

# Priority industry snapshot: Road transport

June 2018

The road transport industry is identified as a national priority to reduce the high rate of fatalities and serious claims in the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022*. The industry includes two detailed sub-industries: road freight transport; and road passenger transport.

This is an overview of the industry and its work health and safety (WHS) performance, highlighting key WHS issues and segments of the industry where performance may be lagging.

## Key points

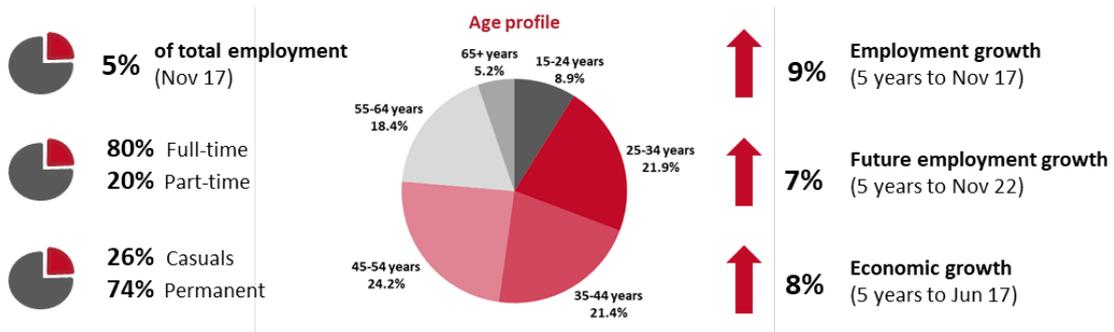
- Worker fatalities are high with 15.6 fatalities per 100,000 workers, with no improvement in recent years.
- Serious claims rates are high with 11.0 serious claims per million hours worked, however, this has fallen by 36 per cent since 2011-12.
- The road freight transport sub-sector accounted for 92 per cent of worker fatalities and 82 per cent of serious claims.
- As an occupation, truck drivers accounted for the highest proportion of both worker fatalities (84 per cent) and serious claims (54 per cent).
- Vehicle incidents accounted for 79 per cent of worker fatalities, followed by being hit by moving objects (6 per cent).
- Muscular stress while handling objects accounted for the highest proportion of serious claims (18 per cent), followed by muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down an object (15 per cent), and falls on the same level (13 per cent).

# The evidence<sup>1</sup>

## Industry profile<sup>2</sup>

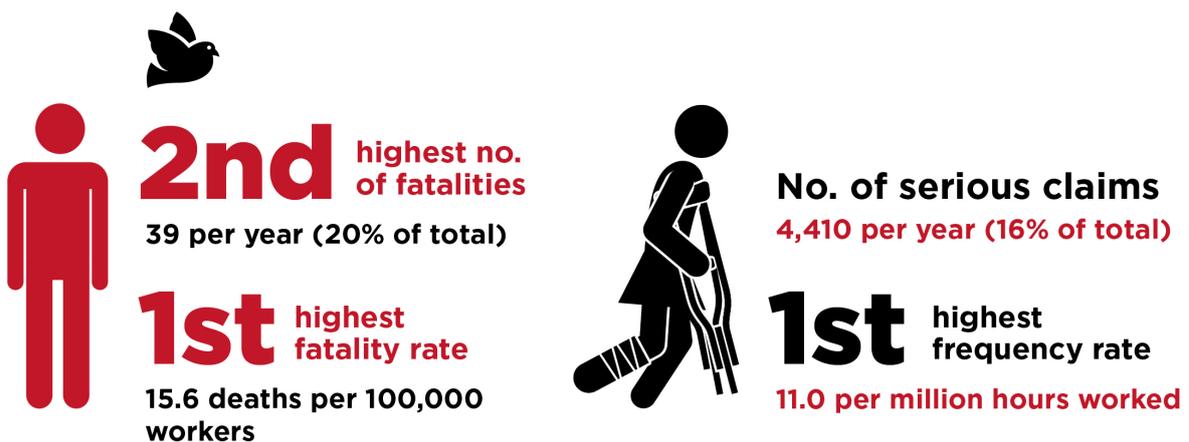
The transport, postal and warehousing industry accounted for 5 per cent of total employment in November 2017, with employment growing by 9 per cent over the five years to November 2017 (slightly above the overall employment growth of 8 per cent). It is projected that employment in the industry will continue growing, increasing by 7 per cent over the next five years, broadly in line with expected overall employment growth of 8 per cent.

The industry is comprised of a slightly older demographic, with just under half (48 per cent) of workers aged 45 years and over, compared with 40 per cent across all industries. While the industry has a higher proportion of full-time workers (80 per cent compared to the all industry average of 69 per cent), the proportion of casual employees is broadly in line with the overall average (26 per cent compared to the all industry average of 25 per cent).



