

A comprehensive review of the
Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Act

Survey results report



Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout the lands on which we work and live. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to the people, their cultures and the Elders past and present.

We are grateful to work on these lands and strive to build respectful and meaningful relationships with First Nations communities. First Nations knowledge and cultural practices have shaped and continue to enrich our shared Australian heritage. We recognise the enduring contributions and wisdom of First Nations people and have sought to ensure their voices were heard in the review.



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Further information about respondents

Demographics

Gender

Employer

Age

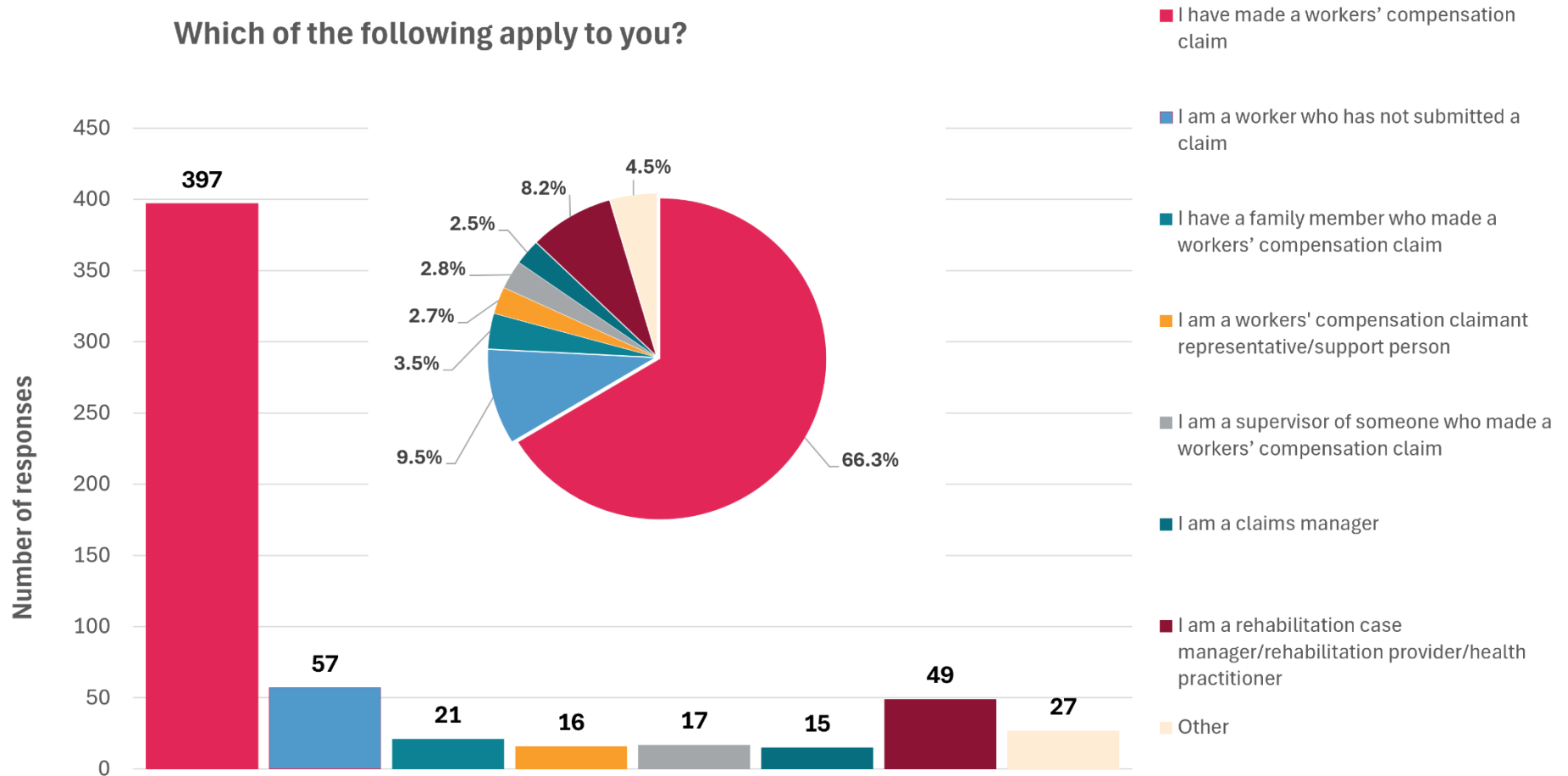
Reason for lodging a claim

Background

On 24 June 2024, the Australian Government appointed Ms Justine Ross as chair and Professor Robin Creyke AO and Mr Greg Isolani as panel members of the independent panel to undertake a comprehensive review of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Cth)* (SRC Act), the legislative framework that underpins the Comcare workers' compensation scheme.

