

Indicator 6.5b: Wage rates and injury rates within the forest sector (2024)



This indicator measures the level of wage and injury rates in the forest sector. A sustainable industry will ensure high levels of workforce health with welfare and wage rates comparable with national averages for other occupations.

Definitions

Wage: a fixed regular payment earned for work or services, typically paid on a daily or weekly basis.

Salary: a fixed regular payment earned for work or services, typically paid on a fortnightly or monthly basis but often expressed as an annual sum.

Wages and salaries are counted for all employees and include severance, termination and redundancy payments, salaries and fees of directors and executives, retainers and commissions, bonuses, annual and other types of leave, salary sacrificed earnings, and remuneration of employees in the form of share-based payments and stock options.

Definitions of forest industry subsectors are found in [Supporting information for 6.5b](#).

Key points

- Total annual wages and salaries in the forest sector between 2016–17 and 2020–21 remained relatively constant when adjusted for inflation.
- Between 2015–16 and 2020–21, serious injury claims in the forest sector increased slightly in total number and rate per 1,000 employees.

Wages and salaries

National data on wages and salaries are derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Census of Population and Housing 2021*. Between 2016-17 and 2020-21, total annual wages and salaries in the forest sector remained relatively constant, varying between a minimum of \$5.18 billion in 2016-17 and a maximum of \$5.46 billion in 2018-19 after adjusting for inflation (Figure 6.5b-1).

From 2016-17 to 2020-21 total annual wages and salaries:

- stayed constant in the forestry and logging subsector
- increased by 6% in the wood product manufacturing subsector
- decreased by 6% in the pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector.

In 2020-21, total forest sector wages and salaries comprised:

- the Wood product manufacturing subsector (56%)
- the Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector (32%)
- the Forestry and logging subsector (13%).

The average per-person wage for the forestry sector increased slightly over the period 2016-17 to 2020-21 when adjusted for inflation, as part of a steady trend (Figure 6.5b-2). The forestry sector had a higher average annual growth rate in per-person wages (4.2%) than other primary and manufacturing sectors (the average annual growth rates for mining and manufacturing were -2.1% and -0.5%, respectively).

