



Safe Work Australia – Data report

Workplace and work-related violence and aggression in Australia

August 2024 | Our Data. Your Stories.

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Workplace violence and aggression is any incident where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted at the workplace or while they are working. These incidents can result in psychological and physical harm to workers and others, and can harm the person they are directed at as well as anyone who witnesses the behaviour.



1 Background

In June 2022, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) included “a safe and healthy working environment” as a fundamental principle and right at work; a workplace without violence and aggression is encompassed in this right.

Safe Work Australia’s recent data report *Psychological health and safety in the workplace* highlighted a concerning upwards trend of workplace violence and aggression.

In this report, we further examine this trend to provide a view of the prevalence, causes and impacts of violence in Australian workplaces, as well as a deeper understanding of where there are opportunities for better risk management approaches to prevent workplace violence and aggression.

Survey data can provide new dimensions to our data analysis, including insights into perpetrators and impacts of these incidents. Understanding where and how harm is occurring can help to improve insights into effective work health and safety (WHS) policy making and risk management. This paper analyses data from Safe Work Australia’s workers’ compensation claims data, as well as data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the People at Work (PAW) Survey. We supplement these sources with several occupation- and industry-specific surveys, and international survey sources. These data sources are detailed in Section 6.

This work aligns with a key target of the Australian WHS Strategy 2023-2033 to continue to build the capability of persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs), WHS regulators and workers to ensure compliance with the duty to manage psychosocial hazards at work. One of the ways Safe Work Australia is taking action on this important target is by ensuring access to high quality data and analysis to help inform our own policy work as well as activities by WHS regulators, worker and employer representatives, duty holders and workers. This analysis also provides insights into the intersection of workplace violence with health and safety vulnerability, which is identified in the Strategy as an area of focus.

Practical guidance on managing WHS risks associated with violence and aggression in the workplace is published in the model Code of Practice: *Managing psychosocial hazards at work*. Better understanding the prevalence, characteristics and impacts of violence and aggression in Australian workplaces is important to improving risk management approaches for PCBUs and positive outcomes for workers.

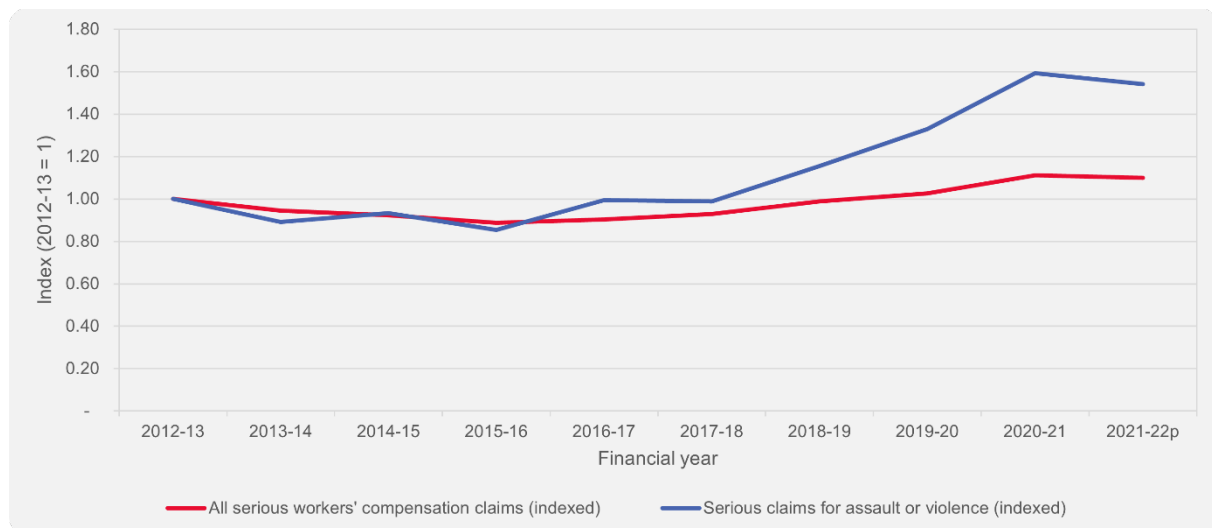
2 Introduction

The ABS PSS estimates 8 million Australians (41%) have experienced at least one incidence of violence since they were 15 years old. Workplace and work-related¹ incidents² account for at least 13% of these, with the survey reporting over 1 million incidents of work-related violence experienced by Australians over this reference period.

The ABS PSS also reports there were 176,100 workplace incidents that occurred in the last 10 years, with physical violence more likely to occur in a workplace setting than sexual violence.

