



Australian Government

Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority

CORPORATE PLAN 2026–27

Seacare Authority

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The Seacare Authority acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

Introduction

I, as the Accountable Authority of the Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority (Seacare Authority), am pleased to present the Seacare Authority's 2026–27 Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2026–2030 as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

I look forward to working with my fellow Seacare Authority Members, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Comcare and industry stakeholders to achieve the objectives of this plan.

Darren Kavanagh
Chairperson

About the Seacare Authority

The Seacare Authority is a statutory body that takes a leading role in minimising the personal and financial costs of workplace injury in the Australian maritime industry. The Seacare Authority oversees a national scheme of occupational health and safety (OHS) rehabilitation and workers' compensation arrangements that applies to defined seafarers (referred to as the Seacare scheme). Relating to OHS, the Seacare scheme also applies to other defined third parties, such as manufacturers and supply of plant and substances used on prescribed ships.

The Seacare Authority has several roles and functions pertaining to the Seacare scheme which encompasses the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992* (Seafarers Act), *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI) Act), *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Act 1992* (Levy Act), *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Collection Act 1992* (Levy Collection Act) and the regulations made under these Acts.

The Seacare Authority administers both the Seafarers and OHS(MI) Acts and works collaboratively with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) through its delivery of the scheme inspectorate function under the OHS(MI) Act.

The Seacare Authority also manages the Seafarers Safety Net Fund (Fund). The Fund acts as a safety net when an 'employer' is no longer able to meet its responsibilities. If this happens, injured seafarers can make a claim against the Fund when there is no employer available to make a claim against.

Our purposes as derived from our functions and powers under the Seafarers Act and OHS(MI) Act are:

Purpose 1

Promote healthy and safe workplaces and appropriate and timely compensation for, and rehabilitation of, injured workers covered by the Seacare scheme

Purpose 2

Maintain a scheme safety net that is able to meet its liabilities

Operating context

Environment

The Seacare Authority continues to support injured workers in the shipping and offshore industry, a hazardous industry involving complex operational and safety challenges.

The withdrawal of most insurers from the Seafarers Act, and the very limited involvement of remaining insurers, is a critical issue for the scheme. The Fund and employers under the scheme are required to be covered by compliant insurance policies – the absence of an available market, however, leaves employers with no option but to seek an exemption from the Seafarers Act and shift to state and territory arrangements where appropriate.

Structural changes in the shipping industry in Australia, combined with the collapse of the insurance market, has an ongoing impact on the Fund, particularly:

- increasing risk of a default event occurring
- significantly decreasing the pool of employers from which to collect a levy to maintain the reserves of the Fund.

In April 2024, the Government injected \$900,000 into the Fund to bring the Fund up to its target reserve of \$2.5 million and ensure its ongoing viability.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) received funding to undertake consultation on legislative reform of the scheme, including reforms to address driving the exit of insurers from the Seacare insurance market and clarifying coverage.

The Government is also considering reforms to harmonise the OHS(MI) Act and its subordinate legislation with the modern work health and safety laws that apply throughout Australia's onshore jurisdictions.

The Department has commenced the consultation process for the reform of OHS(MI) Act.

The Seacare Authority is working closely with the Department and its stakeholders to ensure that the Government's principles of regulator best practice are met and the best outcomes for the scheme are achieved.

We continuously monitor data sources, including those published by Safe Work Australia, and the operating environment to identify trends within the industry. This assists us in tailoring our activities to ensure we adapt to the changing environment and fulfil our purposes.

Our programs and activities are used by and affect:

- employers and operators covered by the Seacare scheme and their employees
- individuals making claims for workers' compensation against the Fund
- Australian Government agencies, such as AMSA and Comcare.

Capability

The Seacare Authority is not a body corporate and does not employ its own staff. To enable it to perform its functions and exercise its powers, section 72A of the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) requires Comcare to provide the Seacare Authority with secretariat support, staff and other resources that the Seacare Authority reasonably requires.

Comcare, in its role providing support to the Seacare Authority, as well as under delegation from the Seacare Authority, is responsible for:

- providing administrative and secretariat support to the Seacare Authority
- managing the scheme's claims database
- monitoring and reporting on Seacare scheme performance
- preparing the annual report
- reporting to the Minister
- liaising and communicating with scheme stakeholders and other regulators
- managing the annual appropriation for supporting the Seacare function
- managing the Fund and levy collection
- administering any claims made on the Fund.

The capability of the Seacare Authority is provided by the appointment of members and deputy members with relevant experience and knowledge to contribute to its effective operation and fulfilment of its legislative functions. A tripartite body, the Seacare Authority comprises representatives of employees, industry bodies and government.

