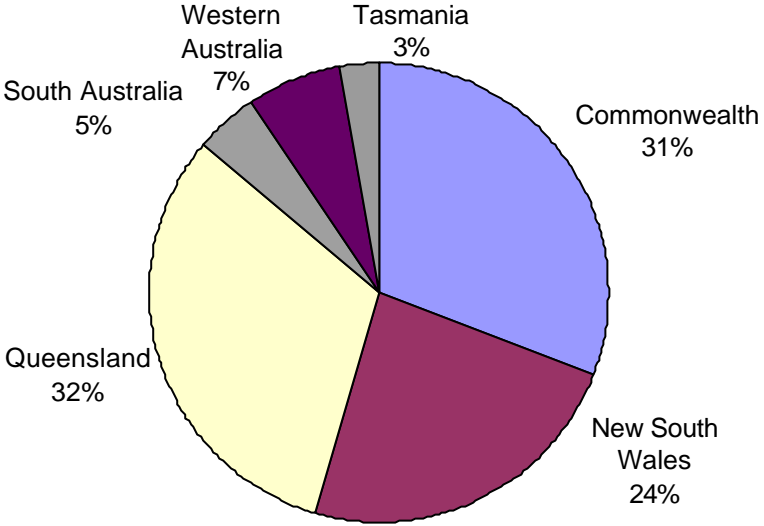
1. The total of calls made from the reception phones in Hobart and Launceston.
2. Includes email inquiries.
3. Total where the caller hangs up before being answered.

New South Wales

The Award Enquiry Service (AES) in NSW currently does not provide a counter service for Awards information. However each of the Department's contact centres provide customer service for the lodgement of industrial complaints etc, and clients may gain assistance from compliance staff, or call the AES.

The AES is about to undergo a review of its service, and the issue of providing a counter service will be addressed.

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 was a total of 2 143 426 inquiries during 1999-2000.

Table 2: Inquiry service costs and performance information 1999-2000

| | Cwth | NSW | Qld | SA | WA | Tas |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Inquiry service costs | | | | | | |
| Total full time equivalents | See note | 17 | 40 | 7.5 | 13.26 | |
| Total costs | \$2298593 | \$1414999 | \$1712726 | \$337350 | | See note 1 |
| Performance information | | | | | | |
| (a) Timeliness | | | | | | |
| Average queuing time in minutes | 3.8 | 6.43 | 2.31 | 0.41 | 0.48 | 0.49 |
| per cent inquiries queuing = 3.00 minutes | 78 | 70 | 67 | 90 | 94 | 90 |
| Average time spent on calls in minutes | 4.2 | 3.23 | 3.05 | 3.08 | 3.35 | 3.48 |
| Per cent written inquiries finalised in five days | 87 | 93 | 95 | 97 | 93 | See note 2 |
| (b) Cost | | | | | | |
| Average cost per phone inquiry | \$2.65 | \$4.35 | \$2.62 | \$3.64 | <u>\$2.87</u> | |

Comments on Table 2

Commonwealth

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.

In Queensland, Commonwealth timeliness statistics are available for the Wageline service covering the greater Brisbane area. This service is estimated to handle approximately 60 per cent of the inquiries workload and is considered a suitable indicator for the whole of the State. Systems are currently being evaluated to discern federal from State inquiries in regional centres.

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

New South Wales

It is important to note also that there is a 2 minute 45 second recorded message containing valuable information when clients call the service. This recorded message answers some queries of callers, and some callers just ring to listen to the message.

During the 1999/00 financial year there was a recruitment freeze imposed on the department affecting recruitment and staffing levels. This impacted on the queue forcing clients to wait longer to get an officer.

The Sydney Office was closed for a week and a half for refurbishment that also impacted on client service delivery.

Queensland

State statistics under all headings relate to all 20 offices in Queensland for the first time in this benchmarking process.

South Australia

Counter inquiries and written inquiries data was not available from two of the four regional offices.

