

# Safe, productive and fair workplaces

## Committed to ensuring Queenslanders are working in safe and fair environments

We are working with the community and our industry partners to ensure compliance with health and safety, electrical safety, workers' compensation and industrial relations laws, set clear safety standards and shape a better and fairer future for all workers and Queenslanders.

In 2017-18, we focused on:

### Making Queensland safer and fairer

Last year was a year of legislative and regulatory firsts, driven in part by the delivery in July 2017 of a Best Practice Review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ). This report made recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes to work health and safety laws as well as operational improvements for Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and the Work Health and Safety Board.

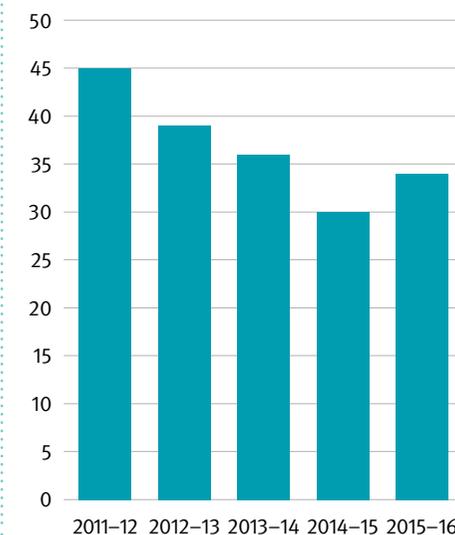
Since then, major changes have been made to the work health and safety act including the introduction of a new charge of industrial manslaughter and the preparation of regulatory amendments to improve safety in the amusement ride and theme park industries. We have also reviewed and updated all Codes of Practice as recommended by the Best Practice Review.

With the largest recreational snorkelling and diving sector in Australia, Queensland is the only state to have specific legislation covering the industry. Based on expert advice from tourism operators and dive safety specialists, we also revised the Recreational diving and snorkelling Code of Practice to make recreational snorkelling safer.

Other legislative and regulatory milestones include:

- delivering Australia's first *Labour Hire Licensing Act*, to protect these workers against unscrupulous, unprofessional practices
- greater protections to workers affected by coal workers' pneumoconiosis
- tougher licensing requirements to strengthen electrical safety in Queensland.

Figure 5: Number of trauma fatalities at the workplace for Queensland



## Protecting workers from preventable injury

In 2017, we introduced new industrial manslaughter laws aimed at protecting Queensland workers on the job. This was one of the 58 recommendations contained in the independent **Best Practice Review of Workplace Health and Safety** in Queensland. We are continuing to implement all recommendations except for two that have been referred to the Work Health and Safety Board for further consideration.

Following reported safety concerns on the **Toowoomba Second Range Crossing** project, we met with senior representatives of Nexus in February 2018 to make sure safety was made a priority.

Our ultimate goal is for every Queenslanders to go out to work or play each day and come home safely. Everything we do in this space – such as our **Injury Prevention and Management Program**, inspections and audits, notices and prosecutions, transport safety networks, workplace visits by people who have been injured at work, and working with around 1500 businesses in our Safety Leadership at Work Program – is about stopping accidents happening in the first place and achieving reductions in work-related injuries and fatalities.

During the 2017–18 period, our inspectors visited over 10,700 workplaces which involved over 27,000 individual site visits, and issued over 6100 notices for contraventions of the work health and safety legislation, predominately relating to non-compliance with workplace environment, work at heights, plant and hazardous chemicals requirements. Our inspectors also issued 220 infringement notices for non-compliance, mainly relating to construction (safe work method statements) and enforcement measures (non-compliance of improvement notices).

We received notifications of non-compliance with work health and safety laws, consisting of 5799 incidents and 4341 complaints. We conducted 173 investigations into serious injuries, fatalities and other high priority matters.

During the same period, we finalised 67 prosecutions, with 59 of these successful, resulting in over \$2.6 million in fines and costs.

We continue to focus on high-risk industries, targeting those that have workers' compensation claim rates significantly higher than other industries. Over the five years from 2011–12 to 2015–16, significant reductions in the incidence of severe injuries were achieved in the following industries:



Manufacturing  
**25.9%**



Transport  
**27.4%**



Agriculture  
**13.7%**



Construction  
**9.9%**

This equates to an overall reduction of 20.5 per cent in serious work-related injuries over that period – a great result for workers, their families and businesses.

In consultation with the Interagency Asbestos Group, we again prepared the annual progress report on the *Statewide Strategic Plan for the Safe Management of Asbestos in Queensland 2014–2019*. This report informs Cabinet on the work being undertaken by government agencies, and is available at [asbestos.qld.gov.au](http://asbestos.qld.gov.au).