There were 53,139 accepted workers' compensation claims for being assaulted by a person or persons, and 12,721 accepted claims for exposure to workplace or occupational violence over the last 10 years. From 2017-18 to 2021-22p, there was a distinct 56% increase in the number of serious workers' compensation claims (involving at least one week away from work) for workplace violence and assault (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Indexed number of all serious claims (red) and serious claims for assault and violence (blue), NDS (2012-13 to 2021-22p)



Source: Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics.



This rate of increase is more than triple the overall growth rate in serious workers' compensation claims (18%).

The Safe Work Australia Traumatic Injuries Fatalities (TIF) data illustrates a similar uptick – in 2023 (preliminary data), there were at least 6 worker deaths as a result of being assaulted by a person or persons. In the 5 years before that, there were 6 worker deaths in total.

¹ We have used the term 'work-related violence' to encompass the combined occurrence of physical violence and sexual violence that is committed by an employer, manager or supervisor; a co-worker; or a client, patient or customer. Due to sample size, the location of these incidents cannot be discerned (i.e., whether they physically occurred in the workplace).

² Where analysis focuses on one type of incident, this is specified in the text. This includes for physical violence, which refers to the occurrence, attempt and/or threat of physical assault, and sexual violence, which refers to the occurrence, attempt and/or threat of sexual assault.

3 Characteristics of workplace and work-related violence and aggression

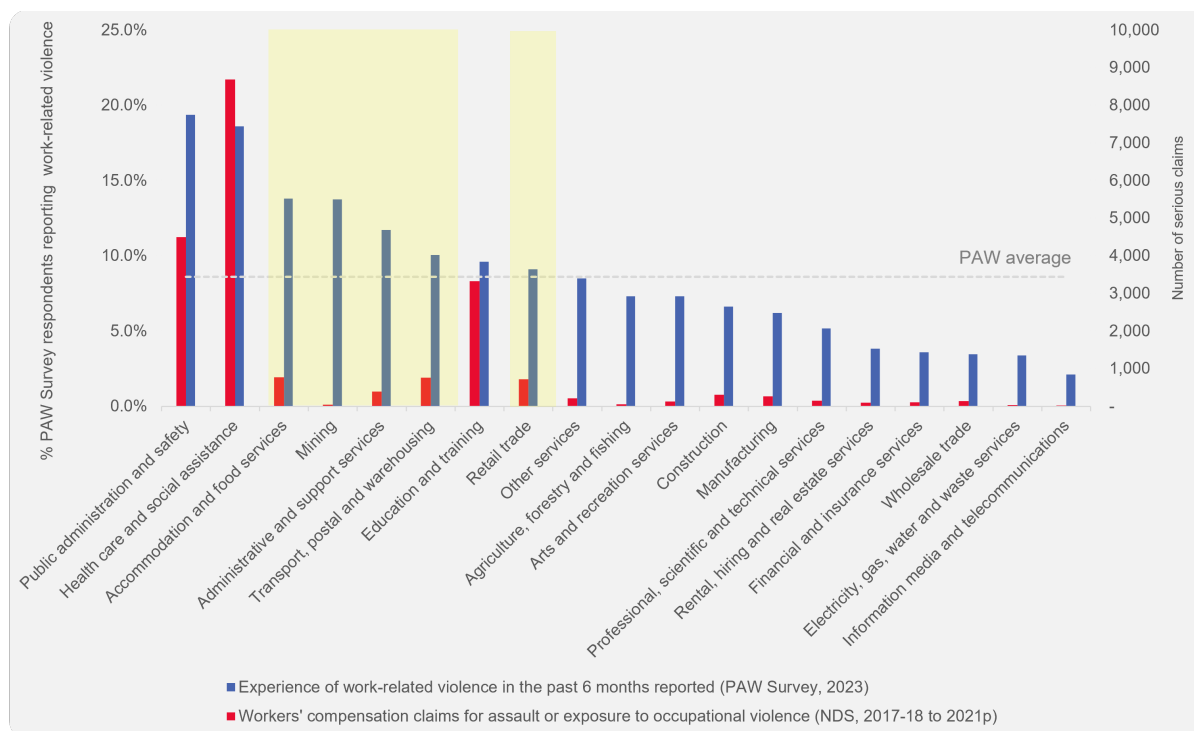
3.1. Industries

The Public administration and safety and Health care and social assistance industries feature prominently in two separate data sources – the PAW Survey data on exposure to occupational violence and in workers’ compensation claims for being assaulted or exposure to workplace or occupational violence (Figure 2).

The high incidence of occupational violence in the Health care and social assistance industry is also supported by data from the Australian Workers’ Union and Head First Mental health issues in the workplace report (October 2023). This survey revealed almost 40% of respondents in Health and community services were exposed to violent or traumatic events at work (e.g. exposure to harm, abuse or assault, being threatened, viewing traumatic events or death). This was considerably higher than the other industries included in the survey.³

The Education and training industry also has a high number of serious claims for being assaulted or exposure to workplace or occupational violence over the last 5 years. There is other evidence to suggest this is a significant issue, with the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey (2023) finding physical violence towards school leaders and teachers has increased 76.5% since the survey’s inception in 2011.

