



Australian Government

**Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority**

SEACARE AUTHORITY

SEACARE 2015—A FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Who we are

The Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (the Seacare Authority) is the Commonwealth statutory authority responsible for federal occupational health and safety (OHS) and workers' compensation arrangements for seafarers (the Seacare scheme)¹.

The Seacare Authority implements these arrangements with the assistance of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and Comcare. AMSA co-regulates aspects of the of the OHS component of the scheme and performs the OHS inspectorate functions while Comcare provides the secretariat and administrative functions.

The Seacare Authority has developed 'Seacare 2015' as its five-year strategic plan and direction for the Seacare scheme. In developing *Seacare 2015* the Seacare Authority:

- explored scheme data and trends over its 17 year life
- probed the insights of industry, social partners and stakeholders
- benchmarked against best practice in OHS, workers' compensation and insurance
- asked what people value and experience
- looked at what other scheme are doing and have learned.

Environmental factors

Seacare 2015 has been developed within the context of the Australian Government's plans to revitalise the Australian shipping industry. The Seacare Authority will assist in delivering on the Government's priorities by protecting the health, safety and welfare of Australian seafarers, providing support when they are injured and maintaining a sustainable scheme. By contributing to the plans for a revitalised shipping industry, *Seacare 2015* also delivers on the government's agenda for a stronger, fairer, more socially inclusive Australia.

Seacare 2015 takes account of other major reforms, notably:

- Moves to a single national maritime safety regulation regime;
- Rewrite of the Navigation Act 1912; and
- The harmonisation of workplace health and safety laws.

¹ The Seacare Authority is responsible for administering the following Commonwealth legislation: *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992* (Seafarers Act) and Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 1993, *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Act 1992* (Levy Act) and Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Regulations 2002, *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Collection Act 1992* (Levy Collection Act) and Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Collection Regulations 2002, *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI) Act) and Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) (National Standards) Regulations 2003.

Strategic Objectives

The Seacare Authority has adopted three themes of injury prevention, injury management and rehabilitation and scheme sustainability, on which to frame the strategic priorities of *Seacare 2015*.

The objectives of *Seacare 2015* are to:

- Prevent workplace deaths and reduce the incidence of workplace injury and disease in the Australian maritime industry;
- Ensure best practice outcomes through effective regulation of how seafarers are supported in their recovery, return to work and compensation following workplace injury; and
- Contribute to a strong, viable Australian maritime industry by ensuring a fair, efficient and effective system of OHS and workers' compensation.

The strategic priorities in *Seacare 2015* provide the focus of activity for the Seacare Authority through to 2015. They include:

- Injury Prevention
 - *Promote worker health, wellbeing and resilience*—by improving the health of seafarers they will be more resilient and less likely to be injured and more likely to recover quicker if injured.
 - *Prevent harm in maritime workplaces*—preventing injuries and disease will reduce the human and financial cost of workplace injuries.
 - *Transition to national workplace health and safety laws*—a seamless transition to the new laws will reduce the burden of regulation on employers and improve safety outcomes in workplaces.
- Injury management and rehabilitation
 - *Improve injury management practices*—improving injury management will improve outcomes for injured seafarers and reduce costs to employers
 - *Improve decision making*—improved decision making will result in less disputation, reduce delay and uncertainty and encourage earlier rehabilitation interventions.
 - *Improve rehabilitation and return to work outcomes*—improved rehabilitation and return to work (RTW) will reduce costs to employers and improve the quality of life for injured seafarers and support their families.
- Scheme sustainability
 - *Ensuring scheme represents value for money*—exploring options to scheme funding and services provision to improve cost effectiveness.
 - *Maintaining viability of scheme in changing industry environment*—ensuring the scheme keeps pace with the changing nature of the industry and community standards.
 - *Maintaining a sound safety net*—ensuring an adequate safety net in the event of an employer default.

The strategic priorities are supported by a range of activities designed to deliver on the intent of the objectives and priorities.

Seacare Authority
25 August 2011

Strategic Priorities and Activities

Injury Prevention		
Promote worker health, wellbeing and resilience	Prevent harm in maritime workplaces	Transition to national Workplace Health and Safety laws
Promote strong work health and safety leadership and culture	Encourage establishment of HSRs in all workplaces. Improve assistance to HSRs in delivery of work health and safety messages	Support government partners in developing of harmonised maritime WHS legislation
Respond to changing nature of the maritime labour force	Adopt targeted approach to dissemination of health and safety messages	Promote the key messages of the new WHS legislative framework
Promote the health benefits of good work	Reduce fragmentation in WHS regulation to ensure there are no gaps and overlaps in regulation Collaborate with other regulators to reduce red tape and compliance costs	Work cooperatively with government partners to ensure seamless transition to new arrangements

Injury Management and Rehabilitation		
Improve injury management practices	Improve decision making	Improve rehabilitation and RTW outcomes
Provide guidance material and support to help seafarers and their families exercise their compensation rights	More proactive regulation to ensure that workers' compensation decisions comply with legislative requirements. Promote correct or preferable decisions to improve confidence in decision making	Collaborate with health providers and experts to improve rehabilitation and RTW outcomes
Provide guidance material on best practice injury management	Promote alternative dispute resolution processes to reduce disputation, costs, delay and uncertainty.	Explore alternative approaches to RTW for injured seafarers

Scheme Sustainability		
Ensuring scheme represents value for money	Maintaining viability of scheme in changing industry environment	Maintaining Safety Net Fund
Explore alternative underwriting and insurance options to improve cost effectiveness	Ensure that scheme coverage provision provide clarity and certainty to the industry	Ensure that Fund balance is sufficient to meet actuarial assessed likely future claims
Explore innovative claims management options to improve efficiency and effectiveness	Improve data collection and integrity to ensure compliance with regulatory obligations	Ensure optimal fund protection
Explore other benefit options to provide mutually beneficial outcomes for claimants and employers competition	Ensure that scheme benefits reflect community standards	Ensure that all scheme participants contribute equitably to the Fund

Key Performance Indicators

A set of key performance indicators and targets have been developed to measure progress against Seacare 2015.

Key Performance Indicator	Measure	Target
Strategic Priority: Injury Prevention		
Workplace fatalities	Number of compensated fatalities	Zero
Incidence of serious injuries	Number of serious claims (involving one week lost time, non-commuting) per 1000 FTE	Reduction on rate for previous five years moving average
Strategic Priority: Injury management and rehabilitation		
Claim determination times	Percentage of claims where actual determination is within statutory time limits	>80%
Disputation rate	Number of AAT applications as a percentage of claims lodged	<15%
Claims continuance rate	Number of claims with 12 weeks or more lost time (excluding commuting) per 1000 FTE	Reduction on rate for previous five years moving average
Return to work rate	Durable return to work rate (percentage of injured workers who have returned to work and still at work 8-9 months after injury)	>70%
Strategic Priority: Scheme sustainability		
Premium rates	Premium rates adjusted 5 day deductible	Reduction from previous year
Safety Net Fund reserves	Available assets in Safety Net Fund over actuarial estimate	Sufficient to meet actuarial assessment