

Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Framework

for the South Australian public sector

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**Government
of South Australia**

Office of the Commissioner
for Public Sector Employment

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A message from the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

This framework reflects my commitment to the safety and wellbeing of every person working in the South Australian public sector throughout their employment journey.

It builds on a strong legislative foundation, including the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*, the *Return to Work Act 2014*, and the *Public Sector Act 2009*, to focus our attention on supporting standards, guidelines and strategies that guide our collective responsibilities.

The SWIM Framework will support agencies to meet their legal obligations and implement consistent and effective systems across the sector by enabling every leader, manager, and worker to contribute to a culture where safety and wellbeing are integral to how we work and serve the community.

The framework is underpinned by the [SWIM Strategy 2023–2032](#), which articulates a clear vision:

“Safe and healthy public sector workplaces that enhance our lives, wellbeing and delivery of services”

This vision is enabled by:

- **leadership and commitment** to safety, wellbeing, and injury management
- **contemporary and innovative approaches** to workplace health and safety
- **continuous improvement** through data-driven insights and collaboration.



Consistency in our approach to managing safety and wellbeing enables the sector to:

- embed **positive duties** and **due diligence** into leadership and governance
- implement **minimum standards** for WHS and injury management
- foster **mentally healthy workplaces** through proactive psychosocial risk management
- leverage **cross-sector collaboration**, including through forums facilitated by my office.
- monitor and improve performance through **data, reporting, and self-assessment tools**.

Through this shared commitment, we can ensure that our workplaces are safe, supportive, resilient, and high performing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erma Ranieri".

ERMA RANIERI PSM
Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management (SWIM) Framework

The SWIM Framework sets out key features of the South Australian public sector environment that are relevant to agencies as we strive to meet our legislative duties for workers’ safety, wellbeing and injury management, and set objectives and monitor performance for improvement.

INTRODUCTION

The duties of the *Work Health and Safety Act (SA) (2012)* (WHS Act) and *Return to Work Act (2014)* (RTW Act) establish significant responsibilities in the South Australian public sector, the largest employer in the state.

Chief executives, senior leaders, managers, and workers share responsibilities for the physical and psychosocial safety and wellbeing of our workforce and the leadership in our workplaces and across the community.

The [Safety Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the South Australian public sector \(2023-2032\)](#) commits to the vision “safe and healthy public sector workplaces that enhance our lives, wellbeing and delivery of services” through three enablers and 17 focus areas. Performance is assessed through performance measures linked to the [Australian WHS Strategy \(2023-2033\)](#).

The South Australian public sector [Work Health Safety \(WHS\) guidelines](#) and [Injury Management \(IM\) Standards](#) established within this framework set out the minimum practices for agencies to ensure compliance with legislation and enable consistent implementation across the sector.

This document is for South Australian public sector leaders and managers responsible for the design and implementation of safety, wellbeing and injury management systems and performance. It should also be promoted to managers and workers to help them understand the public sector context, requirements systems and resources relevant to their risk profile and business operations.

The Public Sector Values of Respect, Collaboration and Engagement, Courage and Tenacity will all be called into action: we value every individual, their physical and psychosocial safety; our actions can impact the safety of others and through consultation and engagement we design healthy workplaces that enable us to thrive; with courage and tenacity we can ensure the impacts of injury are minimised and maximum recovery is attained.

KEY TERMS

Actuarial valuation	The valuation of outstanding workers compensation and additional compensation financial liabilities conducted annually for each public authority, required by the RTW Act 2014.
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Agency	A public sector agency is defined in the <i>Public Sector Act 2009 (SA)</i> (PS Act). It includes administrative units (departments and attached offices) and other agencies or instrumentalities
Code of Ethics	Code of Ethics for the South Australian public sector
Healthy Workplace Service	Free consulting service offered to all public and private sector South Australian organisations
HWSA	Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities
ISO 45001:2018	International Standards Organisation Standard number 45001: Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems
IM Standards	South Australian public sector Injury Management Standards
IMMG	Injury Management Managers Group – A forum convened by OCPSE for coordination and collaboration regarding claims management and return to work scheme issues that impact the whole of government; and to facilitate continuous improvement in the field of injury management.
MHW Framework	Mentally Healthy Workplaces Framework for the public sector
Officer	An Officer is a person who makes or helps make a decision which affects either the whole or a major part of a business or undertaking. If a person has the capacity to significantly affect the financial standing of the organisation, they are recognised as an officer. Officers for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) have a specific duty to exercise due diligence to ensure they meet their own WHS obligations. They must be proactive in ensuring the PCBU complies with their duties under the WHS Act. ¹
Person conducting a business and undertaking (PCBU) ²	A public authority is defined in the WHS Act as an agency or instrumentality of the Crown or an administrative unit or department within the public service. The laws define a PCBU sufficiently widely to cover public sector agencies, which therefore binds the Crown as a legal entity. Refer to ‘Our regulatory environment’ below for more information.