Figure 2: Prevalence of workplace violence and number of serious workers' compensation claims for assault or occupational violence, PAW Survey (2023) and NDS (2017-18 to 2021-22p)



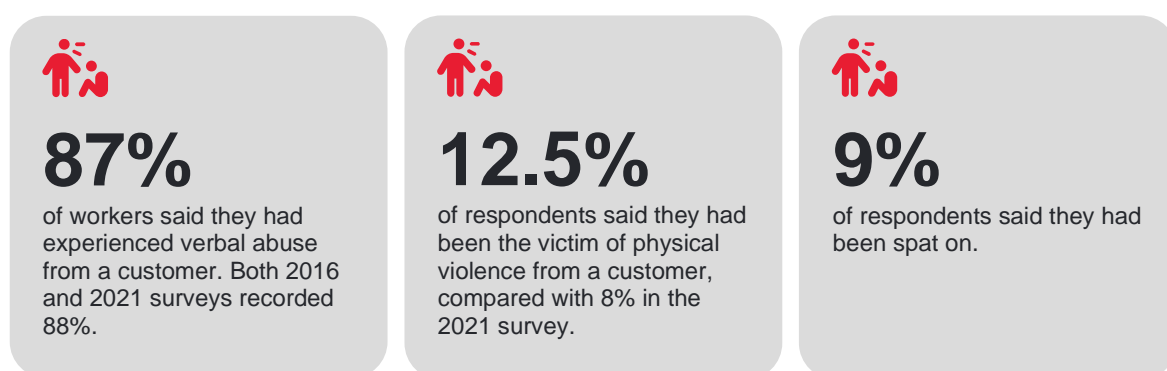
Source: People at Work Survey and Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics.

³ Respondent rates for experience of violent or traumatic events from other industries reported in this survey included Construction (15.04%), Manufacturing (7.66%) and Mining (2.62%).

The PAW Survey data reinforces that workplace violence and aggression are significant problems in the industries discussed above; however, it is also notable that the industries highlighted in yellow in Figure 2 had above average rates of workplace violence but do not feature as prominently in the workers' compensation claims data. When comparing this data, it is important to note that the PAW Survey captures a large range of exposures to violent and aggressive behaviours, whereas workers' compensation data only measures significant exposures that result in a compensable injury. The PAW Survey data may therefore present a valuable indicator into the impact of lower severity violent behaviours.

More evidence collection is required to understand the incidence and nature of violence and aggression in the Mining industry, as there is a discrepancy between the PAW data and other survey sources such as the data from the Australian Workers' Union and Head First Mental health issues in the workplace report (October 2023).¹²

Particularly for the Accommodation and food services, Transport, postal and warehousing and Retail trade industries, findings from the PAW Survey are supported by a 2023 survey conducted by the Shop, Distributive and Allied employees (SDA) Association.⁴ The survey reported in the last 12 months:



Anecdotally, there have also been increasing media reports on occupational violence affecting workers in the Education, Retail trade and Health care industries both domestically^{5,6,7} and internationally.^{8,9}

Together the evidence suggests more attention is required to better understand the nature of workplace violence and aggression, particularly in industries such as Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services which are not well-represented in existing data sources.

⁴ The SDA is a union for Retail, Fast Food and Warehouse workers. The survey of over 4,600 workers are likely to include workers from the Accommodation and food services, Retail trade and Transport, postal and warehousing industries. Accommodation and food services and Retail trade are underrepresented in the PAW Survey respondents (see section 6.3)

⁵ ['I was told to return to work as soon as I regained consciousness.' Why only a third of assaulted nurses report it to police \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/i-was-told-to-return-to-work-as-soon-as-i-regained-consciousness-why-only-a-third-of-assaulted-nurses-report-it-to-police)

⁶ [Gender-based violence is a big concern in hospitality – and women bear the brunt of managing it \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/gender-based-violence-is-a-big-concern-in-hospitality-and-women-bear-the-brunt-of-managing-it)

⁷ [Paramedics have one of Australia's most dangerous jobs — and not just because of the trauma they witness \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/paramedics-have-one-of-australia-s-most-dangerous-jobs-and-not-just-because-of-the-trauma-they-witness)

⁸ [Violence against workers increased during the pandemic – our research shows how it affected them \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/violence-against-workers-increased-during-the-pandemic-our-research-shows-how-it-affected-them)

⁹ [The costs of workplace violence are too high to ignore \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/the-costs-of-workplace-violence-are-too-high-to-ignore)

3.2. Gender

In general, the ABS PSS highlights that women were more likely than men to experience sexual violence, while men were more likely to experience physical violence – and the data shows these trends extend to the workplace.