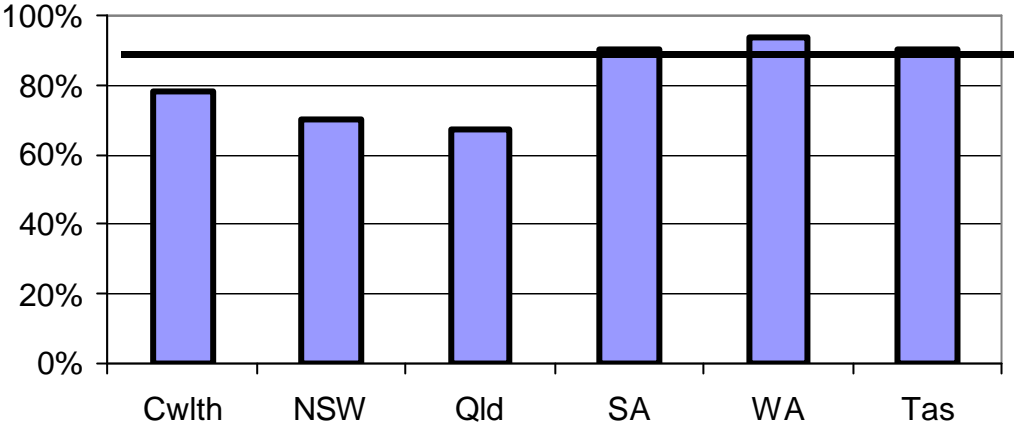
Western Australia

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

Tasmania

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

Figure 2: Percentage of inquiries queuing 3 minutes or less



Summary of Figure 2

Queuing times averaged between 41 seconds and 3.08 minutes. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 90 per cent of clients queuing 3 minutes or less (represented by the black line). South Australia, Western Australia 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.

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

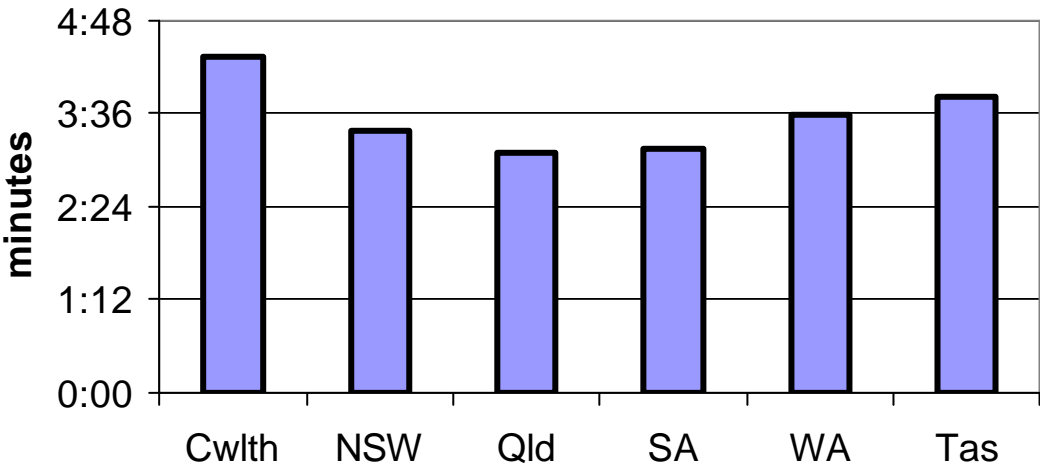
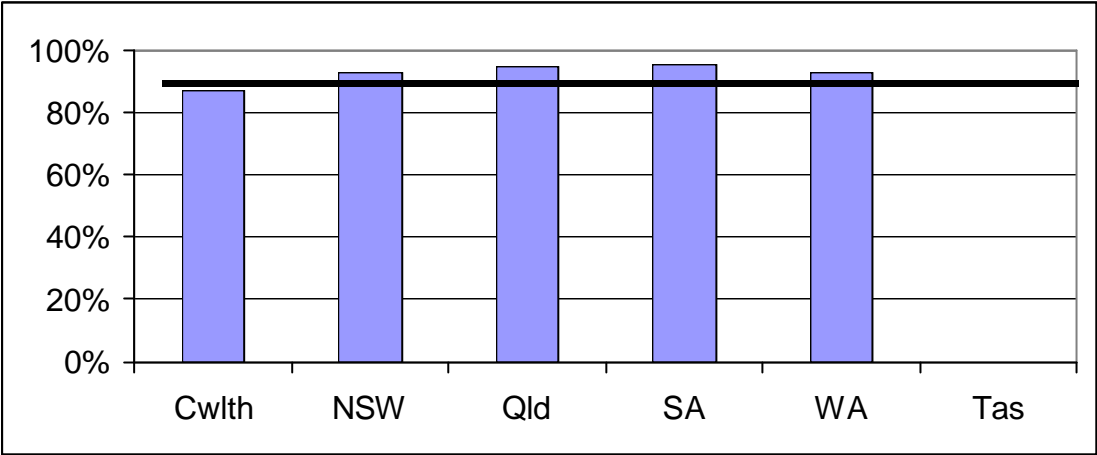