¹ [Glossary | SafeWork SA](#)

² [Glossary | SafeWork SA](#)

Positive duty	The WHS Act creates a positive duty on a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their physical or psychological safety. This includes risks from psychosocial hazards such as sexual and gender-based harassment. In addition to existing WHS duties, the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (SD ACT) also includes a positive duty to prevent sexual harassment (and other related unlawful conduct). ³
RTWSA	ReturntoWorkSA
OCPSE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment
SWSA	SafeWork SA
Worker	A person who carries out work for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) who may be engaged in one of many ways including as an employee, volunteer, contractor, subcontractor, apprentice, trainee, or labour hire worker.
WHS Guideline	WHS Guideline for the South Australian public sector
WHSMG	Work Health and Safety Managers Group – a forum convened by OCPSE to provide coordination and collaboration regarding WHS issues that impact the whole of government; to inform and contribute to the reform agenda for public sector WHS and to facilitate continuous improvement in WHS performance.

OUR REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Safety and wellbeing

In 2011, Safe Work Australia developed the model WHS laws to be implemented across Australia. To become legally binding the Commonwealth, states and territories must separately implement them as their own laws. Safe Work Australia is responsible for maintaining the model WHS laws, which are enforced and regulated by regulators in each jurisdiction; in South Australia this is SafeWork SA.

South Australia's WHS laws align with all Australian jurisdictions other than Victoria through the adoption of the same national model laws⁴.

The WHS Act sets out the positive duties of organisations and individuals to secure the health, safety, and welfare of workers by:

³ [Sexual and gender-based harassment - WHS duties | Safe Work Australia](#)

⁴ [national model laws](#)

- protecting workers and other persons from harm by requiring duty holders to eliminate or minimise risk
- providing for fair and effective representation, consultation, and cooperation
- encouraging unions and employer organisations to take a constructive role in promoting improvements in WHS practices
- promoting the provision of advice, information, education, and training for WHS
- securing compliance with the Act through effective and appropriate compliance and enforcement measures
- ensuring appropriate scrutiny and review of actions taken by persons with powers or functions under the Act
- providing a framework for continuous improvement
- maintaining and strengthening national harmonisation of WHS laws and facilitating a consistent national approach to WHS.

Section 10 of the WHS Act specifies that the Crown is bound by the Act and is liable for an offence against the Act.

In accordance with section 248 of the WHS Act, Crown agencies are 'responsible agencies' and on behalf of the Crown may be subject to legal proceedings, notices, and prosecution.

An agency's chief executive and their leadership team are responsible for performance and the way business is conducted. Their role in making significant decisions and exercising financial control for their agency means that they may be defined as Officers under the WHS Act and are required to exercise due diligence for WHS over the work they control or influence. Public Sector (non-Public Service) executives, Manager Administrative Services and senior project officers may also be "officers".

SafeWorkSA (SWSA) enforce the WHS laws in South Australia. They license and register operations as required by the WHS Act, investigate workplace incidents which have resulted in death or serious injury and provide education and support to organisations to assist them to comply with legislation.

SWSA also enforce other legislation related to safety and wellbeing including the *Dangerous Substances Act 1979*, the *Fair Work Act 1994* and the *Long Service Leave Act 1987*.

Injury Management

The [Return to Work Act \(2014\)](#) (RTW Act) establishes a scheme that supports workers who suffer from injury at work to recover and wherever possible to return to work.

Section 130 of the RTW Act establishes any agency or instrumentality of the Crown as self-insured unless proclaimed⁵ otherwise. This bestows delegation of a broad range of powers and discretions relating to the provision of return to work and injury management services to injured workers.