On 21 October 2024, the panel published an issues paper and sought submissions from interested stakeholders to inform the review. Individuals were also given the opportunity to complete a short survey and 599 responses were received. This document reports the results of that survey. Questions were segmented by claimants (current and former) or other respondents, as detailed below.

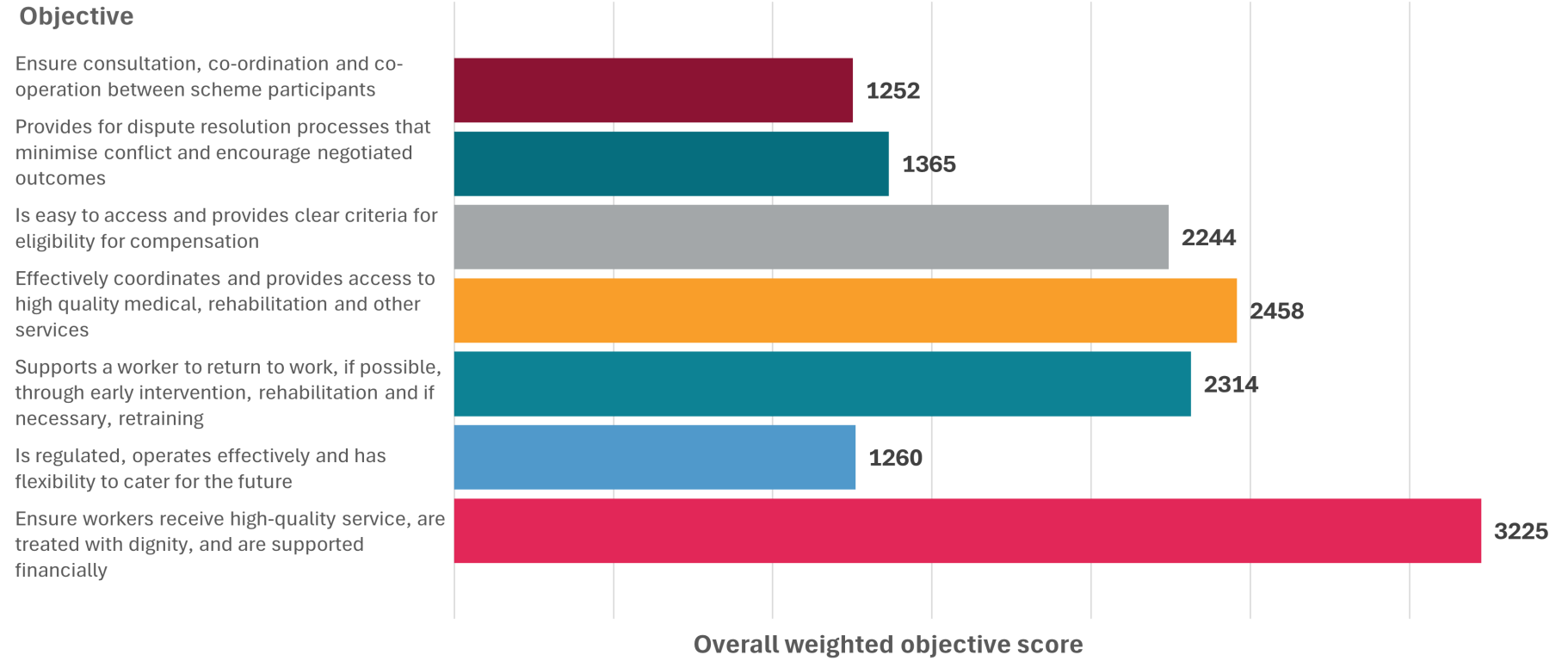
Question 1: About you: Which of the following apply to you?



Most responses came from people who had made a workers' compensation claim, followed by workers who had not made a claim. 27 respondents answered 'other', with most (7) identifying as rehabilitation case managers (RCM) or managers of RCMs.