Figure 4: Percentage of requests finalised as written inquiries in five working days



Summary of Figures 3 & 4

On average, advisers spent between 3.05 minutes and 4.20 minutes per inquiry. Turnaround times for written inquiries ranged from 87 to 97 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). Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia 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’ 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 \$2.52 and \$4.35.

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

Costs have been calculated to include the salaries of staff plus 15% on costs as agreed by the working party. However they do not include the costs of motor vehicles, 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.

Table 3: Client survey results - inquiry services* 1999-2000

| Question | Cwth (per cent) | NSW (per cent) | Qld (per cent) | SA (per cent) | WA (per cent) | Tas (per cent) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Q1 Knowledge increased | | | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 38 | 67 | 37 | 19 | 30 | 59 |
| Agree | 53 | 28 | 57 | 63 | 47 | 39 |
| Undecided | 6 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 8 | 2 |
| Disagree | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Q2 Easy to understand | | | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 51 | 61 | 47 | 28 | 48 | 53 |
| Agree | 47 | 37 | 46 | 67 | 40 | 45 |
| Undecided | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Q3 Staff were professional | | | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 64 | 72 | 49 | 43 | 55 | 63 |
| Agree | 36 | 28 | 49 | 51 | 35 | 34 |
| Undecided | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

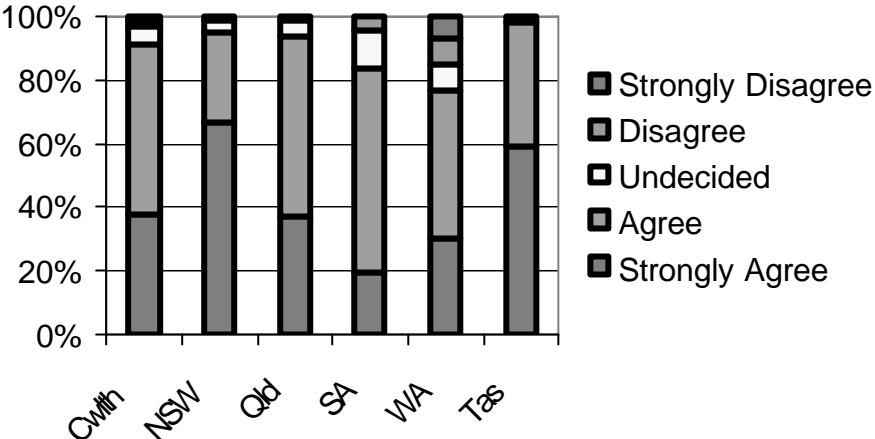
* Not all percentages add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Comments on Table 3

South Australia

Surveys were carried out in August 1999. Responses were received from 280 customers of the Workplace Information Service (WIS).

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 77 per cent and 98 per cent of those surveyed indicated a positive response, with between 19 per cent and 67 per cent strongly agreeing that the information provided increased their awareness of the issues raised.