ReturntoWorkSA (RTWSA) is responsible for regulating South Australia's Return to Work scheme, including its operation in public sector agencies.

⁵ Proclaimed agencies are Carclew Incorporated, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Deign Incorporated, Legal Services Commission of South Australia, Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia, Renmark Irrigation Trust, Return to Work Corporation of South Australia, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia Incorporated, Dairy Authority of South Australia and Legal Professional Conduct Commission.

Agencies are required to pay a self-insurance levy to RTWSA, calculated based on remuneration paid to their employees and the relative risk of injury for those employees related to the type of work undertaken. This is defined in the industry premium rates⁶ adjusted for self-insurance.

Other legislation

Other legislation is relevant when fulfilling the duty or care to provide safe work environments and address risks in the workplace. More details on specific requirements under some of these acts can be found in the WHS Guideline for the South Australian public sector.

- [Disability Inclusion Act 2018 \(SA\)](#)
- [Dangerous Substances Act 1979 \(SA\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 1994 \(SA\)](#)
- [Long Service Leave Act 1987 \(SA\)](#)
- [Public Sector Act \(2009\)](#)
- [Racial Vilification Act 1996 \(SA\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Act 2021 \(SA\)](#)

CROSS-SECTOR STRATEGIES AND POLICY

A range of strategies, policy and consultative mechanisms operate to support agencies meet their responsibilities under relevant legislation, provide consistent and efficient systems and implementation, and improve performance.

Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management (SWIM) Strategy

The Government of South Australia, through SafeWorkSA, is a signatory to the [Australian Work Health Safety Strategy 2023-2032](#) whose objectives inform the Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the South Australian public sector 2023-2032 (SWIM Strategy).

The SWIM Strategy was developed through co-design and consultation with a broad range of stakeholders across the sector. It identifies and addresses the safety and wellbeing challenges of the changing workplace by embedding good practices in all work and using data to broaden our understanding of safety, wellbeing, and injury management performance.

The strategy vision is 'Safe and healthy public sector workplaces that enhance our lives, wellbeing and delivery of services' which will be enabled by:

- commitment and leadership in safety, wellbeing, and injury management
- contemporary and innovative approaches to deliver safe and healthy workplaces
- continuous improvement through data.

Seventeen focus areas have been identified to assist the sector and its agencies improve safety performance and achieve the stated vision of the strategy.

⁶ These are published annually on the RTWSA website [Industry classifications and rates \(rtwsa.com\)](#)

Download a copy of the SWIM Strategy at: [Safety-Wellbeing-and-Injury-Management-FINAL-Web.pdf \(publicsector.sa.gov.au\)](#)

WHS Standard and Guideline

The international standard [ISO 45001:2018](#)⁷ has been adopted as the relevant standard to guide public sector agencies to implement effective systems to protect workers from risk to their safety and wellbeing.

The WHS Guideline complements the international standard by describing the relevant attributes of the public sector that align to each part of the standard.

Mentally Healthy Workplaces (MHW) Framework

The framework and supporting tool kit draw on world-leading research to support agencies to create mentally healthy workplaces. The [MHW Framework](#) is based on four pillars of raising awareness, building positive cultures, preventing harm and intervening early and supporting recovery. It aligns to the International Standard Organisation – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks [ISO 45003:2021](#)⁸.

Injury Management Standards

[The Injury Management Standards](#) apply to all South Australian Crown self-insured employers and outline requirements, policies, and guidelines for the administration of an injury management system across the public sector. They ensure all agencies understand their obligations as Crown self-insured employers under the RTW Act 2014 and promote the integration of injury prevention and management into core business.

Other strategies

Various other strategies, policies, determinations, and guidelines operate across the sector that complement safety, wellbeing and injury management objectives including:

- [Anti-Racism Strategy](#)
- [Autism Strategy](#)
- [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Domestic and Family Violence Support](#)
- [WHS Cultural Safety Framework](#)
- [Disability Employment Strategy](#)
- [Determinations and Guidelines of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment](#)
- [Premier's Directions](#)

CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE) facilitates forums for safety and wellbeing and injury management practitioners across the sector to consult and collaborate on matters in areas of operation that impact the whole of government and to facilitate continued improvement in performance.