## Why is the road transport industry a priority?

The nature of the work in the road transport industry makes it high risk and this is reflected in both the high rates of fatalities and serious workers' compensation claims. On average, the industry recorded the highest fatality rate and accounted for the second highest number of fatalities over the last five years. The industry also recorded the highest frequency rate of serious claims.



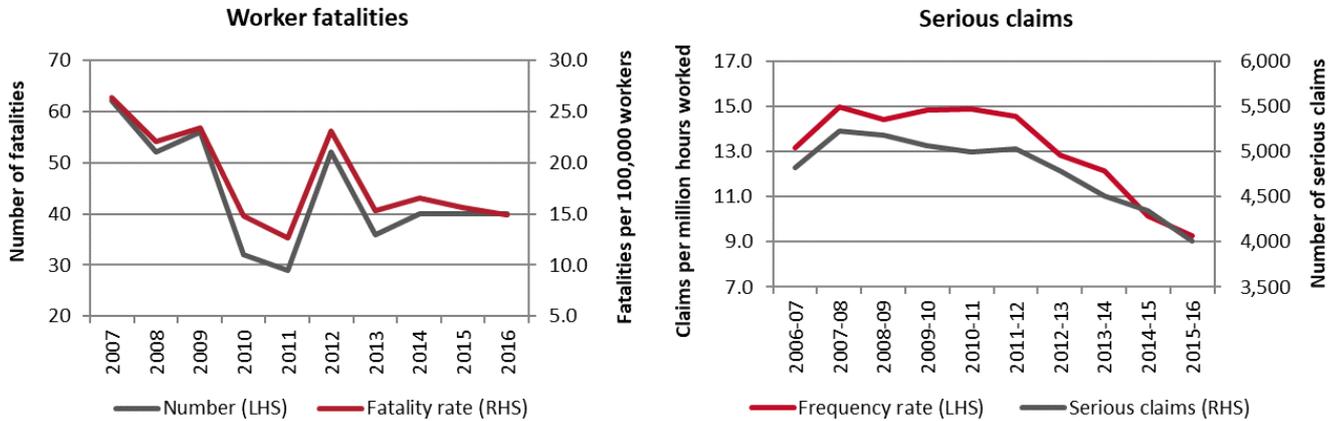
<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data contained in this report is sourced from Safe Work Australia's National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics and Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities data set. Fatalities data relate to the period 2013 to 2016, while serious claim data related to 2012-13 to 2015-16.

<sup>2</sup> The data in this section refers to the broader transport, postal and warehousing industry and is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Employment's *Employment Outlook to May 2022*.

## WHS performance of the industry

While the frequency rate of serious claims in the road transport industry remains comparatively high, there have been substantial improvements over the last five years. The frequency rate remained relatively stable with little improvement from 2007-08 and 2011-12. However the rate has fallen significantly by 36 per cent since then.

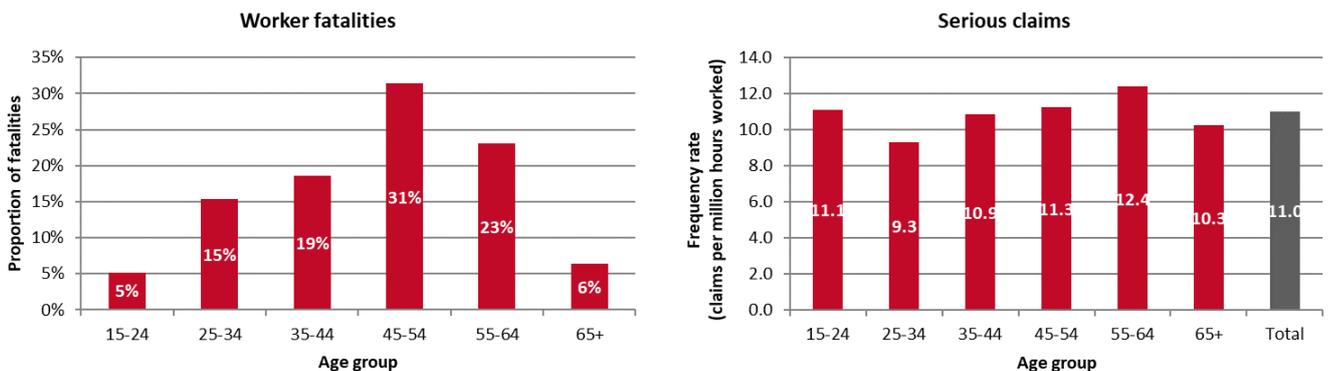
While there has been a significant fall in the number of worker fatalities and the fatality rate since 2007, there has been considerable volatility year-on-year and a plateauing over the last three years.



