



COMCARE

REGULATOR STATEMENT OF INTENT – AUGUST 2025

As the Accountable Authority and acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Comcare, I am issuing this statement to set my intentions of how Comcare will meet the expectations outlined by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations dated 13 August 2025.

About Comcare

Comcare is the national work health and safety regulator and workers' compensation authority.

The Comcare scheme provides a system for work health and safety, rehabilitation and workers' compensation for the Australian Government and self-insured licensees.

Comcare's purpose is to **promote and enable safe and healthy work**. Our purpose brings together our organisation and engages our clients and stakeholders around physical and psychological injury prevention, early intervention, injury recovery, return to work, and work health and safety regulation.

Comcare has work health and safety and workplace rehabilitation regulatory functions and responsibilities under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) and *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act). Comcare also has non-regulatory responsibilities under the *Asbestos related Claims of Commonwealth Liabilities) Act 2005*, *Parliamentary Injury Compensation Scheme Instrument 2016* and the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992*.

Our legislated functions and responsibilities, outlined in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations, reflect our core roles as a work health and safety regulator, workers' compensation scheme manager, claims manager and insurer. Education and engagement are key services we offer and deliver to our clients and stakeholders to promote and enable safe and healthy work.

We also have essential enabling functions that inform and support delivery of our core roles and ensure we meet our legislative responsibilities.

Commitment to the government's policy priorities

I acknowledge my responsibility as the acting CEO of Comcare to regulate work health and safety and rehabilitation and will continue to do so independently and transparently, using the range of functions and powers Comcare has under the SRC Act and WHS Act. In exercising these powers, 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 our published Compliance and Enforcement Policy and the Government's policy priorities.

I am committed to working towards Comcare's purpose – to promote and enable safe and healthy work. We are focusing our efforts and investments to deliver against, and make an impact towards, 2 strategic priorities to achieve our purpose; 'prevent work-related injuries' and 'deliver better return to work outcomes'.

The strategic priorities have a focus on psychological injury to respond to the rise in notifications and claims, and to recognise that the nature of work and workplaces is evolving. Our purpose and strategic priorities directly align with the government's commitment to safe workplaces, providing workers the highest level of protection so they return home safely, and supporting recovery and return to health and work after injury or illness.

We have set enabling priorities as drivers to build capability and ensure we can effectively deliver our strategic priorities and the government's policy priorities: 'make data driven decisions', 'uplift leadership, effectiveness and efficiency', and 'deliver client centric services'.

An independent review of Comcare's workers' compensation scheme and the SRC Act commenced in 2024 to identify potential reforms to improve outcomes for injured employees and ensure the Comcare scheme has the flexibility to respond to new and emerging workplace practices. We are supportive of modernising and futureproofing the scheme and will proactively engage with the outcomes of the review and continue to provide our expertise and knowledge to support the process.

We will continue to support our jurisdiction to understand and comply with changes that might arise from implementation of agreed recommendations from the review of model work health and safety laws, with further changes to improve incident notification provisions in the model WHS laws expected.

Relationships with stakeholders

Relationships with our clients and stakeholders are essential to achieving our purpose.

Employees and employers are our key clients at the centre of our scheme, strategy and operations. We engage, collaborate and partner with a wide range of stakeholders, including employee representatives, at strategic and operational levels to promote and enable safe and healthy work.

For some clients and stakeholders, Comcare may have just one role and relationship. For others there can be multiple roles and relationships at various levels. These could range from WHS regulation, workers' compensation, information, guidance and education, through to strategic partnership, influence and support to promote and enable safe and healthy work.

Organisational matters

Comcare aims for excellence in its governance, to promote public trust and confidence focused on two key requirements: performance and conformance. Comcare's leadership, including myself as the accountable authority, play an important role in ensuring good governance practices are embedded throughout the organisation and how we work.

Comcare's governance framework aligns with the legislative requirements that apply to Commonwealth entities and companies under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule) and Comcare's functions and powers under the SRC Act, WHS Act and other enabling legislation.

The governance framework components cover strategy and direction, performance monitoring, oversight and engagement, and accountability and assurance, including risk management.

Our people are committed to upholding the APS values, employment principles, code of conduct and our own organisational values when representing Comcare in connection to their work.