⁷ [ISO 45001:2018](#) can be purchased from this site. It can also be borrowed from the SafeWork SA library.

⁸ [ISO 45003](#) can be purchased from this site. It can also be borrowed from the SafeWork SA library.

Governance forums

Monthly meetings are held for the WHS managers group (WHSMG) and Injury Management managers group (IMMG) in accordance with their terms of reference. Members from larger agencies vote on matters considered by the group, with smaller agencies provided opportunity to observe and contribute to discussion.

Groups may consider:

1. whole of government implications in relation to the WHS and RTW Acts, regulations, and codes of practice
2. development and review of public sector strategy and frameworks
3. establishment of evidence-based policy and processes to drive continuous improvement
4. development, implementation, and review of the public sector arrangements for audit and assurance
5. findings from various audit activities and how they apply across the sector
6. public sector data management and reporting frameworks for safety, wellbeing, and injury management
7. emerging issues impacting on public sector safety, wellbeing, and injury management outcomes.

COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

Safety

A partnership arrangement is in place between SWSA and the public sector through OCPSE, to share information on legislative change and programs of work. A representative from SWSA briefs agencies at the monthly WHS managers meeting.

OCPSE coordinates the Audit and Verification System (AVS) with an external contractor to provide assurance to RTWSA, the public sector agencies and workers, that agencies are operating effective safety management systems that address risks and prevent injury.

The AVS comprises:

- Verified Self-Assessment (VSA) which examines agency safety management systems against the International Standard for Occupational health and safety management systems ([ISO 45001:2018](#)) and their implementation.
- Risk Based Reviews (RBR) which assess the effective management of safety risks that impact multiple agencies.

Injury Management

A partnership arrangement is in place between RTWSA and OCPSE, to oversee the regulatory compliance-monitoring activities and outcomes. A representative from RTWSA regularly attends monthly meetings of the Injury Management managers group to brief agencies on legislative change and programs of work.

RTWSA have established the Crown Injury Management Regulation Program which comprises audits of Injury Management systems and practice that RTWSA conduct, and audits of WHS management systems and practice which are managed by OCPSE through the AVS. RTWSA provide Cabinet with an annual report on activity under this program.

The program conducted by RTWSA consists of auditing of Crown injury management unit⁹ practices focusing on resources and performance, reporting and compensability, recovery and return to work, reviewable decisions, payment of entitlements, serious injury management, lump sum entitlements and performance monitoring.

Actuarial Valuation

OCPSE delivers workers' compensation and additional compensation actuarial valuation activities on behalf of public sector agencies to meet self-insurer obligations to RTWSA. The valuation activities are reported at sector and agency level to provide information for financial end of year reporting, budget planning and to inform public sector executives, injury management units and other stakeholders of their liabilities.

The actuarial valuation activities comprise:

- an annual valuation of outstanding liabilities at 30 June each year of both the workers compensation and additional compensation schemes
- a mid-point review of actual spend versus the expected spend previously valued for the period ending December each year (December monitoring).

Valuation activities are delivered with written and verbal explanatory material to assist agency delegates to understand their key drivers and levers. Results are reported to agency chief executives by OCPSE.

Data and reporting systems

Most agencies use one of three hazard and incident reporting (information technology) systems to record reports, investigations, and corrective actions:

- IRMS (Incident Reporting Management System) - Department for Education
- SLS (Safety Learning System) - SA Health
- GovSAfety (Hazard and Incident Reporting System) – most other agencies.

Some smaller agencies use paper-based reporting systems.

Functionality varies between the systems and may include recording safety risks, scheduling inspections and audits and actions arising from these processes.

⁹ There are five IM units that solely manage claims for their own agency. (These are in Department for Child Protection, Department for Correctional Services, Department for Education, Department for Human Services and SA Police)

There are two units that provide services to other agencies:

- SAFECOM manages the fire and emergency services claims (South Australian Country Fire Service, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, South Australian State Emergency Service)
- The Department for Treasury and Finance – Work Injury Services (DTF-WIS) provides services for an additional 38 agencies that have had workers compensation claims.

SA Health claims are managed over seven sub-units (Central Adelaide Local Health Network, Department for Health and Wellbeing, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network, Regional Support Services (covering the six regional local health networks), SA Ambulance Service, Southern Adelaide Local Health Network, Women's and Children's Health Network).