However, due to sample size, the ABS PSS does not report the incidence of workplace/work-related sexual violence experienced by men. The ABS PSS data also shows more men than women experienced work-related physical assault (391,900 men compared to 225,200 women¹⁰). These findings align closely with international survey findings, which also report that men were more likely than women to have experienced recurrent incidents of physical violence and harassment at work.^{iv}

Safe Work Australia’s previous report *Psychological health and safety in the workplace* highlights the importance of considering differences in the industries and occupations in which males and females tend to work when we consider exposures and impacts of psychosocial hazards. It is equally important to consider the underlying structural features and hazards profile that give rise to the disproportionate impact on certain workers.

For example, workers’ compensation data shows the Health care and social assistance industry has a high number of claims and high rate of reports of workplace violence and aggression through the PAW Survey, and was comprised of 78% female workers. 4 of the 5 occupations with the most claims for exposure to workplace violence or being assaulted over this period have a high female share of employment (Table 1).

Table 1: Occupations with most claims for exposure to workplace violence or being assaulted with female share of employment, NDS (2017-18 to 2021-22p) and ABS Census (2021)

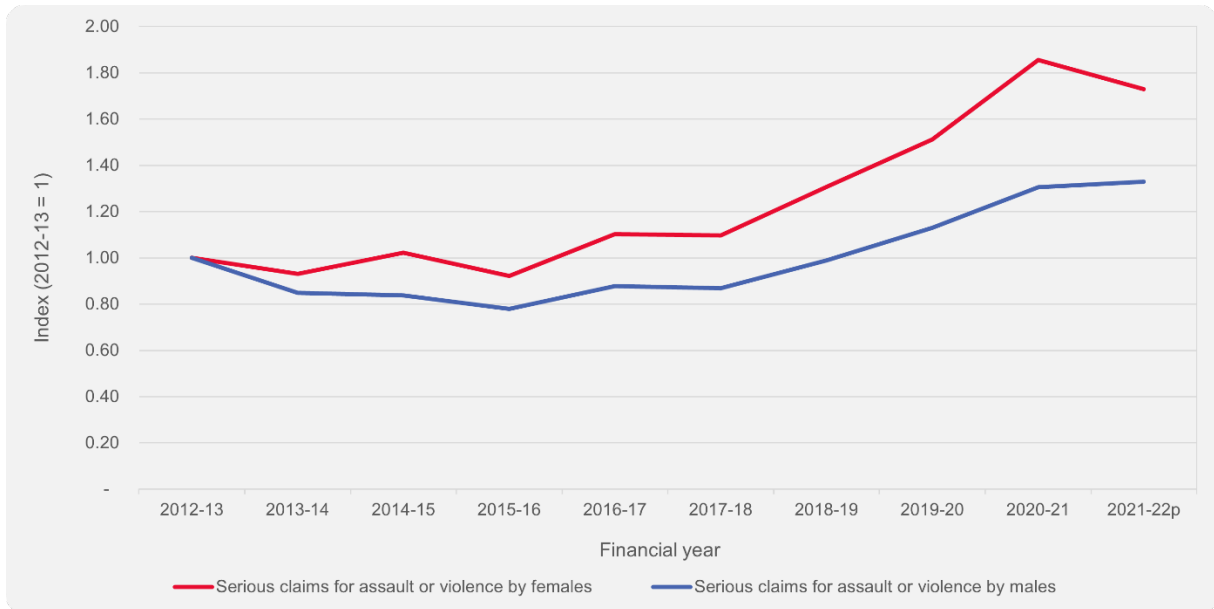
Occupation	Number of serious claims	Female share of employment
Registered nurses	1,848	88%
Welfare support workers	1,701	74%
Aged and disabled carers	1,501	77%
Police	1,476	29%
Nursing support and personal care workers	1,386	79%

Source: Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics and ABS Census..

¹⁰ Since the age of 15

Workers' compensation data also shows almost 1.5 times more serious workers' compensation claims for exposure to workplace violence or being assaulted have been made by women than men from 2017-18 to 2021-22p (12,260 claims by women compared to 8,485 claims by men). Moreover, there has been a 73% increase in claims made by women compared to a 33% increase in claims made by men over the last 10 years (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Serious workers' compensation claims for exposure to workplace violence or being assaulted by gender, NDS (2012-13 to 2021-22p)



Source: Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics.

While the relative experience of workplace aggression by gender is a remarkable feature of the data, more research is required to uncover the factors behind these trends. Factors may include the quality of workplace control measures to manage exposures to violence and aggression, access to workers' compensation, propensity to make a claim, the type or frequency of violence experienced, the injury severity, support from employers following the exposure, and the interaction with other psychosocial hazards.