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

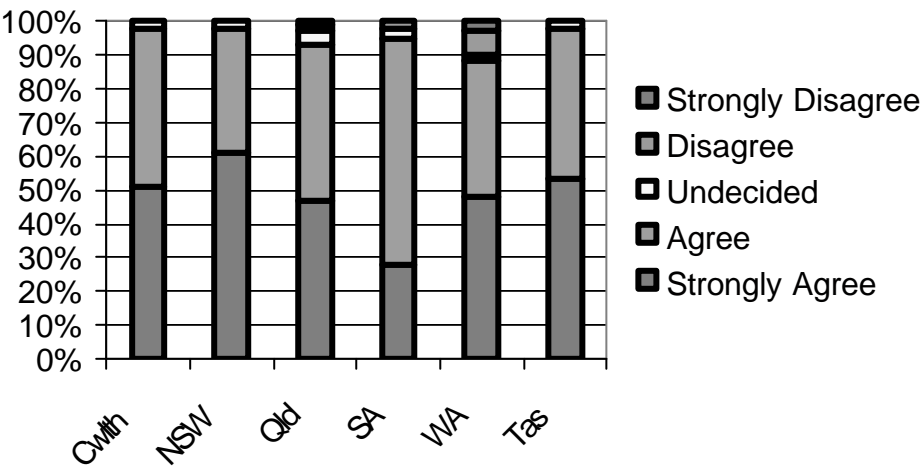
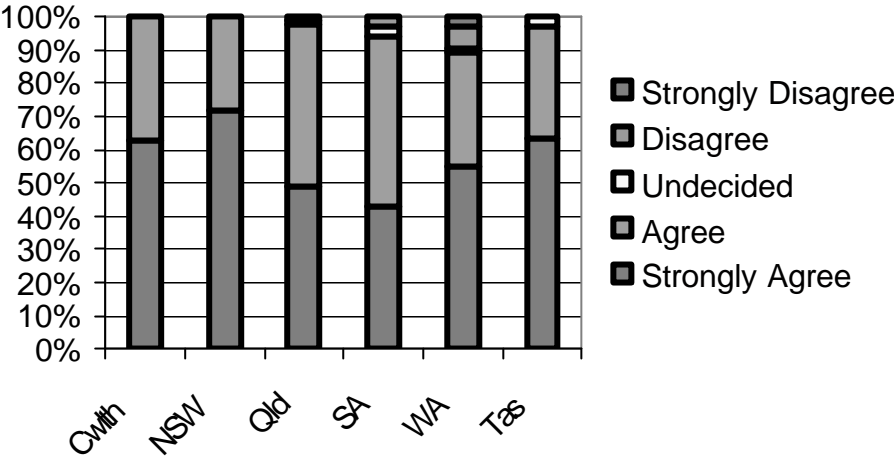


Figure 8: Client feedback on the professionalism of operators



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 98 per cent of survey respondents provided a positive response to the first question and Figure 8 shows that between 90 per cent and 100 per cent of respondents answered positively to the second.

Compliance Performance

Table 4: Compliance Workload 1999-2000

| | Cwth | NSW | Qld | SA | WA | Tas |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------|------|-----|-----|
| Workload | | | | | | |
| (a) Claims | | | | | | |
| Outstanding at the start of the period (SOP) | | 798 ¹ | 0 | | 260 | 64 |
| New claims | | 4672 | 8246 | | 639 | 693 |
| Not proceeded with/finalised as a claim | | see note 1 | | | 140 | 136 |
| Voluntary compliance | | 2060 | | | 0 | 82 |
| Claims on hand at the end of the period (EOP) (awaiting action/work in progress) | | 793 | 0 | | 94 | 47 |
| Cases to be dealt with | | 2617 | 8246 | | 665 | 492 |
| (b) Cases | | | | | | |
| Outstanding at start of the period (SOP) | 1576 | 757 | 1938 | 235 | 260 | 81 |
| New Cases | 5632 | 2617 | 8246 | 1238 | 665 | 492 |
| Total Cases to be dealt with | 7208 ¹ | 3374 | 10184 | 1473 | 925 | 573 |
| Cases Finalised | | | | | | |
| (a) Not proceeded with | | | | | | |
| Total not proceeded with | 614 | see note 2 | 1612 | 141 | 168 | 60 |
| (b) Sustained | | | | | | |
| Jurisdictional litigation | 5 | 484 | 332 | 1 | 14 | 30 |
| Employee litigation | 308 | see note 1 | 0 | 167 | 0 | 0 |
| Penalty Notice issued | | 72 ³ | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary compliance | 2907 | 2287 ² | 5364 | 665 | 467 | 354 |
| Total sustained | 3220 | 2771 ² | 5696 | 835 | 481 | 384 |
| (c) Not sustained | | | | | | |
| Total not sustained | 1722 | see note 1 | 852 | 180 | 182 | 45 |
| (d) Cases finalised | | | | | | |
| Total cases finalised (NSW includes claims) | 5556 | 4831 | 8160 | 1156 | 831 | 489 |
| Cases on hand at End of Period (EOP) | | | | | | |
| Total cases on hand EOP | 1652 | 603 | 2024 | 317 | 94 | 84 |

Comments on Table 4

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. This period is 28 days in New South Wales and Tasmania and 21 days in Western Australia. This explains why the Commonwealth, Queensland and South Australia do not have any entries in part (a) under Workload of the above table