# Power line risk sparks innovation at Bishopp Billboards



Installing billboard signage can be a dangerous business when the billboard is near overhead power lines.

Having seen their competitor's experience the horror of a serious electrical incident, Bishopp Billboards' management and installers came together to tackle the risk posed by overhead powerlines.

Bishopp manages over 800 billboards across Queensland, with a team of six installers performing thousands of signage installations every year. The company wanted to go beyond best practice to protect their installers, improve outdoor advertising industry safety practices and help prevent future tragedies in their industry.

The solution was to develop an innovative billboard structure design which significantly reduces the risk of a worker or their tools coming into contact with overhead power lines.

The new design features a rear gantry walkway allowing work to be done behind the billboard's face, away from dangerous powerlines. Additionally, changes to the design of the sail track prevents workers accidentally feeding equipment into the overhead lines.

These design changes have since been rolled out across at-risk billboards in Bishopp's network.

Concerned about the risk to other outdoor advertising providers, Bishopp worked with the Electrical Safety Office to develop industry educational materials on working safely with billboards near power lines.

While safety is its own reward, Bishopp's innovative solution, industry leadership and passion for safety saw them take home top honours in the electrical safety category of the Safe Work and Return to Work Awards 2017.

## Injury Prevention and Management Program (IPaM)

IPaM is a joint initiative between Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and WorkCover Queensland. The program assists employers to increase compliance and manage their health, safety and rehabilitation and return-to-work systems.

IPaM is a free program tailored to suit workplaces at varying levels of maturity, size, complexity, safety and workers' compensation performance offering three key services, IPaM Advance, IPaM Evolve and IPaM Small Business.

In the 2017–18 year, there were 354 employers actively working in the IPaM Advance and Evolve programs, a further 134 in pre-agreement, and 231 employers have exited the program during the reporting period.

Over 1660 site visits have delivered system and hazard assessments and worker consultation predominantly in priority industries of manufacturing, construction, health care and social assistance, transport and agriculture.

There have been 159 Business Improvement Plans delivered providing over 3473 recommendations for improvement in management commitment, consultation, risk management, training, injury management and return-to-work. Small businesses are further supported through the provision of one-on-one workplace consultations and workshops.

Workers' compensation improvements recognised by IPaM employers in the last 12 months include:



▼ **3.1%**

in claims, compared to an increase of 9.7% for non-IPaM employers



▼ **8.6%**

in average days off work, compared to an increase of 0.4% for non-IPaM employers



▲ **1.4%**

in the average statutory claim cost, compared to a 7.1% increase for non-IPaM employers



▼ **2.2%**

in claims costs per \$ million of wages, compared to an increase of 8.1% for non-IPaM employers



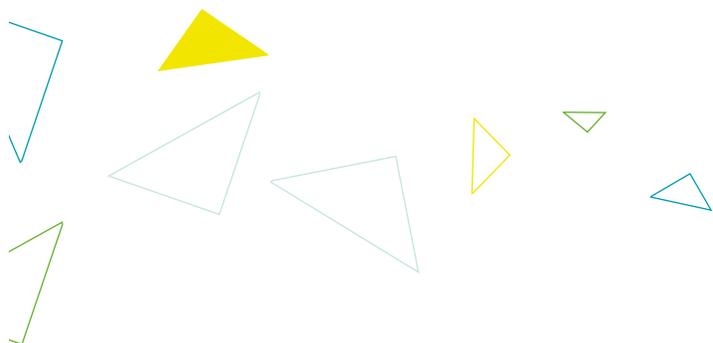
▼ **12.4%**

in time taken for employees to return to work compared to 8.7% increase for non-IPaM employers



▼ **1.6%**

in the workers' compensation premium rate, for large employers and 12.6% decrease for small employers compared to rest of fund



# Advocating for quad bike safety



Domenic Cocco was seven years old when he persuaded his mum, Jodie, to let him have a go on a kid's bike belonging to a family friend. Seconds after he jumped on, Dom hit a power pole and was thrown onto the bitumen. With no helmet to protect his head, his injuries came close to killing him.

Fortunately, Domenic made a full recovery, but his parents know all too well how close they came to losing him and are now passionate about quad bike safety.

Jodie and Mario want to prevent other parents from experiencing the horror they lived through by sharing their story through the safety advocate program.

“You think it is not going to happen to you. Make sure they have got the right protective equipment on, make sure they are wearing a helmet, and make sure they know how to operate it properly.”