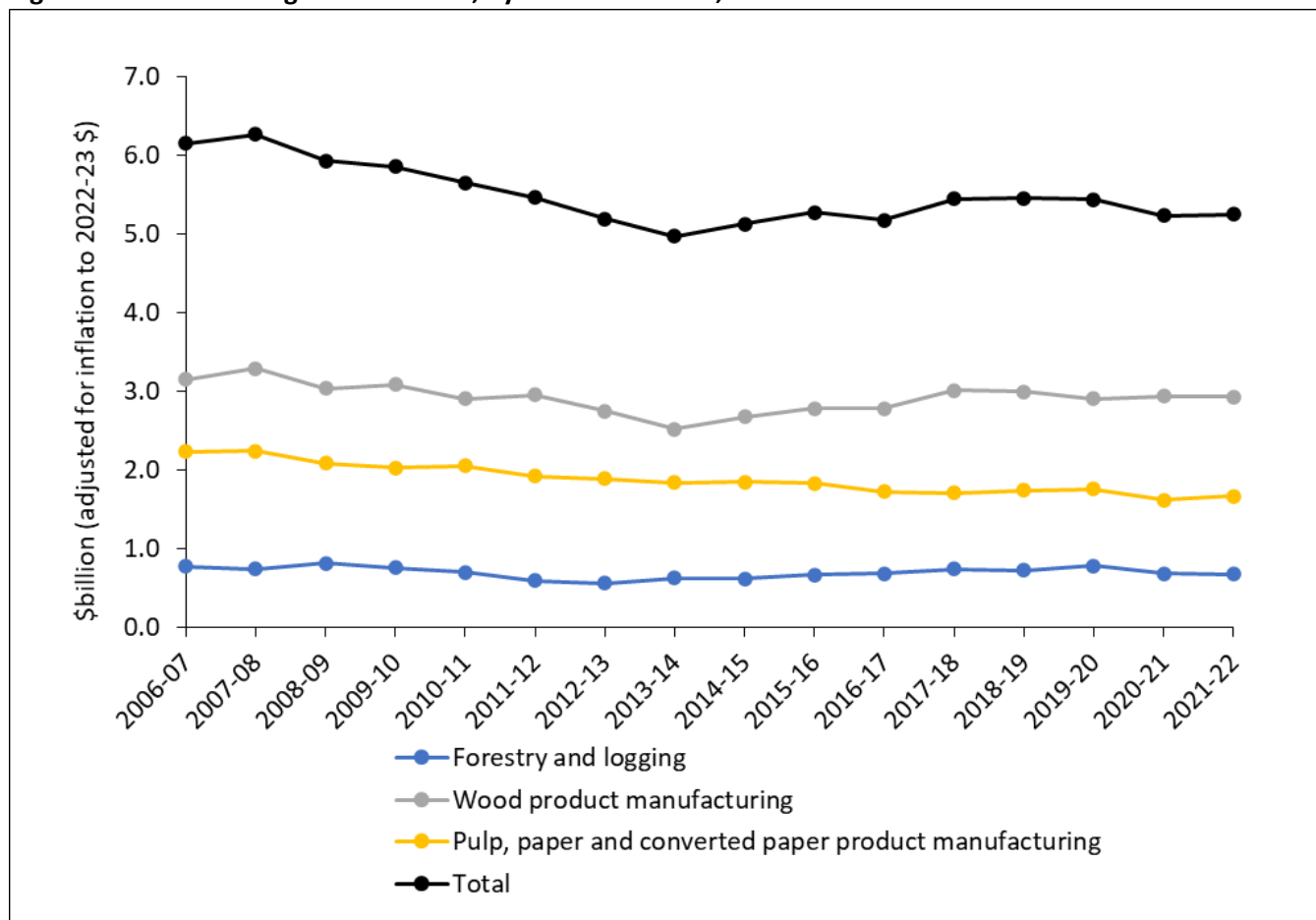
However, care must be taken when reviewing these figures as the change in total and average wages for a sector may be due to a combination of changes in:

- the total number of employees
- the proportion of employees that are part-time or full-time
- the average hours worked by part-time employees
- actual wage rates paid.

There is insufficient detail in statistics for the Australian forestry industry to determine the scale of influence of each of these possible factors, so caution must be used in interpreting the data presented here.

Wages and salaries for other types of employment, such as in forest-based tourism, or management of forested national parks and reserves, are not captured here.