See Differently and Minda are also prescribed to be instrumentalities of the Crown for the purposes of the self-insured arrangements under the RTW Act.

All agencies' workers compensation and additional compensation claims are recorded in SIMS (Self Insured Management System), including details of claims, determinations, complaints, payments, and entitlements.

Reports available from these systems enable agencies to analyse their safety and injury management performance.

OCPSE manages the contracts for the Gov SAfety and SIMS systems and provides systems support services to the agencies who use them. Data from these systems is captured in an OCPSE enterprise data warehouse (EDW) and will be used for various sector reporting activities.

SECTOR-WIDE PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING

Safety and injury management information is reported annually to Parliament by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment through the [State of the Sector](#) report and quarterly to agency chief executives. Agency reports support their chief executives to discharge their duties of due diligence by providing information on the hazards and risks relevant to their operations.

SWIM performance reports include primary measures aligned to targets the [Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy \(2023-2033\)](#) including the:

- number of fatalities caused by traumatic injuries
- frequency of significant¹⁰ injury claims
- incidence of work-related injury/illness among workers.

The number of serious injury¹¹ and additional compensation¹² claims are also included in reports.

SWIM performance reports also contain a range of financial and injury management performance information and performance measures co-designed with agency representatives to provide additional context to the primary measures. The measures will inform agencies' internal performance measurement and reporting approach and internal improvement strategies.

OCPSE will increase the range of data available to agencies by improving the quality and availability of data through the SWIM data management plan. This includes publishing dashboards on PowerBI that are refreshed from the OCPSE enterprise data warehouse to support decision making.

For more information about the components of the SWIM framework, please contact the OCPSE Healthy and Safe Workplaces team at ocpsewhsim@sa.gov.au.

SWIM FRAMEWORK SELF ASSESSMENT

A [self-assessment tool](#) is provided to assist agencies to identify elements of their safety, wellbeing and injury management approach that are in place or can be improved to more closely align to regulatory requirements for the South Australian public sector or sector-wide systems and strategies.

¹⁰ Significant injuries are defined as any claim with more than one week of lost time. These are referred to as 'Serious' injuries in other jurisdictions and in SafeWork Australia reports.

¹¹ Claims where the injured worker has a whole of person impairment equal to or greater than 30% (psychiatric injuries) or 35% (physical injuries)

¹² Claims made under industrial entitlements after workers compensation entitlements have ceased.