3.3. Age

International survey findings^{iv} indicate young people were more likely to face violence and harassment at work; particularly young women. However, both the PAW Survey and workers' compensation claims suggest incidents of violence and harassment occur more frequently for older age groups (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of serious claims for being assaulted or exposure to workplace violence, NDS (2017-18 to 2021-22p) and percent of respondents reporting experience of workplace violence in the last 6 months, PAW Survey (2023)

Age group	Number of serious claims (NDS)	% reported experience of workplace violence (PAW Survey)
Under 25	1,607	9.30
25-34	4,557	10.92
35-44	4,799	10.74
45-54	5,402	12.77
55-64	3,858	13.41
65 and over	544	11.45 ¹¹

Source: People at Work Survey and Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics.

¹¹ Excludes respondents aged 75 or over due to low response numbers

3.4. Vulnerable workers

The PAW Survey also examines the experience of vulnerable workers, including workers who identify as indeterminate and intersex gender, and as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Data from the survey indicates people of indeterminate and intersex gender are more likely to experience workplace violence than men or women; whereas men and women had similar rates of reporting experience of workplace violence in the past 6 months.



21%

of workers identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the PAW Survey report experiencing workplace violence in the previous 6 months



12%

of workers not identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander report this experience

International survey findings^{iv} indicate migrants were more likely to face violence and harassment at work (particularly migrant women); however, more research and data collection is required to speak to the experience of migrant workers in Australia. More research is also required to examine experiences of workplace violence and aggression in other vulnerable groups, including people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people and LGBTIQ+ people.

3.5. Perpetrators

The ABS PSS indicates that work-related physical violence was more likely to be perpetrated by a client/patient/customer than a co-worker or employer/manager/supervisor across both men and women (Table 3).

This is substantiated by data from the PAW Survey, which shows clients/customers were the most common source of workplace violence. However, it is notable that there are still over 250,000 workers estimated to have experienced physical violence by a male employer, manager, supervisor or co-worker.

Table 3: Experienced physical violence since the age of 15, ABS PSS (2021-22)

	Estimate ('000)
<i>Women's experience of work-related physical violence</i>	
Physical violence by a male employer/manager/supervisor	22.9
Physical violence by a male co-worker	63.9
Physical violence by a male client/patient/customer	167.7
Physical violence by a female client/patient/customer	111.4
<i>Men's experience of work-related physical violence</i>	
Physical assault by a male co-worker	187.3*
Physical assault by a male client/patient/customer	204.6*

* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution


Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey.

Together, the data highlights the importance for workplaces to effectively identify and understand the risk of violence and aggression by clients or customers and adopt effective and reliable control measures to prevent or minimise the incidence and risk from violence and aggression.

3.6. Behaviours

While the ABS PSS collects information on violent behaviours, the data quality for work-related and workplace violent behaviours is limited. However, it does indicate the experiences of workplace physical assault is greater than sexual assault.

In the last 10 years:



