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Australian Government
Comcare

INSPECTOR REPORT

COMCARE REFERENCE NUMBER	MC00043232
PCBU DETAILS	Name: Services Australia ABN: 90 794 605 008
REPORT ISSUED TO	Name: s 47F Position: Assistant Director WHS Delivery Team

BACKGROUND

1. On 14 July 2026 Comcare received information regarding a work health and safety concern. The WHS concern alleged ongoing systemic psychosocial hazards and a failure of the internal grievance process at a Services Australia workplace.

2. Comcare commenced an inspection in relation to this matter on 29 July 2026 to monitor and enforce compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) **(WHS Act)** and the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth) **(WHS Regulations).**

3. The scope of the inspection was to:

    a. Determine the circumstances and nature of the WHS concern received.

    b. Determine systems of work policies/procedures in place for reporting complaints/ hazards, psychosocial risk management, as well as mechanisms available for internal grievances and management of conflicts of interest.

4. I acknowledge that Services Australia participated in Comcare's Psychosocial Inspection Program and was issued with a closure report on 15 July 2026. This inspection has been undertaken as a separate regulatory activity and is independent of that program.

OUTCOMES

5. Based on the information reviewed during the inspection, I did not identify any non-compliance with the WHS Act/WHS Regulations with respect to the scope of the inspection.

Information and advice

6. Services Australia must ensure risks to health and safety are eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable, or if not reasonably practicable to do so, are minimised so far as reasonably practicable: s 17 of the WHS Act. Services Australia should have regard to Part 3.1 of the WHS Regulations and the *Code of Practice: How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks* when managing risks to health and safety. The PCBU must monitor and

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maintain control measures, particularly any interim controls, to ensure that they remain in use and effective.

7. In relation to this matter Services Australia should consider:

    a. Strengthening and promoting the reporting of incidents of customer violence and aggression, to improve the identification of trends and the assessment of the cumulative psychological impacts on workers. This will support the ongoing identification, assessment, implementation, and review of appropriate control measures to manage psychosocial risks (refer to observations made in paragraph 22 of this report).

    b. Mandating psychosocial hazard training to increase capability, awareness and understanding throughout the agency (refer to observations made in paragraph 21 of this report).

8. Learnings regarding control measures as a result of the inspection should be applied across the organisation where applicable.

9. The inspection is now closed however should an incident of a similar nature occur anywhere within the organisation in the future, Comcare will seek to confirm that Services Australia has ensured the control measures are effective and are maintained so that they remain effective.

10. Comcare draws the Services Australia's attention to their duties to consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers and HSRs on work health and safety matters. Comcare encourages PCBUs to share inspector reports, or to provide access to relevant content or information regarding hazards and associated risks, with their workers, including HSRs. PCBUs must, so far as is reasonably practicable, 'consult with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a matter relating to work health or safety' (s 47).

11. Compliance with this duty may be assisted by sharing health and safety information from inspector reports with relevant workers and/or their representatives. Services Australia should also note that HSRs are empowered to receive information relevant to their work groups, and that as a function of their role, may request access to inspector reports, or relevant information within them. Comcare encourages PCBUs to have regard to their consultation duties, and to their obligations to HSRs under the WHS Act when responding to such requests (see ss 49, 70(1)(a), 70(1)(c), 71 and 79(3)).

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

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12. On 8 September 2026, I conducted announced inspections with another inspector at three (3) Services Australia Service Centres **(the workplaces)**. The workplaces included:

    a. Casuarina Service Centre located at 50 Bradshaw Terrace, Casuarina NT 0810,

    b. Darwin Service Centre located at 24 Knuckey street, Darwin NT 0800, and;

    c. Palmerston Service Centre located at 1 Palmerston Circuit, Palmerston NT 0830.

13. I was provided a list of HSR's for each workplace prior to undertaking the site inspections. I undertook actions to make the relevant Health and Safety Representative/s **(HSR's)** aware of my attendance at the workplace to afford the opportunity to engage in the inspection process. I was accompanied by the relevant HSR/s at all three (3) workplaces.

14. Services Australia voluntarily provided a range of documentation and information to assist with the conduct of the inspection.

15. Inspectors conducted onsite discussions with management, workers and HSR's to obtain information regarding the implementation, application and effectiveness of workplace systems and processes for incident and hazard reporting, and psychosocial risk management, including workers understanding of and engagement with these processes in practice.

16. Workplace Health and Safety information boards were prominently displayed at all 3 workplaces, providing the names of relevant HSR's and information regarding the Employee Assistance Program **(EAP)**.