## Demographics

Older workers accounted for the majority of worker fatalities in the road transport industry from 2013-2016, with workers aged 45 to 54 years accounting for the highest proportion (31 per cent) of the 156 workers killed in the industry.

The serious claim frequency rate was relatively similar across the age groups, with workers aged 55-64 recording the highest rate (12.4 serious claims per million hours worked), followed by workers aged 45-54 years (11.3 serious claims per million hours worked).



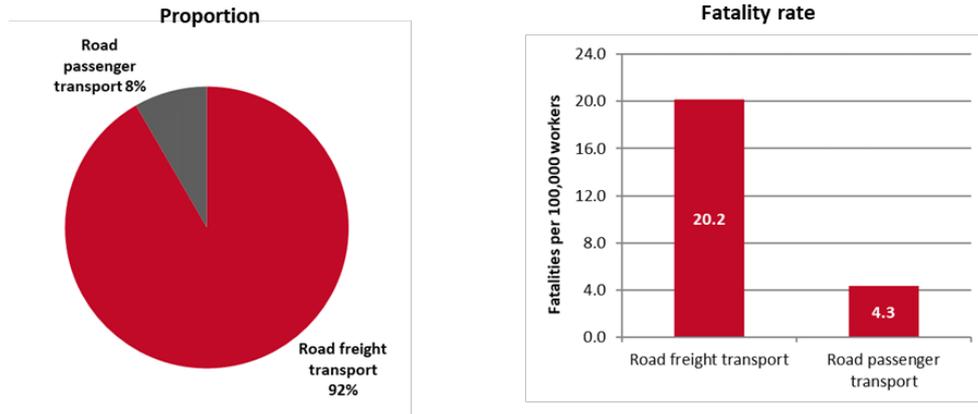
## Key areas of the industry

### Sub-industries

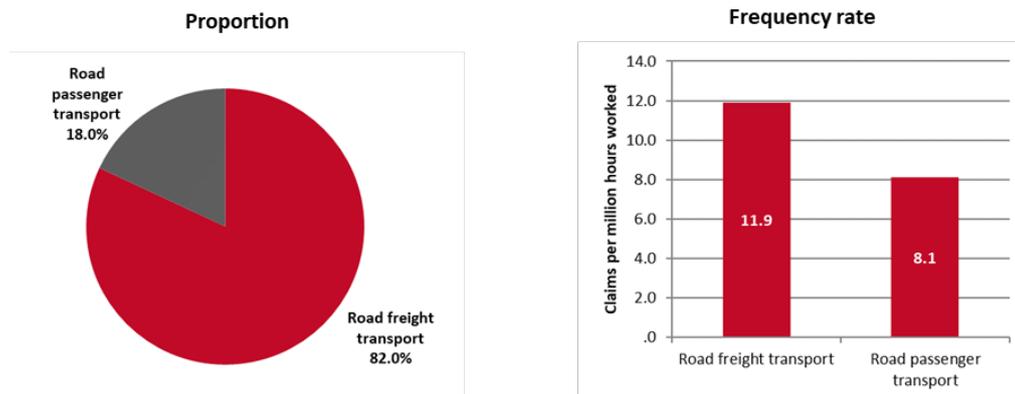
The road freight transport sub-industry accounts for the majority of workers in the road transport industry, which is reflected in both the number of fatalities and serious claims. This sub-industry accounted for 92 per cent of fatalities and 82 per cent serious claims in the industry from 2013-2016.

Accounting for the size of the workforce, the road freight transport sub-industry also recorded both the highest fatality rate (20.2 fatalities per 100,000 workers) and serious claim frequency rate (11.9 claims per million hours worked).