Question 2: In your opinion, what are the most important objectives of a workers' compensation scheme? (all respondents)

In your opinion, what are the most important objectives of a workers' compensation scheme?



Respondents were asked to rank the statements from most to least important but did not have to rank all statements. Respondents ranked the objective they considered most important '1' and could continue to rank statements until they reached '7' – their least important objective. 'Ensure workers receive high

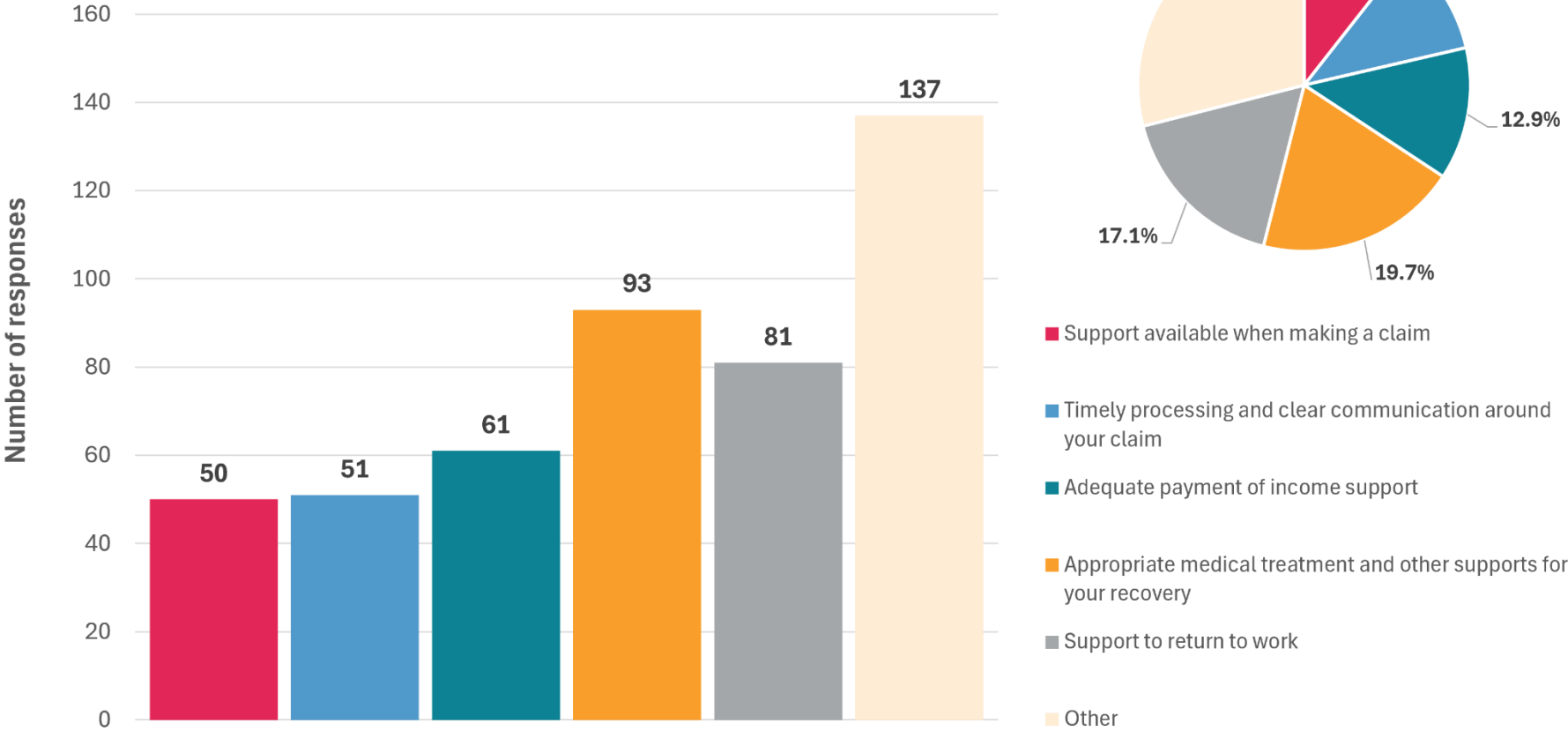
quality service, are treated with dignity and are supported financially' was the most important objective for 249 people. Each statement has been given a weighted score in the above chart. These scores were calculated by assigning a weighting to each rank from 7 to 1 in descending order, multiplying the weighting by the number of times a statement received the ranking, then adding each of these scores together to achieve a final, weighted result.