17. Incident reporting systems relating to psychosocial hazards, complaints and incidents

    a. All employees have access to a WHS electronic reporting system '*Our Safety*' to report hazards, incidents and injuries. The reporter must select from a category of incident with the relevant descriptor form a drop-down list, which includes psychosocial hazards, psychosocial mechanism or injury or incident. Each entry automatically workflows through to the employee's line manager for review.

    b. Records relating to bullying or harassment are managed as confidential matters and are locked as confidential within the system. These matters are referred through established workflows to the WHS Delivery Team and the HR specialist RESPECT Team for review and action. Where a complaint involves an employee's immediate line manager, alternative reporting and escalation pathways are available to ensure the matter is managed independently and without any actual or perceived conflict of interest, including direct referral to the RESPECT Team for assessment and action.

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c. Employees can also make reports to the RESPECT Team via email, telephone, or by submitting a staff complaint form available on the intranet.

18. Agency response to psychosocial hazard reports, complaints and incidents

    a. In the first instance line managers complete a review and preliminary incident analysis in *Our Safety*. The intranet page 'manage workplace injuries, incidents and WHS activities' provide information and resources for managers on how to complete a manager review in Our Safety.

    b. In relation to psychosocial incidents or complaints the WHS delivery team will conduct an initial review of the report and determine the appropriate agency response depending on the complexity of the matter. Which includes early resolution or mediation is the first instance. If the matter is complex, the internal conduct and standards team may conduct an investigation. Additionally, where appropriate referral outside the agency for investigation or mediation can occur.

    c. The RESPECT team are trained to respond in a trauma informed and timely way. Procedural fairness is maintained by informing affected parties of concerns, giving them an opportunity to respond, considering information impartially, maintaining confidentiality, and communicating outcomes, relevant actions, and review options where appropriate. In the event of mediation or resolution process a support person can be made available to the affected worker.

19. Services Australia provides a range of support mechanisms and resources to workers. The staff distress support page on the intranet provides information on **EAP,** Harassment Contact Officers **(HCOs),** Health and Safety Representatives **(HSRs),** Mental Health First Aid Officers **(MHFAOs),** and an internal Diversity and Inclusion Team.

    a. The RESPECT team is available for all employees who may be experiencing inappropriate workplace behaviours. The team provides support, information and referral to relevant resources and support services available. Whilst assisting to identify the most appropriate resolution pathway.

    b. Discussions with managers, workers and HSR's indicated;

        i. An awareness of the available safety reporting mechanisms and the processes for reporting workplace health and safety concerns. While workers generally understood the formal reporting pathways, some indicated they would seek assistance from their manager to submit a report. Most workers were also aware of the support services and resources available within the agency, including options to seek support or raise concerns through the RESPECT Team, including anonymously.

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However, a small number of workers were not aware of the role and function of the RESPECT Team.

ii. Managers and supervisors advised that they have access to adequate resources and information to support the reporting and management review of workplace issues. They noted that additional guidance and assistance are available through the WHS and HR teams, with relevant resources readily accessible via the intranet.

20. Psychosocial Risk Management

a. Services Australia have a Psychosocial Enterprise Risk Register, and each service centre has a Site Risk Management Plan **(SRMP).**

b. SRMPs are developed using the *Our Safety* system, which includes an agency-wide risk control library. The library provides a range of established controls to support the development, assessment, and implementation of suitable risk controls within SRMPs.

c. SRMPs are reviewed in consultation with workers and are updated following incidents or complaints, workplace changes, the identification of new hazard information, evidence that existing controls are ineffective, or at least annually in accordance with organisational requirements.

d. The Psychosocial Safety Page and WHS Risk Management Playbook establish the agency's framework for the identification, assessment, control, monitoring, and review of psychosocial hazards and risks. These resources provide guidance to support a systematic risk management approach, including the implementation of control measures and the ongoing evaluation of their effectiveness in consultation with workers.

21. Information, Training and Instruction

a. Service Australia provide employees access to a range of resources and training to support their knowledge and understanding of psychosocial hazards through a combination of mandatory training, resources and information sessions.

i. Mandatory induction program, and annual mandatory refresher program via the internal Learning Management system **(LMS),** includes content on psychosocial safety and how to report incidents and hazards.

b. Other discretionary resources and information sessions are available to support building capability and knowledge of psychosocial hazards;

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i. Our Safety – Resources Intranet page providing resources such as Report a Workplace Injury, Illness, Hazard or Incident, Report Injury or Harm from Bullying and Harassment and links to instructional videos and guides.

