



Australian Government

Comcare

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STATEMENT OF INTENT – December 2021

This statement sets out my intentions as the Chief Executive Officer of Comcare of how Comcare will meet the expectations outlined by the Attorney-General (Minister) under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations of 21 October 2021.

Overview

I acknowledge my responsibility as the Chief Executive Officer of Comcare as the national health and safety regulator, scheme administrator, insurer and claims manager to promote and enable safe and healthy work. Comcare does this through:

- Excellence in service provision
- Engagement with stakeholders
- Promotion of prevention and early intervention
- Insight driven and evidence based practice
- Being adaptive to and sustainable in the face of change.

I appreciate the Government's recognition and respect for the independence of the Chief Executive Officer. In exercising Comcare's functions and powers under the WHS Act and the SRC Act, I am assisted by the Comcare Executive, staff and other experts engaged from time to time.

Comcare will conduct and exercise its regulatory and administrative functions in good faith, to the best of its ability in ways that are consistent with the Government's approach to regulation and the deregulation agenda.

Principles of regulator best practice

Comcare acknowledges the principles of regulator best practice and performance set out in the Regulator Performance Guide 2021 and will undertake its regulatory activities consistent with this guide.

As the regulator for work health and safety under the WHS Act and rehabilitation under the SRC Act, Comcare will continue to fulfill its role independently and transparently. Comcare will work to continually improve its regulatory processes and to build trust with stakeholders. Comcare will actively collaborate and engage with stakeholders around injury prevention, early intervention, injury recovery, return to work and workplace health and safety regulation to promote and enable safe and healthy work. In line with these priorities, Comcare will:

- Adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving its performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings by:
 - engaging with stakeholders to achieve improved work health and safety outcomes as a result of its regulatory activities
 - continuing to actively engage with rehabilitation authorities and workplace rehabilitation providers to ensure that rehabilitation roles and obligations are understood and are performed effectively
 - continually improving its regulatory frameworks, in collaboration with its stakeholders, to drive improved outcomes and to reduce regulatory burden.
- Manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leveraging data and digital technology to support those Comcare regulates to comply and improve performance by:
 - using data, evidence, intelligence and risk analysis to inform and proportionately target its engagement and regulatory activity
 - ensuring that regulatory activities are conducted in accordance with endorsed policies and procedures.
- Be a transparent and responsive communicator and implement regulations in a modern and collaborative way by:
 - ensuring that its interactions with regulated entities and other stakeholders are open, transparent and consistent
 - innovating its regulation and engagement, including continuing digital forums, education and training, and effective monitoring such as through the real time monitoring through the workplace rehabilitation provider portal
 - engaging with the Regulator Leadership Cohort.

Innovation and regulatory change

Comcare is a flexible and adaptive agency, always open to new ideas and new ways of doing things. Comcare considers the broader environment and is proactive in dealing with its impacts. Comcare aims to encourage innovation in the development of sustainable solutions to health and safety issues and endeavours to use the latest tools, data and technology to develop new solutions to problems.

The Government's policy priorities and objectives

Deregulation Agenda

Comcare acknowledges that the Government is committed to supporting economic recovery by making it easier for businesses to grow and create jobs. In support of this commitment, Comcare will:

- apply the Regulator Performance Guide July 2021 to its regulatory functions to assess and improve its performance and engagement with stakeholders
- act in accordance with regulatory best practice in its decision making to maximise transparency and minimise compliance costs
- adopt a risk-based approach to compliance, engagement and enforcement allowing for proportionate approaches suited to the risk of regulated entities
- seek to balance the effort of complying with the outcomes and benefits of regulation.

Comcare has integrated regulator performance outcomes into its Corporate Plan and will report on its performance against the outcomes publicly in its Annual Report.

Relationship with Minister and portfolio

Comcare acknowledges the role of the Attorney-General's Department (the Department) as the primary source of advice on policy development and the performance of the portfolio's regulatory systems, and looks forward to being kept informed of the Government's policy direction. Comcare will maintain its collaborative working relationship with the Minister and the Department on significant issues to strengthen work health and safety and workers' compensation schemes.

Comcare appreciates that the Minister and the Department take into account the knowledge and expertise of Comcare when considering changes to policy and legislation that impact on work health and safety and workers' compensation.