Below we break down the proportion of rankings each statement received, according to their total number of responses.

In your opinion, what are the most important objectives of a workers' compensation scheme?	Number of responses	Rank 1 (most important) %	Rank 2 %	Rank 3 %	Rank 4 %	Rank 5 %	Rank 6 %	Rank 7 (least important) %
Ensure workers receive high-quality service, are treated with dignity, and are supported financially	554	44.9%	24.2%	14.3%	8.3%	3.1%	3.4%	1.8%
Is regulated, operates effectively and has flexibility to cater for the future	371	10.5%	7.3%	11.6%	13.2%	17.3%	19.7%	20.5%
Supports a worker to return to work, if possible, through early intervention, rehabilitation and if necessary, retraining	483	20.7%	18.0%	20.3%	17.8%	11.4%	7.5%	4.3%
Effectively coordinates and provides access to high quality medical, rehabilitation and other services	490	16.5%	29.0%	22.9%	14.7%	8.2%	5.7%	3.1%
Is easy to access and provides clear criteria for eligibility for compensation	466	20.8%	21.0%	20.2%	13.7%	11.4%	6.9%	6.0%
Provides for dispute resolution processes that minimise conflict and encourage negotiated outcomes	404	4.2%	13.4%	14.9%	12.4%	15.8%	17.6%	21.8%
Ensure consultation, co-ordination and co-operation between scheme participants	373	3.5%	9.1%	16.9%	15.3%	18.5%	18.8%	18.0%

Question 3a: What aspects of the SRC Act are working well? (responses from people with a claim)

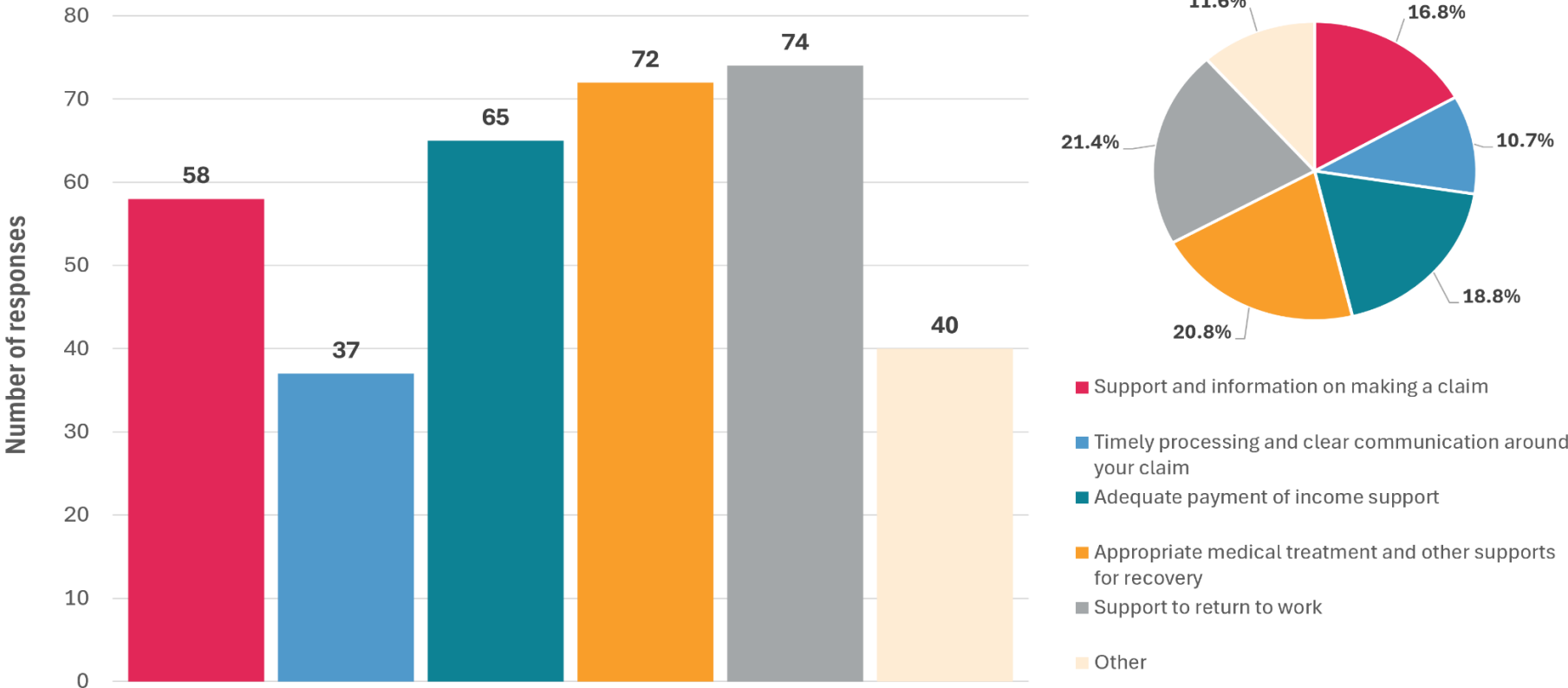
What aspects of the SRC Act are working well?