ii. Our Safety managers resources including; Manage Workplace Injuries, Incidents, and WHS Activities Intranet home page, Review and Respond to Our Safety Incident Reports of Injury, Illness or Harm Intranet page.

iii. Services Australia Psychosocial Safety Intranet page.

iv. Monthly WHS masterclasses covering various WHS topics for leaders and HSR's.

v. WHS Fundamentals videos on demand accessible through the LMS are 5-minute introductory videos on key WHS topics.

c. Discussions with managers, workers and HSR's indicated;

i. Managers advised that relevant resources, guidance material and information are readily accessible through the intranet, and that WHS masterclasses are available to support capability development. While managers generally considered the information available to be adequate, several indicated that time constraints can limit their ability to access and utilise these resources.

ii. Most workers indicated that they were not aware of any mandatory training in relation to psychosocial hazards. However, noted they are required to complete annual mandatory training but were unaware of completing training specific to psychosocial hazards.

iii. HSR's indicated they had not received training specifically on psychosocial hazards. However, noted that resources and guidance material are available on the intranet and via WHS masterclasses.

d. Services Australia acknowledged that whilst these training packages are not yet mandatory, the agency is progressing all recommendations and continuous improvement from the Comcare Psychosocial Inspection which mandate psychosocial safety training.

22. It was identified that incidents involving customer violence and aggression are primarily recorded against the client's file and are not consistently reported through the organisation's safety reporting system. Workers advised that this is due to time constraints or an understanding that reporting is only required on the client record. As a

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result, the organisation may not have a complete and accurate records of customer violence and aggression incidents, which may limit its ability to identify trends, assess psychosocial risks, and evaluate the cumulative impact of such incidents on workers. This may reduce the effectiveness of hazard identification, risk assessment, and the implementation of appropriate control measures.

23. Based on this assessment I formed a reasonable belief that Services Australia has a system in place for the reporting of complaints/hazards, psychosocial risk management, as well as the mechanisms available to manage conflicts of interest. The inspection is now closed.

REPORT ISSUED BY	Inspector	s 22
	Inspector ID number	311
	Email	s 22
	Phone	s 22
	Date	05/10/2026
	Signature	s 22

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DISCLAIMER

This report contains information that may assist you to take steps regarding your obligations under the WHS Act. You must refer to the Commonwealth *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011* (WHS Regulations) to understand your duties and obligations. Comcare's external website contains links to WHS legislation.

Comcare does not accept liability for any errors or omissions or for any loss or damage suffered by you or any person which arises from your reliance on this report or for any breach by you of your obligations under the WHS Act. Where a Comcare inspector has inspected a particular workplace, it is not a representation by Comcare that the particular workplace is in any way free of hazards.

IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH A DECISION

If you disagree with the outcome of this inspection, you may seek an internal reconsideration of the inspector's decision. A request for a review should be sent to statutory.oversight@comcare.gov.au including any additional information or evidence you have to support your request. Comcare will review your request and advise of the outcome in writing within 20 business days.

If you would like to clarify any aspect of this report, you can contact the inspector directly.

Comcare has a range of publications and fact sheets to help explain your responsibilities and provide guidance to make your workplace safer. The Compliance and Enforcement Policy provides guidance as to how Comcare approaches regulation. To access these, visit our website.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Your privacy is important to us. Comcare will only collect, use or disclose personal information in accordance with the Commonwealth *Privacy Act 1988* and if it is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, one or more of our functions, powers and/or activities. These include functions and activities under the following Commonwealth legislation: *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, the WHS Act, the *Seafarer's Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992*, and the *Asbestos-related Claims (Management of Commonwealth Liabilities) Act 2005*. If Comcare does not collect personal information from you, for the purposes of its legislated functions or related functions, we may not be able to respond appropriately.

Comcare is the Commonwealth agency authorised by the WHS Act to collect personal information relevant to the exercise of functions and powers under the WHS Act, WHS Regulations and the administration and evaluation of Comcare's WHS programmes. Any personal information collected in these forms will be used for those purposes.

In exercising our functions and powers, Comcare may disclose personal information, subject to confidentiality of information provisions under the WHS Act, to the following bodies and agencies, including but not limited to:

- Comcare's internal and external legal advisers
- the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission
- a court or tribunal
- state or territory work health and safety regulatory agencies
- personnel engaged by Comcare to conduct research related activities
- enforcement agencies or bodies
- state and territory Coroners
- Commonwealth, state or territory industry regulators
- any other person assisting Comcare in the performance of its functions or exercise of its powers, including contractors and consultants
- any other person where there is an obligation under law to do so (for example but not limited to, responding to the direction of a court to produce documentation).

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