

## PROJECT SUMMARY

- Three-year exploratory research partnership.
- Investigated trends in a comprehensive Comcare scheme data set.
- Sought to understand injuries and illnesses of employees within the Comcare scheme compared to the Australian population.
- Findings enabled Comcare to improve its data maturity and understanding of health service utilisation.

## THE DATA



30 year period (1989-90 to 2018-19)

- **Comcare scheme**
  - > Deidentified claims data from the commencement of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (SRC Act).
  - > All claims lodged – not limited to accepted claims.
- **Australian general population health data**

## TIMELINE

2020



**SCOPING PAPER:**  
An overview of Comcare scheme data and metadata



**REPORT ONE:**  
Australian Government and Licensee claims data analysis

2021



**REPORT TWO:**  
Workers' compensation, chronic pain and drugs of concern in the National Hospital Morbidity Database

2022

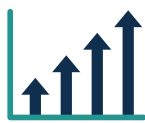


**REPORT THREE:**  
Comparative analysis of costs for services between Comcare and Medicare



**REPORT FOUR:**  
Patterns of treatment service utilisation for mental diseases

# KEY FINDINGS



## Long-term trends

There is a strong reduction in acute physical injuries for the Australian Government sector over the last 30 years, while remaining steady for Licensees.



Mental health and musculoskeletal injuries are key areas of focus for prevention and education initiatives as they make up an increasing proportion of all injuries across both the Australian Government and Licensee sectors.

The number of psychological claims for the Australian Government has risen significantly over the last 30 years, with a slight increase also seen amongst Licensees over the past 10 years.



## Service provision

Median provider costs within the Comcare scheme are comparable to those paid under the Medicare Benefits Schedule, however Comcare see a wider variation in costs, and Licensee costs are generally higher than those for the Australian Government claims.



There was a steady increase in workers' compensation funded hospitalisation relating to the use of drugs of concern in the 5 years from 2013-14 to 2018-19, almost two-thirds of which were for alcohol, suggesting a need for further holistic health and wellbeing support for employees with an injury or illness.

Length of stay in hospital for workers' compensation funded treatment was generally shorter than non-workers' compensation hospital stays, including for injury and poisoning and musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases. However, the average length of stay was longer for typical work-related mental and behavioural conditions.



## Mental health

The combinations and patterns of service use for mental health conditions in the Comcare scheme appear to follow better practice guidelines, including General Practitioners, Psychologist, Psychiatrists and pharmaceuticals.

Treatment within the Comcare scheme was characterised by consistent GP service use and lower levels of pharmaceuticals compared with the comparison groups in the public health system.



For people with a mental health condition, the Comcare scheme provides more treatment services per person, at a higher cost, but over a much shorter duration, compared with people seeking support for similar conditions via Medicare.

## Insights



Comcare efficiently provides a high level of care for injured workers across the scheme.

Mental health and musculoskeletal conditions are increasingly important features of the scheme and should remain key focus areas for prevention and early intervention.

**Comcare will continue its efforts to target high risk groups by promoting early intervention and education activities.**