Most respondents answered ‘other’ and advised that no aspects of the SRC Act were working well.

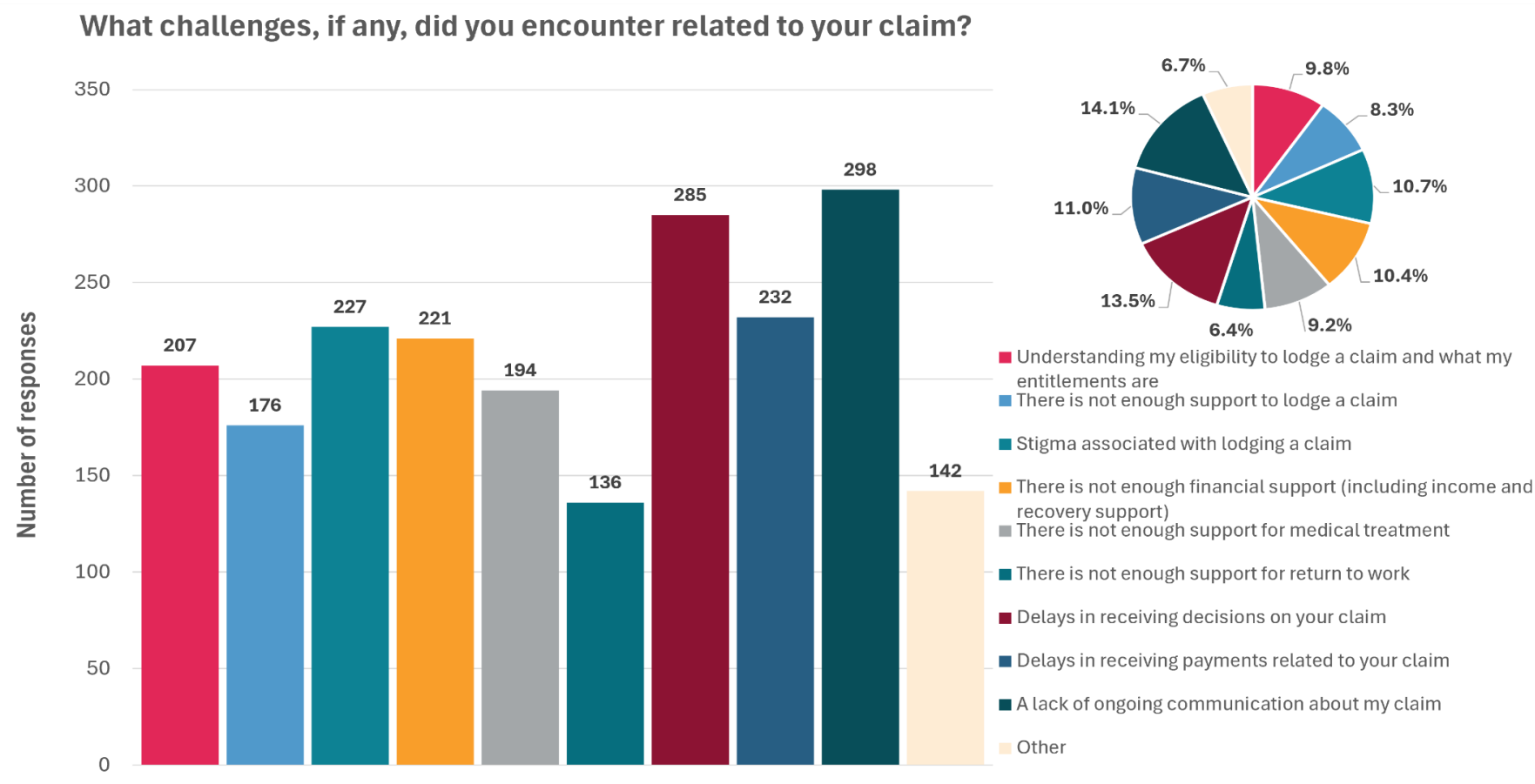
Question 3b: What aspects of the SRC Act are working well for employees who have made a workers' compensation claim? (all other respondents)

What aspects of the SRC Act are working well for employees who have made a workers' compensation claim?