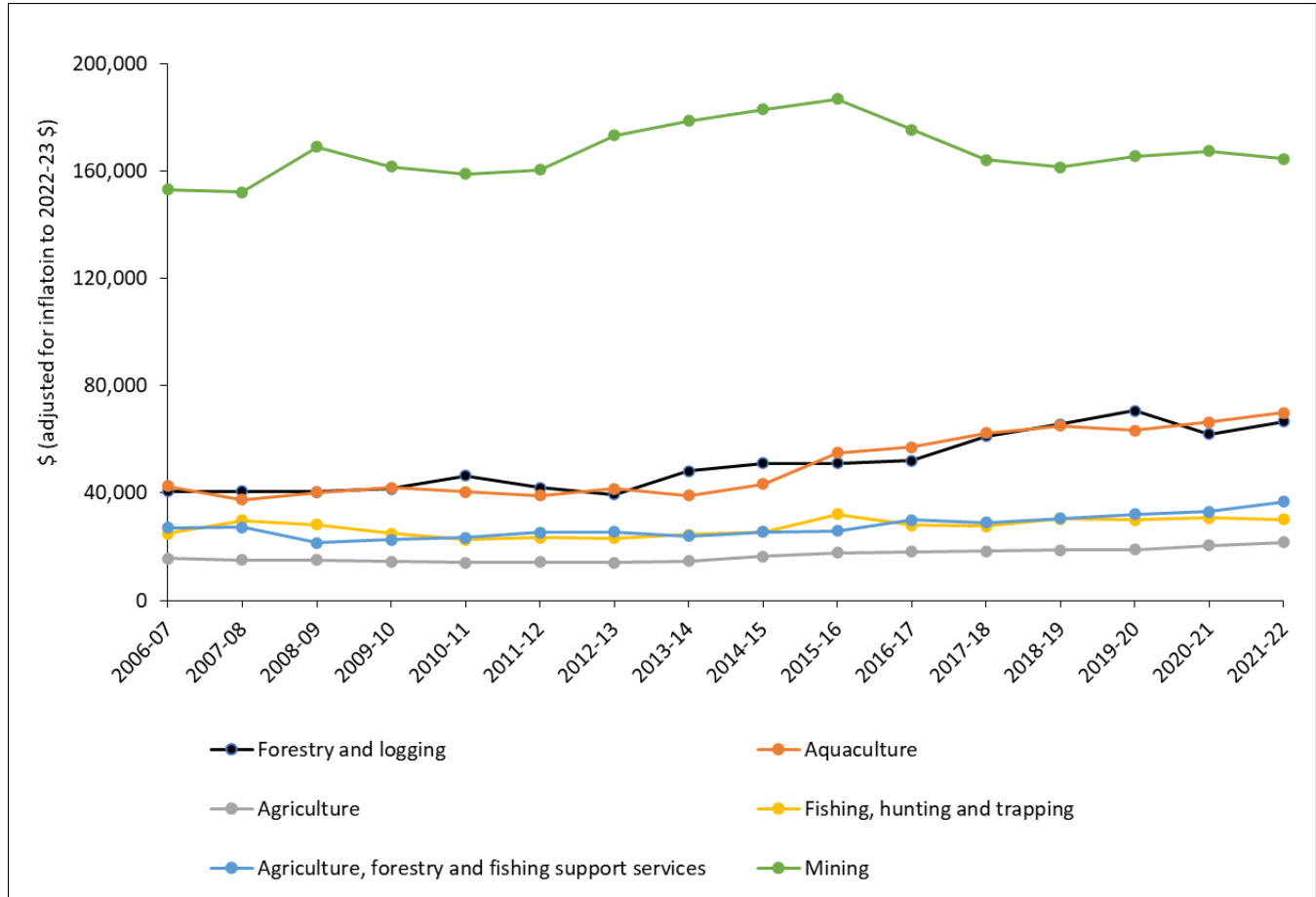
Figure 6.5b-1: Total wages and salaries, by forest subsector, 2015-16 to 2021-22



Source: ABS (2021-22).

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 6.5b-1.](#)

Figure 6.5b-2: Average annual per-person wages, primary sectors



Source: ABS (2021-22).

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 6.5b-2.](#)

Injury and fatality rates

National data on injury and fatality rates in the forest sector are sourced from Safe Work Australia.

Between 2015-16 and 2020-21, the number of serious injury claims:

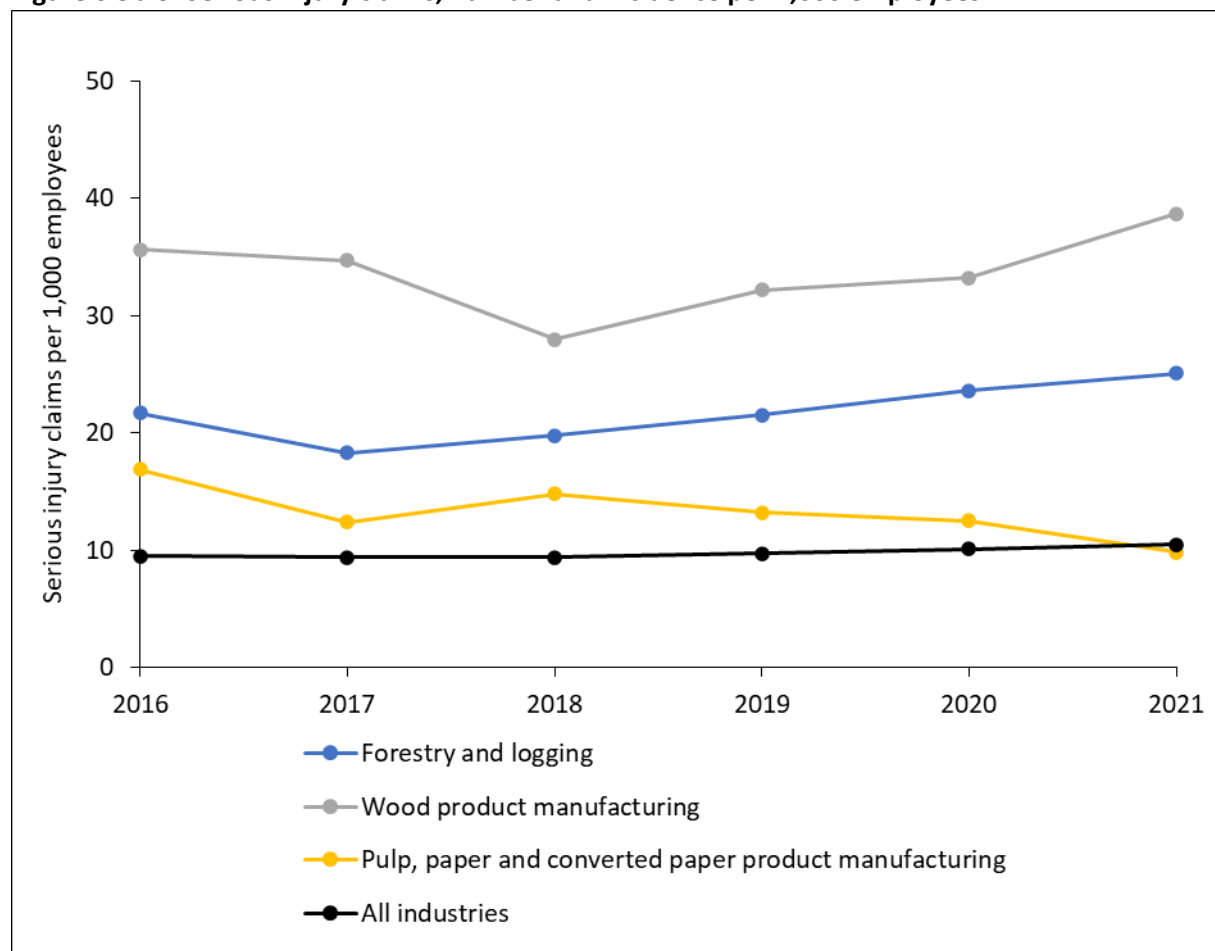
- increased by 21% in the Forestry and logging subsector, from 126 to 152
- increased by 12% in the Wood product manufacturing subsector, from 1,252 to 1,406
- decreased by 12% in the Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector, from 205 to 181.

Between 2015-16 and 2020-21, the incidence of serious injury claims per 1,000 employees:

- increased in the Forestry and logging subsector, from 21.7 to 25.1
- increased in the Wood product manufacturing subsector, from 35.6 to 38.7
- decreased in the Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing sector, from 16.9 to 9.8.

Incidence rates in 2020-21 for the Forestry and logging, and Wood product manufacturing subsectors were significantly higher than the all-industries average (Figure 6.5b-3). The Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector incident rates in 2020-21 were on par with the all-industries average.

Figure 6.5b-3: Serious injury claims, number and incidence per 1,000 employees



Source: ABS (2021-22).