145,900

Workplace physical assault incidents



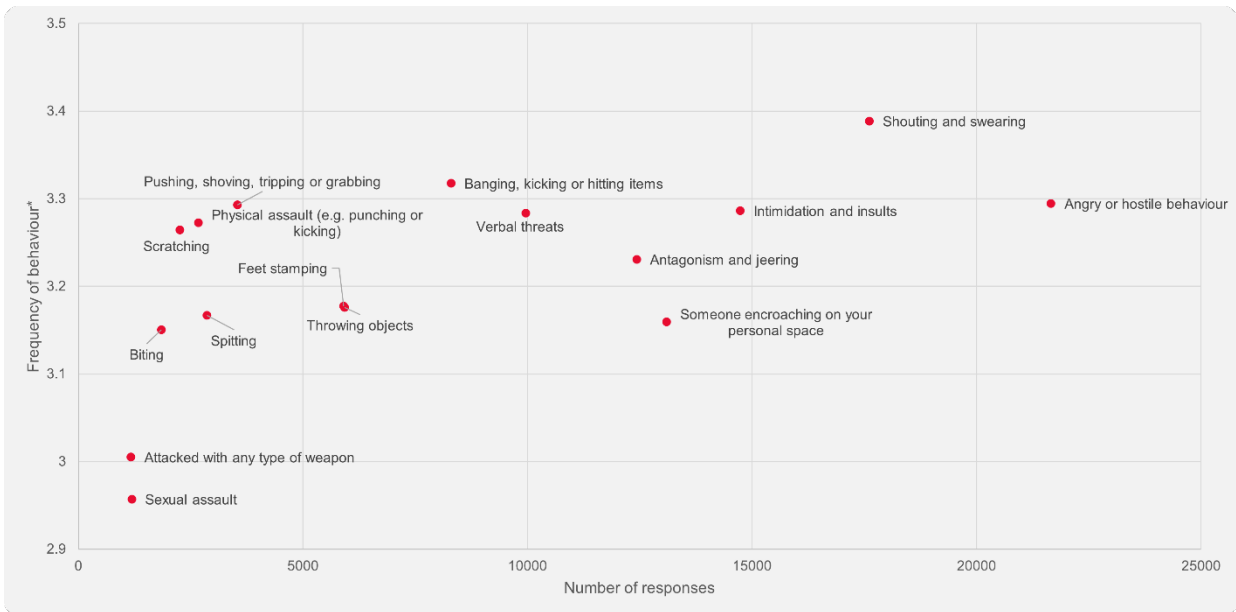
30,200

Workplace sexual assault incidents

The PAW Survey provides insights into violent behaviours experienced in the workplace, summarised in Figure 4. The number of respondents are those that indicated they experienced that behaviour at least once in the last 6 months, and the **frequency** shows how often that behaviour was experienced (of those who did experience that behaviour).

The behaviours with the highest number of respondents were ‘Angry or hostile behaviour’, ‘Shouting and swearing’, and ‘Intimidation and insults’. Though these behaviours are lower severity than other violent behaviours, if they are prolonged and sufficiently frequent, they can still represent significant workplace hazards.

Figure 4. Incidence and frequency of violent behaviours in the workplace, PAW Survey (2023)



* The frequency response scale is 1 = Never (these responses were excluded from analysis), 2 = Rarely, 3 = Once in a while, 4 = Some of the time, 5 = Monthly, 6 = Weekly, 7 = Almost daily. Behaviours with fewer than 500 responses have been excluded from analysis.

Source: People at Work Survey

3.7. Impacts

Data from the PAW survey indicates that measures of poor worker outcomes – including measures of psychological distress, musculoskeletal symptoms and job burnout – become progressively worse with the frequency of exposure to workplace violence. Workers are also more likely to consider taking sick leave, seeking medical advice, transferring jobs or resigning when they are exposed to workplace violence more frequently.

Table 4 shows the highest injury types caused by being assaulted or exposure to workplace violence. While mental health conditions accounted for the highest number of claims, this data also highlights the significant physical injuries that can be caused by workplace violence and aggression. It is also important to note that workers' compensation claims data only captures the most serious injury, and does not capture instances where there may be less serious, but still significant, mental or physical injuries.

Table 4. Highest injury types from being assaulted or exposure to workplace violence, NDS (2017-18 to 2021-22p)

Nature of injury	Being assaulted by a person or persons	Exposure to workplace or occupational violence	Total
Mental health conditions	1,599	5,985	7,584
Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury	5,736	67	5,803
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	3,367	26	3,393
Fractures	1,395	10	1,405
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases	993	13	1,006

Source: Safe Work Australia National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics.

The ABS PSS data could not be analysed for impacts of workplace and work-related violence due to the sample size available. However, in general, a high proportion of women who have experienced violence reported feelings of anxiety or fear for personal safety in the 12 months following the incident. This was particularly the case if the perpetrator is male compared to female (Table 5). More evidence is required to understand if these trends extend to workplace incidents; however, it suggests this is important for PCBUs to consider when managing the both the impacts of violent incidents in their workplaces and how these hazards are identified where they may be hidden in the workplace.

Table 5. The proportion of women assaulted who reported feelings of anxiety or fear in the 12 months after the most recent incident in the last 10 years, ABS PSS (2021-22)

Incident	Proportion (%)
Physical assault by male	62.8
Physical assault by female	40.0

Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey.

4 Reporting behaviours

Over the last 10 years, the ABS PSS records that 176,100 incidents of workplace violence occurred. Of these, approximately 46% (80,900) were formally reported as workplace/on-the-job incidents (Table 6).

Table 6. Women who did not contact police¹², but reported their assault by a male as a workplace/on the job incident and internal reporting procedures were followed,¹³ ABS PSS (2021-22)

Assaults reported as workplace/on-the-job incidents	Estimate ('000)
Physical assault by a male	39.5
Physical assault by a female	27.3
Sexual assault by a male	14.1*

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey.

The ABS PSS also highlighted the role workplaces play in facilitating informal reporting of incidents of violence and aggression in the workplace. Of women who experienced physical assault by a male in the last 10 years, 7.2% (68,500) sought advice or support from a work colleague or boss following the most recent incident. By contrast, women who experienced physical assault by a female were twice as likely to seek advice or support from their work colleague or boss (15.5%, or 44,800). Internationally, only slightly more than half (54.4%) of those who experienced violence and harassment at work shared their experience with someone, and of those that did, 70.4% were with a co-worker and 55.3% were with an employer or supervisor.^{iv}

This highlights the importance of PCBUs providing appropriate systems of WHS reporting (including WHS incident notification requirements) and removing barriers to reporting, particularly when managing sensitive incidents. This may include informal, confidential and/or anonymous reporting mechanisms for workers who may not feel comfortable making a formal report.