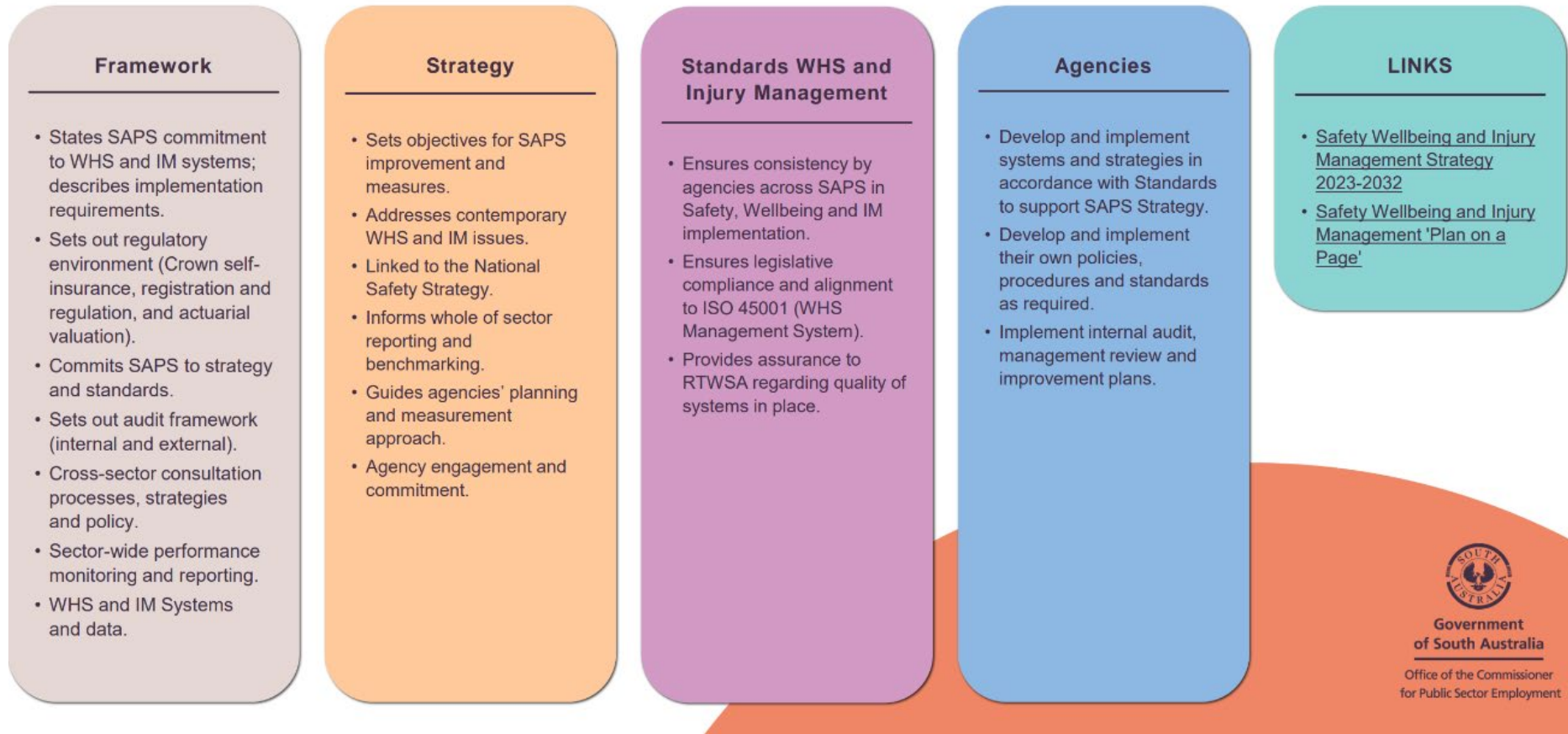
FRAMEWORK TOPIC	KEY OUTCOME	INDICATOR
Our regulatory framework	Agency policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines reflect current legislation, regulations, and approved codes of practice relevant to business operations as a responsible agency of the Crown (section 248 of the WHS Act)	Yes No Unsure
	Internal processes exist to intermittently check currency of IM and WHS management system documents in relation to relevant legislative and other requirements.	Yes No Unsure
	Registration and self-insurance licence arrangements with RTWSA are current (e.g. reference correct agency trading name, personnel and contact information, business activity description)	Yes No Unsure
	Action:	Completed Outstanding
Cross-Sector policy and strategies	The Safety Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy has informed agency planning, performance measurement and reporting	Yes No Unsure
	Agency work health and safety management systems are designed to align with SA public sector WHS Standard (ISO 45001:2018)	Yes No Unsure
	Agency injury management processes align to SA public sector Injury Management Standards	Yes No Unsure

	Agency approach to workplace mental health and psychosocial safety address the four pillars of the SA public sector Mentally Healthy Workplace Framework (raising awareness, building positive cultures, preventing harm, early intervention and supporting recovery)	Yes No Unsure
	The following strategies, guidelines and determinations have been considered and incorporated into agency SWIM plans and processes as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Racism Strategy • Autism Strategy • Diversity and Inclusion Strategy • Domestic and Family Violence Support • Healthy Workplaces Service • WHS Cultural Safety Framework • Disability Employment Strategy • Determinations and Guidelines of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment • Premier’s Directions 	Yes No Unsure
	Action:	Completed Outstanding
Consultation and collaboration	My agency representatives participate in WHS and IM forums as appropriate	Yes No Unsure
	My agency representative shares information and resources within the agency where needed.	Yes No Unsure

Compliance and monitoring	My agency has accessed the Healthy Workplace Service to support development of its wellbeing program	Yes No Unsure
	Responsible leaders in my agency monitor outcomes and actions from internal and external reviews and audits (e.g. Audit and Verification System, RTWSA Crown Injury Management Regulation Program).	Yes No Unsure
	My agency communicates safety performance information widely within the organisation to ensure awareness of objectives, good performance and opportunities for improvement.	Yes No Unsure
	Action:	Completed Outstanding

SWIM FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

SAPS Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Framework



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