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 6.5b-3.](#)

Reported compensated fatalities between 2014-15 and 2020-21 comprised:

- 17 in the Forestry and logging subsector
- 10 in the Wood product manufacturing subsector
- 3 in the Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector.

Between 2014-15 and 2020-21, the average incidence of compensated fatalities per 1,000 employees was:

- 0.64 in the Forestry and logging subsector
- 0.06 in the Wood product manufacturing subsector
- 0.05 in the Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing subsector.

Due to the small numbers of fatalities in any one year, individual year data are aggregated in the data source (Safe Work Australia 2012).

Supporting information for Indicator 6.5b: Wage rates and injury rates within the forest sector

Data sources

This indicator presents data derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys and Safe Work Australia data.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2021-22). [Australian Industry](#). Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Safe Work Australia (2012). *Compendium of Workers' Compensation Statistics Australia 2009-10*. Customised report. Safe Work Australia, Canberra.

Safe Work Australia (2016). *Compendium of Workers' Compensation Statistics Australia 2010-11 to 2014-15*. Customised report. Safe Work Australia, Canberra.

Safe Work Australia (2022). *Compendium of Workers' Compensation Statistics Australia 2015-16 to 2020-21*. Customised report. Safe Work Australia, Canberra.

Awards regulating employment conditions

While information on average wages per full-time-equivalent staff are not available, it is important to note that employment, including wages and conditions, is heavily regulated in Australia. The three central components of regulation are:

- [modern awards](#), prepared on an industry-by-industry basis, outlining requirements for pay, hours of work, rosters, breaks, allowances, penalty rates and overtime
- [National Employment Standards](#), outlining 11 minimum entitlements for employees
- [National Minimum Wage](#), being the minimum amount any employee in Australia may be paid for work. In most cases, the relevant minimum wage is outlined in the Industry Award.

For the Australian forestry sector, two key Industry Awards regulate employment conditions:

- the [Timber Industry Award](#), covering the following subsectors:
 - harvesting and forestry management
 - milling and processing
 - panel products
 - manufacturing
 - merchandising and retailing
 - pulp and paper
- the [Silviculture Award](#), covering silviculture and afforestation industry employees.

Forest industry subsectors

The following forest industry subsectors used in Figures 6.5b-1 and 6.5b-2 are slightly different to the those used elsewhere in Indicators 6.5a, 6.5b, 6.5c, 6.5d.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing support services

This category refers to Division A, Subdivision 05 of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006. It includes businesses that provide silvicultural support services to forestry, shearing

services for livestock, and other agricultural and fishing support services, and businesses that operate forestry nurseries.

Forestry and logging

This category refers to Division A, Subdivision 03, of ANZSIC 2006. It includes businesses that mainly grow and log timber in native or plantation forests, or timber tracts; cut and/or roughly hew logs into products such as railway sleepers or posts; cut trees and scrubs for firewood; and gather forest products such as mushrooms and resin from forest environments.

Wood product manufacturing

This category refers to Division C, Subdivision 14, of ANZSIC 2006. It includes businesses that manufacture rough-sawn timber and boards; woodchips; prefabricated buildings; structural fittings and components (such as roof trusses and doors); veneers and plywood; wood boards and sheets from reconstituted wood fibres; laminated timber and non-timber materials; and businesses that re-saw or dress timber, timber boards and mouldings. It excludes businesses that manufacture timber used in furniture-making.

Pulp, paper and converted paper product manufacturing

This category refers to Division C, Subdivision 15, of ANZSIC 2006. It includes businesses that manufacture: wood pulp, pulp from used paper, paper or paperboard; paperboard containers; paper bags; paper stationery products; and sanitary paper-based products.

Businesses are classified according to their predominant activity, and can include government-owned and controlled entities such as government agencies.

More information

Learn more about [Criterion 6 of Australia's State of the Forest Report](#).

Web agriculture.gov.au/abares/forestsaustralia/sofr/

[Download a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data presented in Indicator 6.5b.](#)

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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