¹² Due to the way in which the survey questions were asked, these statistics do not count respondents who may have both contacted the police regarding the incident and reported it as a workplace/on-the-job incident.

¹³ Based on the most recent incident in the last 10 years

5 Conclusion and key findings

This report uses data from the ABS Personal Safety Survey, People at Work Survey and the National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics to explore workplace violence and aggression trends in Australian workplaces.

Notable findings include:

- 💡 There has been a 56% increase in workers' compensation claims for being assaulted and exposure to workplace violence since 2017-18.
- 💡 Gendered differences in the types of industries and occupations in which men and women work are important when considering exposures to and impacts of workplace violence and aggression. Despite the ABS PSS indicating workplace physical violence is a significant issue among men, there has been a 73% increase in claims made by women compared to a 33% increase in claims made by men over the last 10 years. More research is required to uncover the factors behind these trends, which may include the quality of workplace control measures to manage exposures to violence and aggression, access to workers' compensation, propensity to make a claim, the type or frequency of violence experienced, the injury severity, support from employers following the exposure, and the interaction with other psychosocial hazards. It is equally important to consider the underlying structural features and hazards profile that give rise to the disproportionate impact on certain workers.
- 💡 Clients and customers were the most common source of work-related violence. Employers and PCBUs should be talking to workers about these hazards and implementing effective and reliable control measures to prevent and respond to violence and aggression by others at the workplace.
- 💡 The highest incidence behaviours of workplace violence were 'Angry or hostile behaviour', 'Shouting and swearing', and 'Intimidation and insults'. Though these harmful behaviours are lower severity than other violent behaviours, they can still represent significant workplace risks to workers, particularly if they are prolonged or frequent.

6 About the data

The data analysed in this paper comes from several distinct sources that provide unique insights separately and in combination. When interpreting the findings, it is important to note each use slightly different definitions of workplace and work-related violence (see table below), and that the scope, coverage and available detail in each data source varies widely.

6.1. Definitions

Definition of workplace/work-related violence

Workers' compensation data	Workers' compensation serious claims coded to TOOCS mechanisms "29 Being assaulted by a person or persons" or "82 Exposure to workplace or occupational violence"
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ABS Personal Safety Survey

There are two areas that the ABS PSS explores under the Code of Practice definition for workplace violence and aggression:

- **Physical violence** refers to the occurrence, attempt or threat of physical assault experienced since the age of 15. Physical violence is measured by combining experiences of physical assault and physical threat.
- **Sexual violence** refers to the occurrence, attempt or threat of sexual assault experienced since the age of 15. Sexual violence is measured by combining experiences of sexual assault and sexual threat.

Note that due to the sample size available, it was not always possible to examine trends across both physical and sexual violence and across all demographic cohorts.

We have used the term 'work-related violence' to encompass the combined occurrence of physical violence and sexual violence that is committed by an employer, manager or supervisor; a co-worker; or a client, patient or customer. Due to the way the ABS PSS survey questions were asked, we do not know whether these work-related incidents occurred in a workplace setting.

People at Work Survey

The PAW Survey asks respondents about their overall experience of workplace violence in the last 6 months, then about each behaviour below separately.

In the past 6 months, have you been subjected to any of the following behaviours in the course of your work?

Angry or hostile behaviour

Antagonism and jeering

Intimidation and insults

Shouting and swearing

Verbal threats

Someone encroaching on your personal space

Feet stamping

Banging, kicking or hitting items

Biting

Spitting
Scratching
Throwing objects
Pushing, shoving, tripping or grabbing
Sexual assault
Physical assault (e.g. punching or kicking)
Armed robbery
Attacked with any type of weapon

6.2. National Dataset for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS)

Safe Work Australia compiles national workers' compensation statistics using data obtained from workers' compensation authorities in each state, territory and the Commonwealth government. These data are collated into the National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS), which is Safe Work Australia's primary source of information on work-related injuries and diseases.

The NDS categorises workers' compensation claims using the Type of Occurrence Classification System (TOOCS). The TOOCS is divided into four parts: Nature of injury/disease classification, Bodily location of injury/disease classification, Mechanism of incident classification and Agency of injury/disease classification.

Note that classifications of mental health conditions used in the TOOCS do not necessarily reflect those used in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

When interpreting NDS data, it is important to consider that not all workers are eligible for workers' compensation may opt not to lodge a claim, and not all workers who are eligible may opt to lodge a claim. According to ABS work-related injuries survey data, over the 2021-22 financial year, approximately one third (173,900 or 35.1%) of all workers who experienced a work-related injury or illness made a workers' compensation claim.