As quad bike safety advocates, the Coccas will be sharing their story to compel workers and the community to think about the hazards and risks involved in using a quad bike.

Queensland businesses can request a safety advocate to visit a workplace or community event, free of charge, to speak about the importance of safety in the workplace and on the farm.

Jodie and Mario also share their story through the film ‘Too fast. Too soon—Domenic’s story’, available on [worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://worksafe.qld.gov.au).

## Shining a light on electrical safety

In 2017–18, we implemented the recommendations of an independent review of electrical licensing including enhancing the requirements for electrical contractor licence eligibility.

We conducted over 2590 proactive audits and issued 1002 notices. Fifty matters involving electrical licence holders were referred to the Electrical Licensing Committee and found to be in breach of electrical safety legislation, with disciplinary action including fines, reprimands and licence suspension pending re-training. There were 33 serious electrical incidents across Queensland in 2017–18, increasing by 12 from the previous financial year, but no fatalities resulting from contact with electricity.

We are also continuing initiatives to support the safe introduction of smart grid and renewable technologies.

## Making workers' compensation fairer

The *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* requires a review of the operation of the workers' compensation scheme at least once every five years.

In 2018, the independent review found the scheme is financially sound and provides fair treatment for both employees and employers.

Queensland's workers' compensation scheme gives people injured at work the support and protection they need to return to work so they can support themselves and their families. The scheme's performance is such that Queensland has the fastest workers' compensation dispute resolution service in Australia: 86.5 per cent of disputes are resolved within three months.

## Reporting on Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis

We prepared the Government's response to the **Parliamentary Committee's Report into Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis** and implementation of recommendations regarding workers' compensation changes. We progressed actions in response to the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee Report No.4 55th Parliament Inquiry into Occupational Respirable Dust Diseases.

## Continuing to educate the community

Our advertising campaigns are an important means to get our message into the community. In 2017, we shined the spotlight on electrical safety, quad bike safety, safe work and return to work, and in 2018, the North Queensland Injury Prevention and Return to Work Conference was held in Townsville.

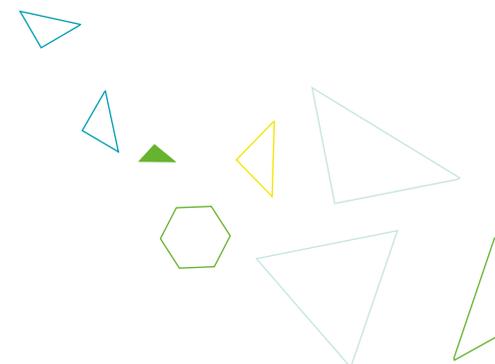
In 2017–18, electrical safety inspectors provided engagement activities to over 2800 organisations and more than 13,300 people. **Electricity Safety Week** (4–8 September) included a host of events tailored specifically for electrical contractors and workers, including the Electricity Safety Summit.

Each year, on average, 600 people need hospital treatment because of quad bikes, with approximately one-third of quad bike deaths in Australia taking place in Queensland. To raise awareness of quad bike safety, the final phase of the government's **Ride Ready** campaign was launched in 2017.

When it comes to getting back to meaningful work after an injury, the best results are achieved when employers encourage and support injured staff to recover at work. The **Getting Back** advertising campaign reminds workers, employers and medical professionals of the importance of getting people back to work.



Fastest workers' compensation dispute resolution service in Australia



The 2017 Safe Work and Return to Work champions were recognised at the **2017 Safe Work and Return to Work awards**. The awards showcase excellence in safety or getting injured workers back to meaningful duties as soon as possible and are a highlight of Safe Work Month which runs each year in October.

A dedicated statewide advertising campaign ‘It’s about time’, introducing the labour hire licensing scheme, ran on radio, press and social media for six weeks, raising awareness of and encouraging compliance with the scheme.

### Improving industrial relations for Queensland workers

In response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Practices of the Labour Hire Industry in Queensland, the *Labour Hire Licensing Act 2017* establishes a mandatory labour hire provider licensing scheme to protect labour hire workers from exploitation and restore confidence in the labour hire industry.