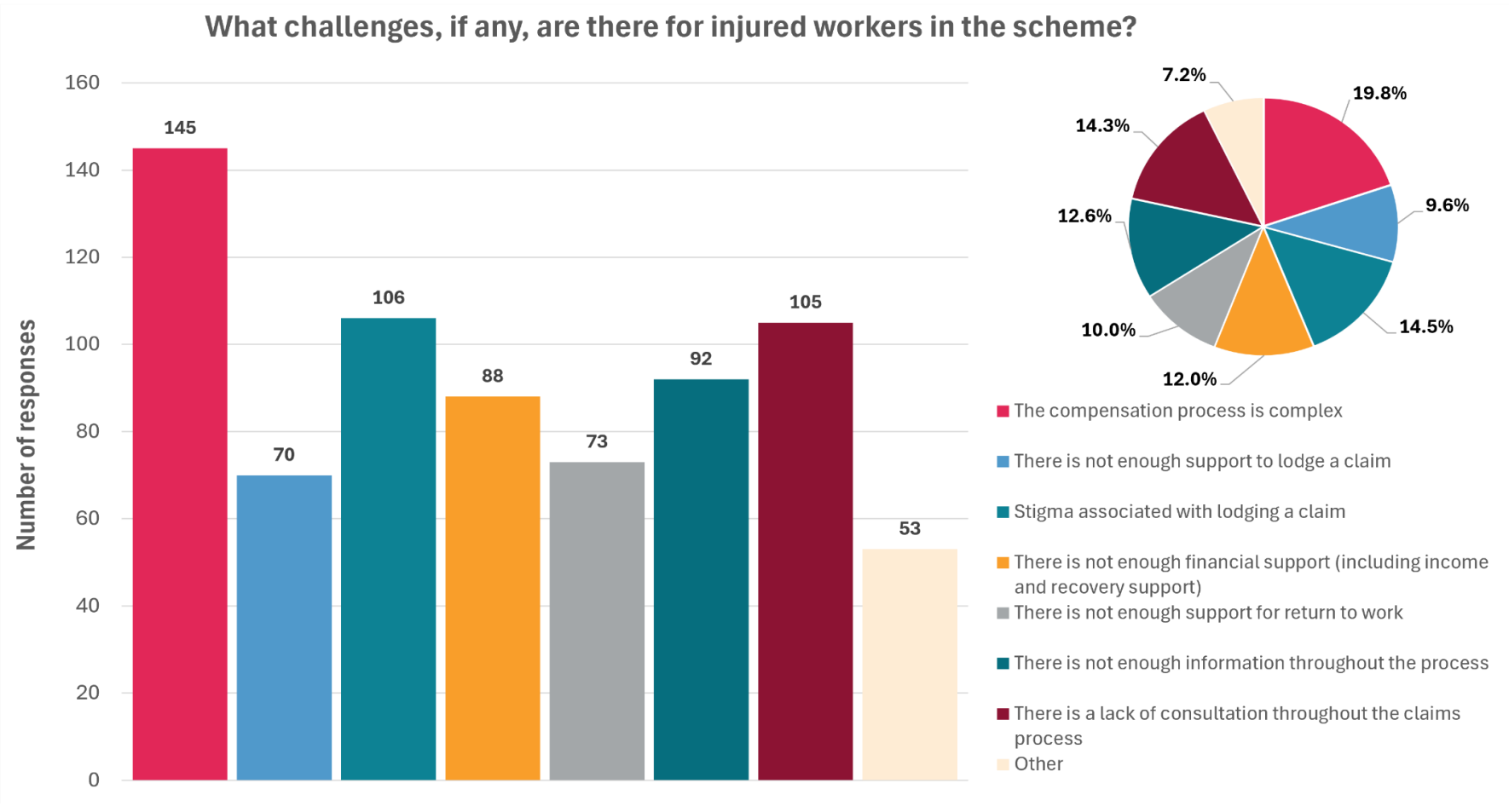
40 respondents answered 'other'. Most of those responses (28) advised that no aspects or very few aspects of the SRC Act scheme were working well for workers who have submitted a workers' compensation claim.