Commonwealth

1. Does not include targeted activity.

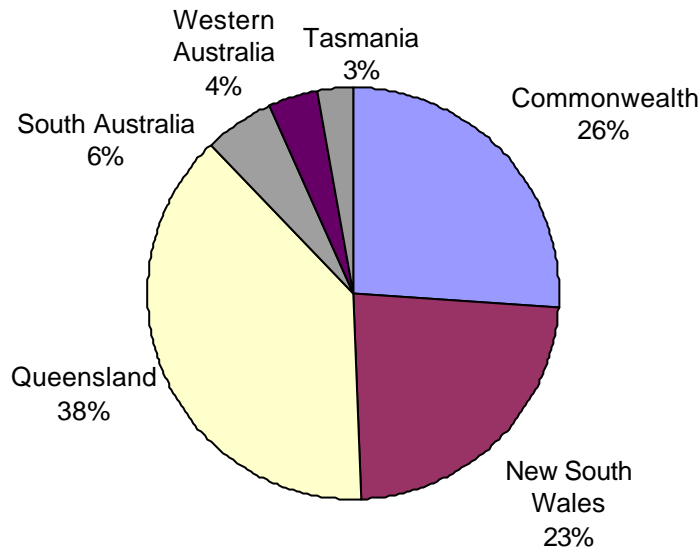
New South Wales

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' is included with the figures provided for 'voluntary compliance', and hence 'total sustained'. See note 1 concerning difficulties in 'separating' such data currently.
3. The figure provided for penalty notices issued is not equivalent to 72 cases resolved by this means (in addition to the other totals provided) ie voluntary compliance and monies recovered may still in some instances result in a penalty notice being issued to the employer for breaches identified.

Queensland

State statistics under all headings relate to all 20 offices in Queensland for the first time in this benchmarking process.

Figure 9: Total compliance workload



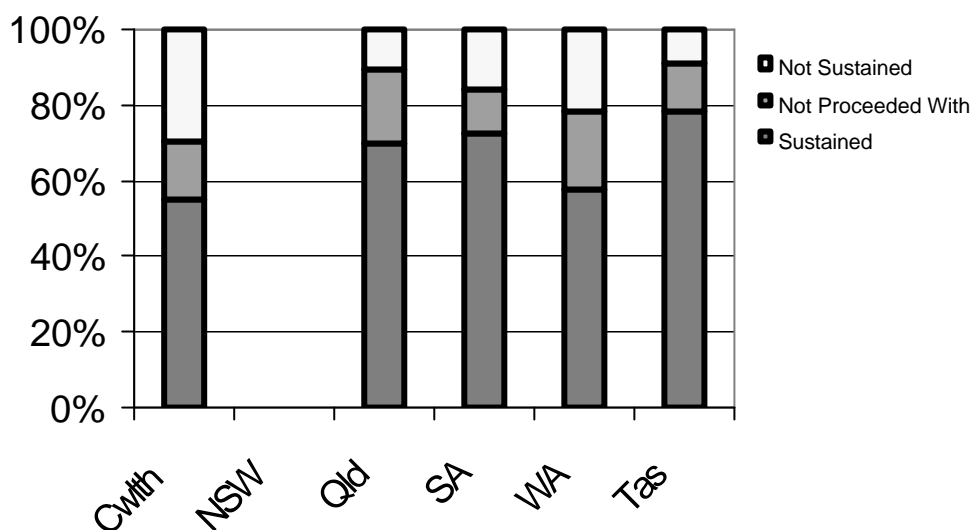
Summary of Figure 9

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 26 899 claims/cases dealt with in the period. This includes both matters finalised and matters 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 2 853 and 169 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.

In Western Australia a 21 day compliance period has operated since November 1999. WA dealt with 140 claims in 1999/2000.

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 ranged from 57 to 78 per cent.

As noted previously, New South Wales and Tasmania have a 28-day voluntary compliance period prior to allocating a claim to an inspector. Western Australia has a 21 day voluntary compliance period.

Comments on Figure 10

Commonwealth

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

New South Wales

The NSW Department of Industrial Relations continues the implementation of a new information technology platform and database for compliance management and reporting. The Compliance Information Management System (CIMS), when completed, will allow innovative reporting functionality and allow more definitive analysis and provision of information for identified benchmarking measures. Data currently available is reliant on other reporting systems.