Regulator principles of best practice

I acknowledge the principles of regulator best practice and performance requirements set out in the Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide 128, and the expectation to embed these and strive for continuous improvement. I am committed to upholding and embedding the principles through Comcare's organisational strategies and regulatory operations, where our approach may cross over more than one of the regulator principles of best practice.

Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust

Comcare is committed to ensuring a whole-of-system perspective through its regulatory operations and decision making, continuously improving its performance, capability, and culture to build and maintain trust and confidence with all stakeholders in its regulatory settings. For example, Comcare:

- Takes a prevention-led regulatory approach to WHS and aims to make workplaces safer and healthier by preventing harm, supporting early intervention, encouraging adoption with better practice guidance and ensuring effective compliance with the WHS legislative framework.
- Publishes a Compliance and Enforcement Policy that sets out its approach to its regulatory functions and powers associated with regulating work health and safety and rehabilitation providers under the WHS Act and SRC Act.
- Publishes a Cost Recovery Implementation Statement annually providing transparency about how Comcare cost recovers activities and functions for self-insured licensees.
- Has an organisational value of 'earning and strengthening trust' that is foundational to the way the Agency operates and delivers towards its purpose and priorities.

Principle 2: Risk based and data driven

Comcare will manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leverage data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow. For example, Comcare:

- Identifies regulatory priorities using a risk-based and evidence-led approach, including the review and analysis of regulatory data and consideration of Comcare's prevention initiatives and the priorities within the [Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023–2033](#).
- Delivers on regulatory priorities through proactive programs of work.
- Uses regulatory programs and specialist teams to target high-risk, complex WHS matters across the jurisdiction to ensure greater compliance, consistency in approach and sharing of best practice. This includes the established Psychosocial Regulation team.

Principle 3: Collaboration and engagement

Comcare will be open, transparent and responsive in its communications with stakeholders, including regulated entities, implementing regulation in a modern and collaborative way. For example, Comcare:

- Is a member and the current Chair of the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) which is made up of representatives from work health and safety regulators across Australia and New Zealand. Comcare is also a member of the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA). This body is made up of representatives of workers' compensation authorities from across Australia and New Zealand. HWSA and HWCA are separate bodies that work together to promote and implement best practice in WHS and workers' compensation in the areas of operational policy and legislative matters.

- Collaborates with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) and Safe Work Australia on significant issues relating to strengthening WHS and workers' compensation arrangements, including through the independent review of the SRC Act and changes to the model WHS laws.
- Engages with unions, including through participation in a Senior Unions Liaison Forum which brings together the department and union representatives for discussions on strategic national issues impacting workers in our scheme.
- Participates in a range of WHS Special Interest Groups with various stakeholders.
- Hosts a range of training courses, forums, webinars and other events providing opportunities for collaboration, engagement and sharing of knowledge and best practice.
- Publishes contemporary guidance material to support organisations understand and meet their regulatory requirements.

Communicating plans and performance outcomes

Comcare's Corporate Plan will provide further information about the Agency's purpose, strategic direction, operating context (environment, cooperation, capability and risk) and performance measures and targets, including linkages to the 3 regulator principles of best practice.

Comcare's Annual Report will be used to communicate and promote our performance for the year, including delivery of key initiatives and results against our performance measures to demonstrate our progress towards preventing work-related injuries and delivering better return to work outcomes.

Comcare will promote its Corporate Plan, Annual Report and other important information and guidance on work health and safety, workers' compensation and rehabilitation through to our clients and stakeholders through our website, events and targeted engagement activities.

Relationship with Minister and portfolio

I acknowledge the role Comcare has in assisting you, as the responsible Minister, and the government to respond promptly to issues that may arise in relation to work health and safety and workers' compensation matters and will take proactive steps to ensure regulated entities are compliant with relevant regulations and operate within the law.

I acknowledge the role of the department as having responsibility for administering and providing policy advice on the WHS Act and SRC Act and advising on the performance of the portfolio's regulatory systems. Comcare will continue to share its expertise and work collaboratively with the department on policy and legislative changes that could affect, or strengthen, Commonwealth work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements. Comcare appreciates the enabling environment provided by the Minister to consistently implement best practice and keep informed of the government's policy direction, initiatives and strategies being considered.



Michael Duke

Acting Comcare Chief Executive Officer and Accountable Authority

25 August 2025