To ensure the Seacare Authority is operating to actively promote best practice, the Seacare Authority has adopted the Seacare Authority Values and Code of Conduct. This came into effect from 11 June 2026.

Risk oversight and management

The Seacare Authority applies principles and a risk management framework which align with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and complies with international risk management standard ISO 31000:2018 and section 16 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

We use a Strategic Risk Register to identify, monitor and mitigate risks to both the Seacare Authority and the scheme more generally, and to recognise and respond to environmental factors. The Strategic Risk Register is reviewed at each of the regular quarterly meetings of the Seacare Authority. The Comcare and Seacare Authority Audit and Risk Committee provides independent oversight and guidance, ensuring compliance with the processes applicable to the risk management framework.

We recognise some risk is inevitable – however the Seacare Authority actively works to minimise risks which may cause harm to our financial position, regulatory authority, reputation, stakeholder relationships, legislative obligations and the health and safety of employees covered by the scheme. We regularly monitor the success of risk controls implemented, and revise or supplement controls as required.

The Seacare Authority's strategic risks are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Seacare Authority strategic risks

Strategic risk	Mitigation strategies
The scheme becomes unviable	- The Seacare Authority works with scheme employers to ensure compliance with legislative obligations and promote better practice injury prevention and return to work practices. - The Seacare Authority will work with relevant stakeholders to implement changes arising out of any reform for the Seacare scheme.
The Fund becomes unviable	- The Seacare Authority commissions and considers the outcomes from a biennial actuarial review of the Fund, including assessment of the appropriateness of the target reserve and the levy rate. - The Seacare Authority considers the Fund design and how this is suited to scheme operations considering any changes that arise out of the Seacare reform.
Seacare Authority fails to anticipate changes in the strategic environment and is unable to adequately respond to changes	- The Seacare Authority monitors its operating environment and engages with scheme stakeholders to consider strategic issues and prioritise actions. - The Seacare Authority exercises its legislative powers to provide certainty to scheme operators and employers.
Safety performance of scheme deteriorates	The Seacare Authority has developed an OHS plan and undertakes activities against this plan to promote compliance with health and safety legislation and regulations as best practice.
Seacare Authority unable to execute intent of Seacare Corporate Plan	The Seacare Authority undertakes active review and regular reporting of Corporate Plan strategies and works with Comcare to ensure reasonable and effective resources are available to support the Seacare Authority in its program of work.
Ineffective scheme administration and service delivery	The Seacare Authority considers reports on scheme performance inspectorate activity and the exercise of delegations at its regular meetings and works with Comcare to ensure reasonable and effective resources are available to support the Seacare Authority in its program of work.
The Seacare Authority does not undertake its legislative obligations under the Seafarers Act due to: - poor governance arrangements or - a catastrophic event.	- The Seacare Authority undertakes reviews of governance and delegation arrangements on an annual basis to ensure conformance with better practice corporate governance. - Business continuity plans are in place to ensure that the Seacare Authority can undertake its duties should a catastrophic event occur.

Cooperation

As a tripartite body, the Seacare Authority collaborates with government, industry and employee organisations to undertake our statutory duties.

AMSA undertakes the inspectorate function under the OHS(MI) Act and provides the Seacare Authority with regular reports in relation to its inspectorate activity. AMSA also supports the Seacare Authority through provision of information and data on issues impacting the maritime industry and collaborates with the Seacare Authority on our Occupational Health and Safety Plan.

Comcare, as already noted, provides secretariat and other such support so that the Seacare Authority can undertake its functions. Comcare also facilitates collaboration with scheme stakeholders such as SafeWork Australia, and our participation in the National Data Set and the Jurisdiction Comparison.

The Seacare Authority will continue to work closely with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations through 2026–27 on the reform of the Seacare scheme and broader issues of policy and scheme management.

Subsidiaries

The Seacare Authority does not have any subsidiary bodies.

Performance against our strategic purposes and key activities

Our performance management framework is responsive to our operating environment.

We have established clear linkages between our key activities and statutory purposes and set targets to demonstrate how the Seacare Authority works to achieve these performance measures. Outcomes against our performance measures are monitored by the Seacare Authority on a half yearly basis (or more regularly as required) and are presented in the Annual Performance Statements published in our Annual Reports.

Regulator performance

The Seacare Authority has regulatory functions and powers under the Seafarers Act and OHS(MI) Act.

We are committed to applying the 3 principles of regulatory best practice through delivery of our operations, as required by the [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide 128](#). This commitment has been formalised through the Ministerial Statement of Expectations issued to the Seacare Authority and our corresponding Regulator Statement of Intent, available on our website.