Moreover, the NDS data are coded under the principle that coders must select the most serious injury or disease sustained by the worker in the TOOCS. This means that where workplace incidents cause both physical and psychological harm to a worker, only one is recorded. Likewise, only one mechanism is coded, defined as the action, exposure or event that **best** describes the circumstances that resulted in the most serious injury or disease.

Note that 2021-22 NDS data are preliminary (denoted by 'p') and likely to rise as revisions occur in future years.

6.3. People at Work (PAW)

People at Work (PAW) is a validated Australian psychosocial risk assessment survey, which assesses 14 psychosocial hazards within a workplace. The aim of the survey is to allow organisations to identify, assess and control risks to psychological health at work. The People at Work risk assessment survey tool has its theoretical foundations in the Job Demands-Resources model. Job demands refer to those events precipitated by the organisation's characteristics that create tension and are bothersome to workers. Job resources are aspects of the work environment that help workers to achieve work-related goals and reduce job demands. It also asks about common psychosocial hazards such as workplace violence and aggression and bullying.

Limitations of the PAW Survey must be considered when interpreting the data in this report. PAW uses a workplace-based approach to data collection, meaning that workers who responded to the survey were not drawn from the working population using a sampling technique designed to enable representative population estimates to be calculated. PAW data therefore does not necessarily provide a complete representation of psychosocial hazards and outcomes among Australian workers and the available data may be subject to bias. For example, organisations that choose to undertake the PAW Survey may be more likely to prioritise improving psychological health in their workplace. This dataset does not capture businesses with less than 20 employees.

A raw data extract from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 was used for this report. There were 62,327 respondents to the survey (approximately 0.4% total employed Australians). This sample size is too small to draw definite conclusions about population groups, particularly as the survey overrepresents certain industries (see industries highlighted below).

Industry	Proportion of respondents (PAW)	Proportion of labour force (2021 Census)
Accommodation and Food Services	0.90%	6.80%
Administrative and Support Services	1.87%	3.37%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.04%	2.45%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.31%	1.64%
Construction	3.93%	9.27%
Education and Training	13.11%	9.21%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	3.23%	1.17%
Financial and Insurance Services	5.75%	3.86%
Health Care and Social Assistance	24.75%	15.20%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0.98%	1.45%
Manufacturing	7.43%	6.20%
Mining	3.78%	1.86%
Other Services	5.66%	3.78%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	8.04%	8.20%
Public Administration and Safety	10.38%	6.92%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0.76%	1.63%
Retail Trade	1.40%	9.54%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	4.19%	4.74%
Wholesale Trade	0.50%	2.71%

Moreover, the People at Work survey uses the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) to measure psychosocial distress. This scale measures the likelihood that the respondent has a mental health condition but cannot be used to diagnose specific mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression.

PAW Survey data from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 were used throughout this report. This report uses data supplied by www.peopleatwork.gov.au. The views expressed are the responsibility of the author(s) and are not necessarily the views of the People at Work® funding and non-funding partners.

6.4. ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS)

The ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS) collected information from persons aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of their experiences of violence, including detailed information about experiences of:

- physical and sexual violence
- violence, emotional abuse, and economic abuse by a cohabiting partner
- stalking
- sexual harassment
- childhood abuse and witnessing parental violence before the age of 15

Data collected from the survey provides high level prevalence statistics and changes over time for key violence types collected in the survey. The ABS PSS achieved a response rate of 52.2%, with 11,905 persons completing the entire questionnaire (both compulsory and voluntary components) nationally – 9,832 women and 2,073 men. The final data was benchmarked and weighted to be representative of the in-scope population. The ABS advised on the release of this data that the 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey was conducted between March 2021 and May 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this time, government policies were in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including stay-at-home orders, border control measures, limits on gatherings, and social distancing rules. Hence, the survey results should be understood and interpreted within the broader context of the wide-ranging changes to everyday life during the pandemic.^{i,ii,iii}

6.5. Supplementary data sources

A range of union and industry surveys are used to supplement the main data sources noted above; however these surveys do not use statistical sampling and are not representative of the population or population subsets and may be subject to bias. As such, it is important to consider these results in the context of other data sources.

International comparisons have been drawn from the *Violence and Harassment at Work* survey conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO). The Violence and Harassment at Work survey was fielded in 121 countries, territories and areas with diverse political, cultural, economic and geographic backgrounds.^{iv}

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22), [Personal Safety, Australia](#), ABS Website, accessed 6 September 2023.

ⁱⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22), [Physical violence](#), ABS Website, accessed 6 September 2023.

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22), [Sexual violence](#), ABS Website, accessed 6 September 2023.

^{iv} Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey, Geneva: ILO, 2022