Table 5: Compliance Service Costs & Performance Information 1999-2000

| | Cwth | NSW | Qld | SA | WA | Tas |
|--|-------------|------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Compliance service costs | | | | | | |
| Total Full-time Equivalents (FTE) | See note | 62 ¹ | 80 | 20 | 20.75 | |
| Total salary and on costs (less super) | \$3081011 | \$3003579 ¹ | \$4574157 | \$986364 | \$1045686 | |
| Performance information | | | | | | |
| (a) Timeliness | | | | | | |
| Average time to finalise a case (months) | 4.1 | 5 ² | 2.2 | 2.42 | 3.7 | |
| Per cent finalised in 90 days of commencement of investigation | 74% | 42.6% ² | 77% | 71% | 61% | |
| (b) Cost | | | | | | |
| Average cost per case finalised | \$587 | See note 1 | \$561 | \$846 | <u>\$1011</u> | |

Comments on Table 5

Commonwealth

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.

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 e.g. 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

Costs have been calculated to include the salaries of staff plus 15% on costs as agreed by the working party. However they do not include the costs of motor vehicles, 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

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

Figure 11: Average time in months to finalise a case

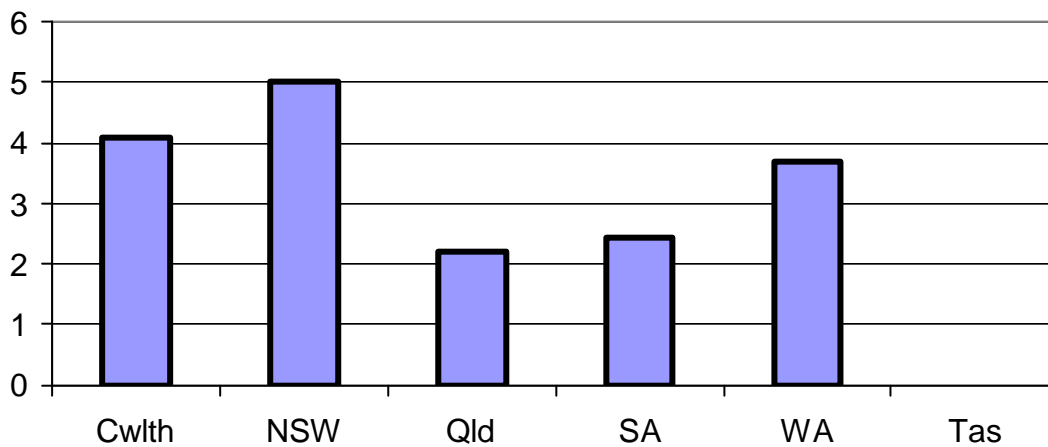
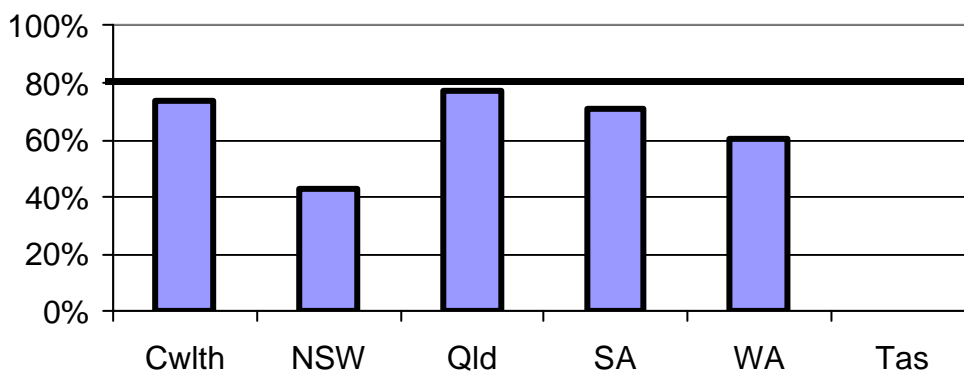