The passage of the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Act 2017* delivered a significant reduction in the complexity around Queensland’s retail trading hours regulation, providing

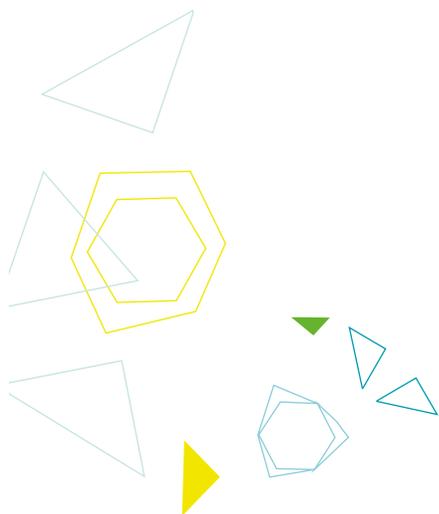
certainty for retail shop trading hours and striking the right balance between flexibility and increased consumer shopping hours, while providing protections for retail workers and smaller retail businesses.

We prepared the Queensland Government’s submissions to the Fair Work Commission Annual Wage Review and also the Queensland State Wage Case. These submissions advocated for increased wages for the lowest paid workers in the community. We also prepared the Queensland Government’s submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Future of Work and Workers, which called for reform of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and other relevant legislation to better recognise emerging forms of non-traditional employment, including engagement within the gig economy, to ensure that the national workplace relations system protects vulnerable workers and remains fair and equitable for all working Australians.

During 2017–18, we completed 11 enterprise bargaining agreements for the Queensland public sector and government-owned corporations. All agreements were settled within the government wages policy.



Mandatory labour hire provider licensing scheme established



Service standards	Notes	2017-18 Target/Est.	2017-18 Actual
<b>Service: Industrial Relations<sup>1</sup></b>			
<i>Effectiveness measures</i>			
Overall client satisfaction with inspectorate's effectiveness and professionalism	2,3	85%	97%
Overall client satisfaction with the services and advice provided on public sector industrial relations	2,3	85%	85%
<i>Efficiency measures</i>			
Cost of Industrial Relations services per Queensland worker	4	\$2.60	\$3.38
Cost of public sector industrial and employee relations per Queensland public sector worker	5	\$6.30	\$6.55
<b>Service: Administration of the Industrial Court and Commission system</b>			
<i>Effectiveness measure</i>			
Percentage of matters resolved at conference		65%	65%
<i>Efficiency measure</i>			
Percentage of matters filed with the Industrial Registry and processed within 24 hours	6	New measure	New measure
<b>Service: Work health and safety services</b>			
<i>Effectiveness measure</i>			
Overall client satisfaction with inspectorate's effectiveness and professionalism	2,3	85%	87%
<i>Efficiency measure</i>			
Cost of WHSQ services per worker covered by the workers' compensation scheme		\$30.95	\$29.83

Notes:

1. This service area was transferred from Queensland Treasury following machinery-of-government changes.
2. This service standard considers quality, timeliness, staff knowledge, access and outcome. Data is collected via a telephone survey.
3. This is a biannual measure. Further trend data is required before targets are adjusted.
4. This service standard is calculated based on the total cost of Industrial Relations services divided by the Queensland labour force, which is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Cat 6202.0 – *Labour Force, Australia*, Table 06. The increase in the 2017–18 Actual is due to funding for the Labour Hire Licensing Scheme.
5. This service standard is calculated based on Industrial Relations Public Sector budget divided by the Queensland public sector labour force, which is sourced from the ABS Cat 6248.0 – *Employment and Earnings, Public Sector*. The increase in the 2017–18 Actual and is due to an increase in costs to support the continued provision of efficient and modern Industrial Relations services.
6. This is a new service standard introduced to measure the efficiency of Queensland Industrial Relations Commission services. It is calculated based on the time taken to file the matter and the time taken to enter the matter into the Case Management System.
7. This new measure is based on a five-year rolling average of the number of verified serious electrical incidents reported rather than a yearly count. It replaces the discontinued measure 'The number of reported serious electrical incidents involving powerlines, installations and electrical equipment per million population'.
8. The increase in the 2017–18 Actual is due to increased costs paid to the Queensland Ambulance Service.
9. The increase in the 2017–18 Actual is due to an increase in employee expenses.

Service standards	Notes	2017-18 Target/Est.	2017-18 Actual
<b>Service: Electrical safety services</b>			
<i>Effectiveness measures</i>			
Reduction in the number of reported serious electrical incidents on a five-year rolling average	7	New measure	New measure
Overall client satisfaction with inspectorate's effectiveness and professionalism	3	85%	91%
<i>Efficiency measure</i>			
Cost of electrical safety services per person in Queensland		\$3.95	\$3.99
<b>Service: Workers' compensation services</b>			
<i>Effectiveness measure</i>			
Cost of Workers' Compensation Regulator service per worker covered by the workers' compensation scheme	8	\$9.40	\$9.64
<i>Efficiency measure</i>			
Cost per Workers' Compensation disputation	9	\$2,700	\$2,850