#### Worker fatalities



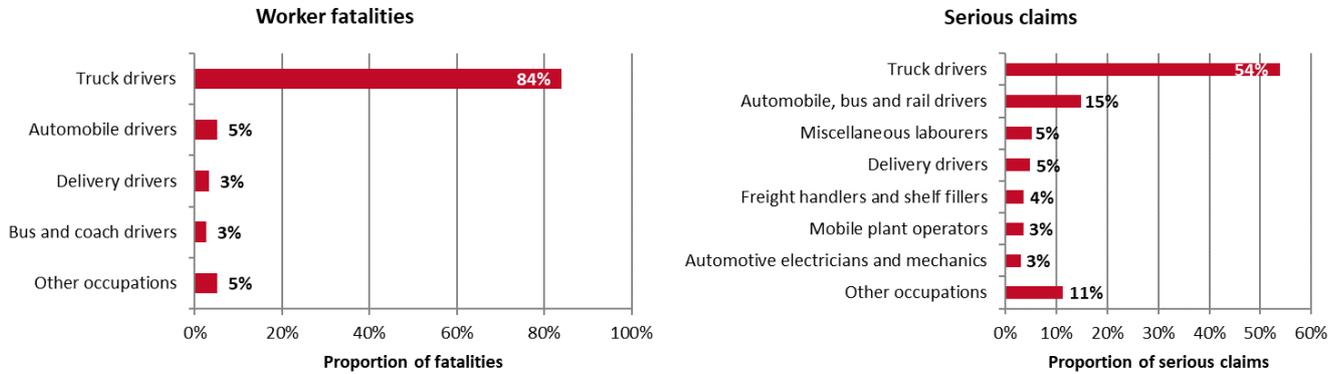
#### Serious claims



## Occupations

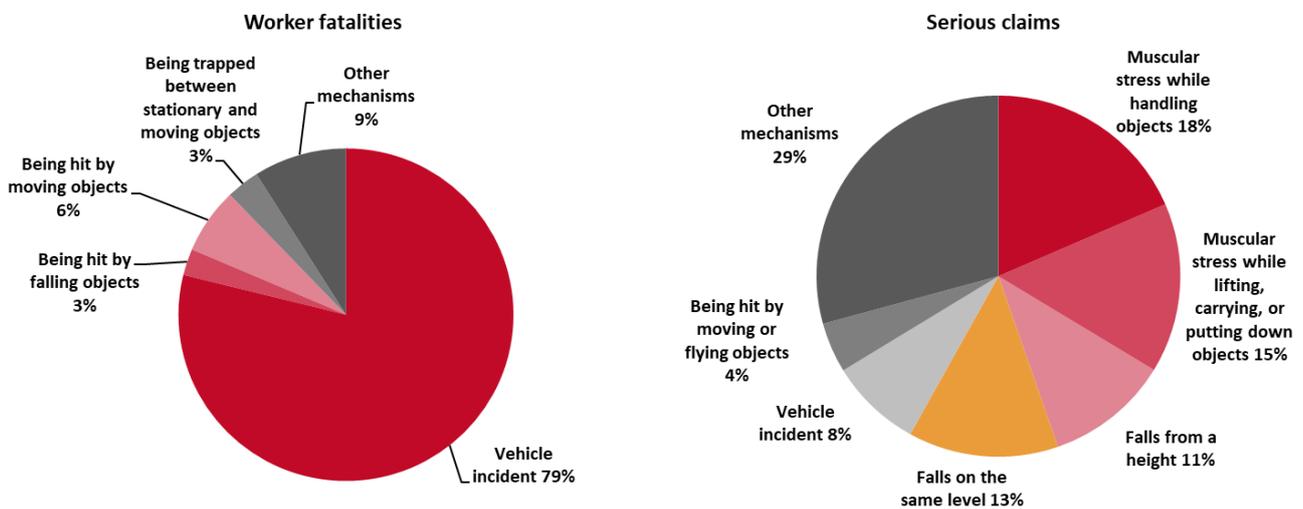
Truck drivers accounted for the majority of fatalities (84 per cent or 131 fatalities over the four-year period) within the road transport industry, followed by automobile drivers (5 per cent or 8 fatalities).

Truck drivers also accounted for majority of serious claims (54 per cent or an average of 2,375 claims per year), followed by automobile, bus and rail drivers (15 per cent or an average of 655 claims per year).



## Key WHS issues in the industry

Data shows that vehicle incidents accounted for the largest proportion of fatalities (79 per cent) within the road transport industry, followed by being hit by moving objects (6 per cent). Muscular stress while handling objects accounted for the highest proportion of serious claims (18 per cent), followed by muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down an object (15 per cent), and falls on the same level (13 per cent).



At the sub-industry level, a vehicle incident was the main cause of fatalities and muscular stress while handling objects was the main cause of injuries in both sub-industries.

<u>Main causes of fatalities</u>	<u>Main causes of injuries</u>
<p><b>Road freight transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle incident – 80%</li> <li>• Being hit by moving objects – 7%</li> <li>• Being trapped between stationary and moving objects – 3%</li> <li>• Being hit by falling objects – 3%</li> </ul>	<p><b>Road freight transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscular stress while handling objects – 18%</li> <li>• Muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down objects – 16%</li> <li>• Falls on the same level – 13%</li> <li>• Fall from a height – 13%</li> </ul>
<p><b>Road passenger transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle incident – 69%</li> <li>• Being trapped by moving machinery – 23%</li> <li>• Being assaulted by a person/s – 8%</li> </ul>	<p><b>Road passenger transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscular stress while handling objects – 19%</li> <li>• Falls on the same level – 14%</li> <li>• Vehicle incident – 12%</li> </ul>