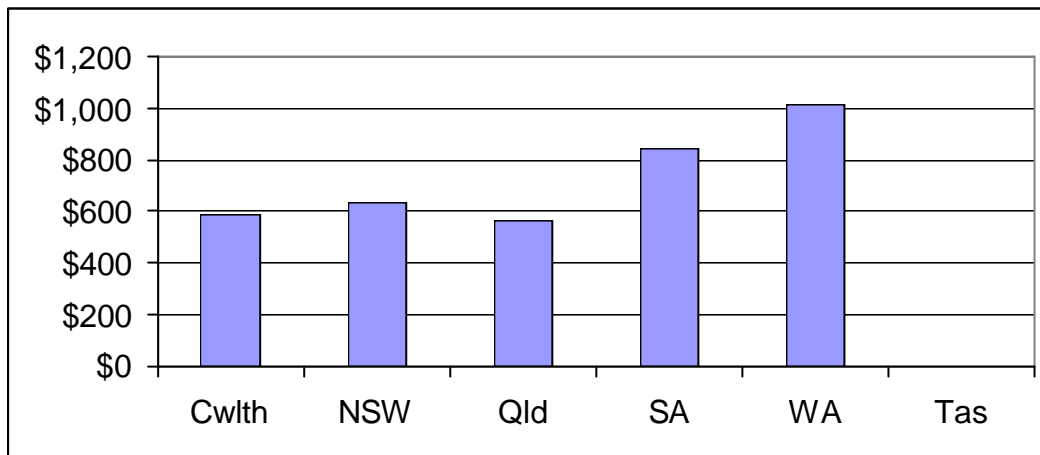
Figure 12: Percentage of cases finalised in 90 days from commencement of investigation



Summary of Figures 11 and 12

The average time in months to finalise a case ranged between 2.2 months and 3.7 months. The percentage of cases finalised in 90 days ranged from 43 to 77 per cent. Jurisdictions have agreed to a benchmark of 80 per cent of cases being finalised within 90 days of commencement of the investigation (represented by the black line). No jurisdiction met the benchmark.

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 per case finalised ranged between \$561 and \$1011.

Comments on Figure 13

Queensland

Costs have been calculated to include the salaries of staff plus 15% on costs as agreed by the working party. However they do not include the costs of motor vehicles, 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.

Table 6: Client Survey Results - Compliance Services* 1999-2000

| Questions | Cwlth (per cent) | NSW (per cent) | Qld (per cent) | SA (per cent) | WA (per cent) | Tas (per cent) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Q1 - Staff were professional | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 31 | | 59 | 32 | 33 | |
| Agree | 60 | | 36 | 46 | 47 | |
| Undecided | 8 | | 2 | 10 | 5 | |
| Disagree | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 5 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | | 2 | 5 | 9 | |
| Q2 - Information was relevant | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 29 | | 55 | 32 | 35 | |
| Agree | 56 | | 40 | 47 | 48 | |
| Undecided | 11 | | 3 | 12 | 8 | |
| Disagree | 4 | | 1 | 5 | 6 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | |
| Q3 - Information was timely | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 27 | | 57 | 22 | 35 | |
| Agree | 53 | | 37 | 47 | 41 | |
| Undecided | 12 | | 3 | 7 | 6 | |
| Disagree | 7 | | 2 | 9 | 11 | |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | | 1 | 9 | 7 | |

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

Comments on Table 6

New South Wales

Note 1: Due to a restructure after a substantial budget cut in April 2000, the NSW Department of Industrial Relations did not conduct the planned customer survey. This will now be considered in the 2001-2002 financial year.

South Australia

Surveys were carried out in August 1999. Responses were received from 138 employees or employers who were the subject of investigations about wages and other employee entitlements.