Our performance measures and targets for 2026–27 consider linkages to the 3 principles of best practice:

- Principle 1: Continuous improvement and building trust
- Principle 2: Risk based and data driven
- Principle 3: Collaboration and engagement.

Purpose 1: Perform its statutory functions to promote healthy and safe workplaces and appropriate and timely compensation for, and rehabilitation of, injured workers covered by the Seacare scheme

Table 2: Purpose 1, Measure 1

The Seacare Authority promotes healthy and safe workplaces				
Key activities*				
Monitor the operation of the OHS(MI) Act and promote compliance				
Proactively engage with the jurisdiction on safety issues, including activities undertaken against the Seacare Authority/Australian Maritime Safety Authority Occupational Health and Safety Plan				
Promote better practice occupational health and safety through information and guidance and other agreed cost neutral initiatives				
Undertake a review of agency operational agreements and due diligence activities to ensure the Seacare Authority is meeting its legislative obligations				
Assist and consult the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in relation to strategic reviews of Seacare scheme legislation				
Performance measures				
Measure	Regulatory best practice principle link	2026–27 target	2027–28 and beyond	Method/source
1. The Seacare Authority promotes healthy and safe workplaces	1, 2, 3	Seacare Members and scheme participants have reporting available on scheme OHS performance and trends, and the Seacare Authority uses this to promote health and safety in the jurisdiction	As per 2026–27	Seacare Performance Indicators tabled and considered against reported data annually, AMSA inspectorate reports are tabled at each regular meeting (quarterly) Source: AMSA data, Seacare data prepared by Secretariat

* Key activities have been included to reflect the Seacare Authority's continual review of due diligence activities, as well as assistance with strategic reviews. The Seacare Authority aims to achieve these activities by providing considered responses to the reviews as announced by government.

Table 3: Purpose 1, Measure 2

The Seacare Authority promotes timely rehabilitation and compensation				
Key activities				
Promote return-to-work outcomes in the scheme through collaboration with scheme stakeholders				
Promote better practice claims management through provision of relevant information for employees and employers to improve decision making and dispute resolution				
Educate scheme stakeholders to facilitate compliance with legislated reporting and payment obligations				
Performance measures				
Measure	Regulatory best practice principle link	2026–27 target	2027–28 and beyond	Method/source
2. The Seacare Authority promotes timely rehabilitation and compensation	1, 2, 3	Seacare members have reporting available on scheme rehabilitation and claims performance and trends. This is used to promote appropriate and timely rehabilitation and compensation activities	As per 2026–27	Consideration of Performance at Seacare Authority meetings, and action taken to promote improved performance Source: Seacare data prepared by Secretariat

Purpose 2: The Seacare Authority maintains a scheme safety net that is able to meet its liabilities

Table 4: Purpose 2, Measure 1

The Seacare Authority maintains a scheme safety net fund that is able to meet its liabilities				
Key activities				
Undertake a biennial (or more frequent if required) actuarial review of the Fund to determine an appropriate reserve target and levy rate				
Monitor potential liabilities or other factors that may reduce the Fund and ensure appropriate actions are taken in a timely manner				
Performance measures				
Measure	Regulatory best practice principle link	2026–27 target	2027–28 and beyond	Method/source
3. The Seacare Authority maintains a scheme safety net fund that is able to meet its liabilities	2, 3	1. Target cash reserve and recommended levy rate reviewed at a quarterly meeting of the Seacare Authority	As per 2026–27	Determination of target cash reserve and recommended levy rate, informed by Actuarial assessment of the Fund as undertaken. Reports on the status of the Fund and potential liabilities against the Fund are tabled at each regular meeting, implications considered and action taken if required Source: Seacare data prepared by Secretariat, valuation provided by external Actuary
		2. Full and proper payment of levies and reporting of berths by employers as required by the Seafarers Act and Levy Collection Act	As per 2026–27	Reports of employer compliance with obligations tabled and reviewed at regular meetings and action taken as appropriate to promote compliance. Source: Seacare data prepared by Secretariat
		3. Factors that may reduce the Fund are identified, monitored, and appropriate action taken	As per 2026–27	Reports on the status of the fund and potential liabilities against the Fund are tabled at each regular meeting; implications considered and action taken if required Source: Seacare data prepared by Secretariat

Appendix A – Corporate plan content requirements

This corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act
- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.

The following table details the requirements met by the Seacare Authority's corporate plan and the page reference(s) for each requirement.

Table 5: Seacare Authority compliance table

Requirement	Page
Introduction	3
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The reporting period for which the plan is prepared	
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