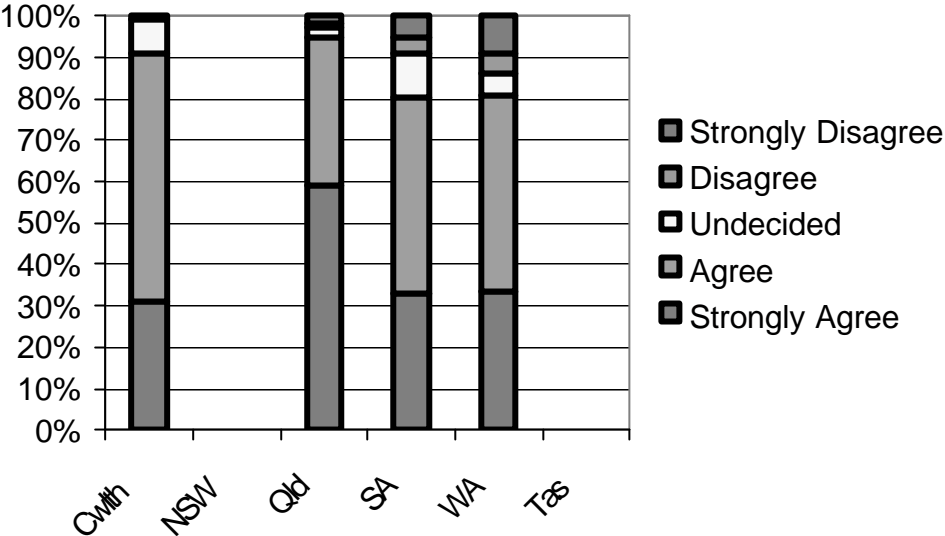
Tasmania

The client survey will be conducted annually by an agreed method.

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.

Figure 14: Client feedback on the professionalism of staff



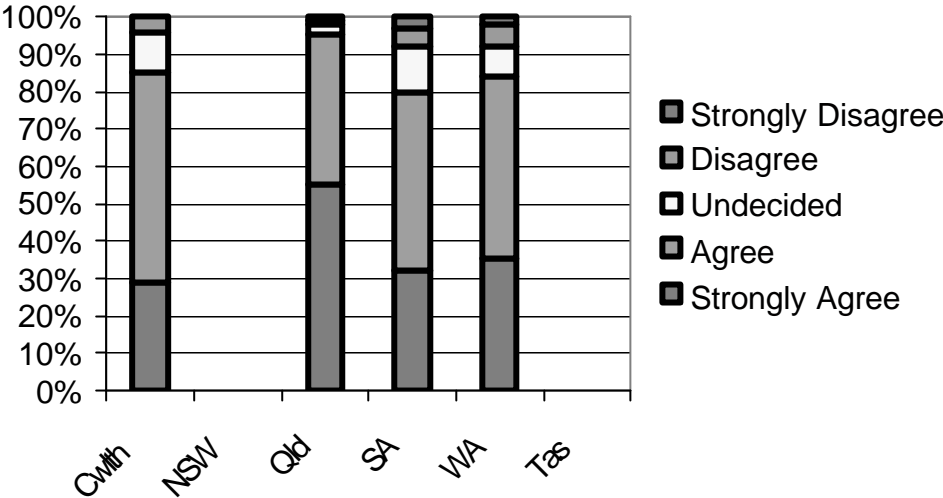
Summary of Figure 14

Clients were asked if staff handled the matter professionally. Between 78 per cent and 95 per cent of callers responded positively, and between 31 per cent and 59 per cent indicated strong satisfaction with the conduct of staff.

New South Wales

See note 1 Table 6.

Figure 15: Client feedback on the relevance of the information



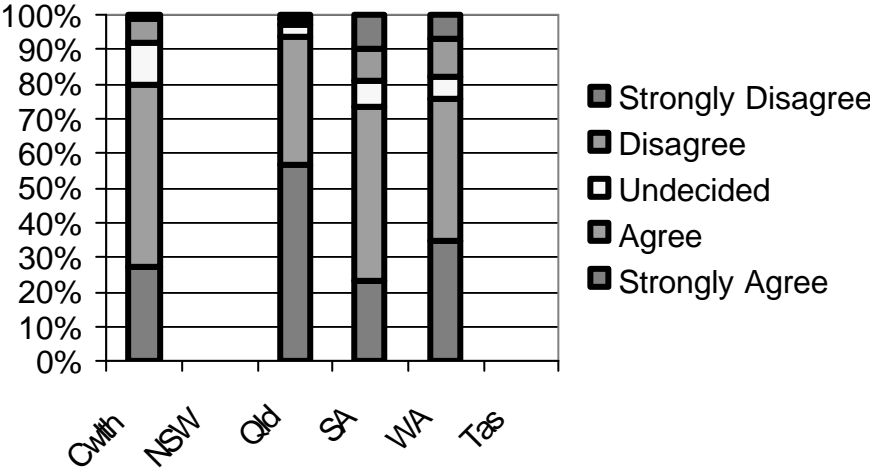
Summary of Figure 15

The survey asked clients if the information provided by departmental staff was relevant. Between 79 percent and 95 per cent of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement.

New South Wales

See note 1 Table 6

Figure 16: Client feedback on the timeliness of the information



Summary of Figure 16

Between 69 per cent and 94 per cent of respondents considered that the information was provided in a timely and efficient manner.

New South Wales

See note 1 Table 6

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 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. |