Question 4a: What challenges, if any, did you encounter related to your claim? (responses from people with a claim)



‘Other’ was selected by 142 respondents. Most responses to this option related to problems making a claim and having it determined, including process issues, perceived delays and poor communication from claims managers. A smaller proportion described problems related to employer conduct, access to medical treatment and financial stress.

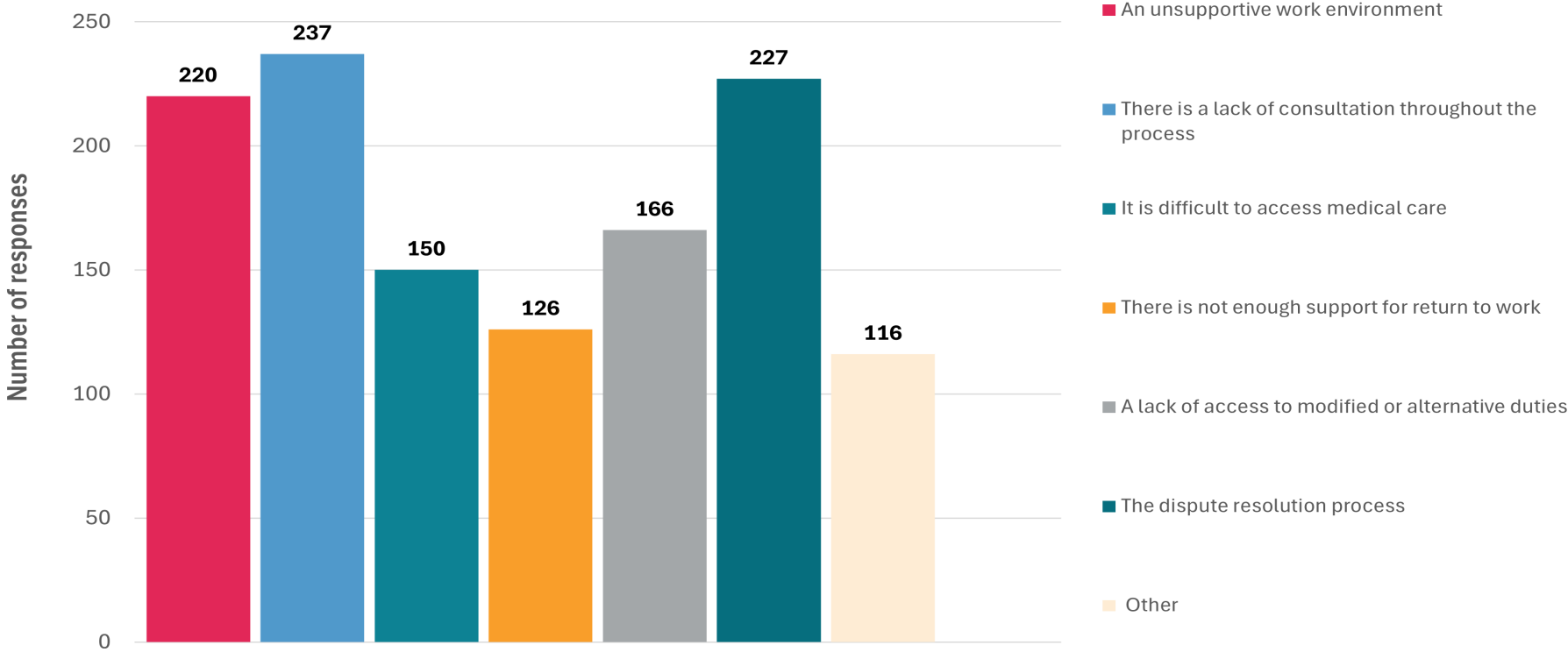
Question 4b: What challenges, if any, are there for injured employees in the scheme? (all other respondents)



53 respondents answered 'other'. Most respondents identified employee challenges with delays (13), problems with staff communication (10) and system complexity (8). Other common responses were conflict with employers or determining authorities (6) or lack of support for appropriate medical care (5).

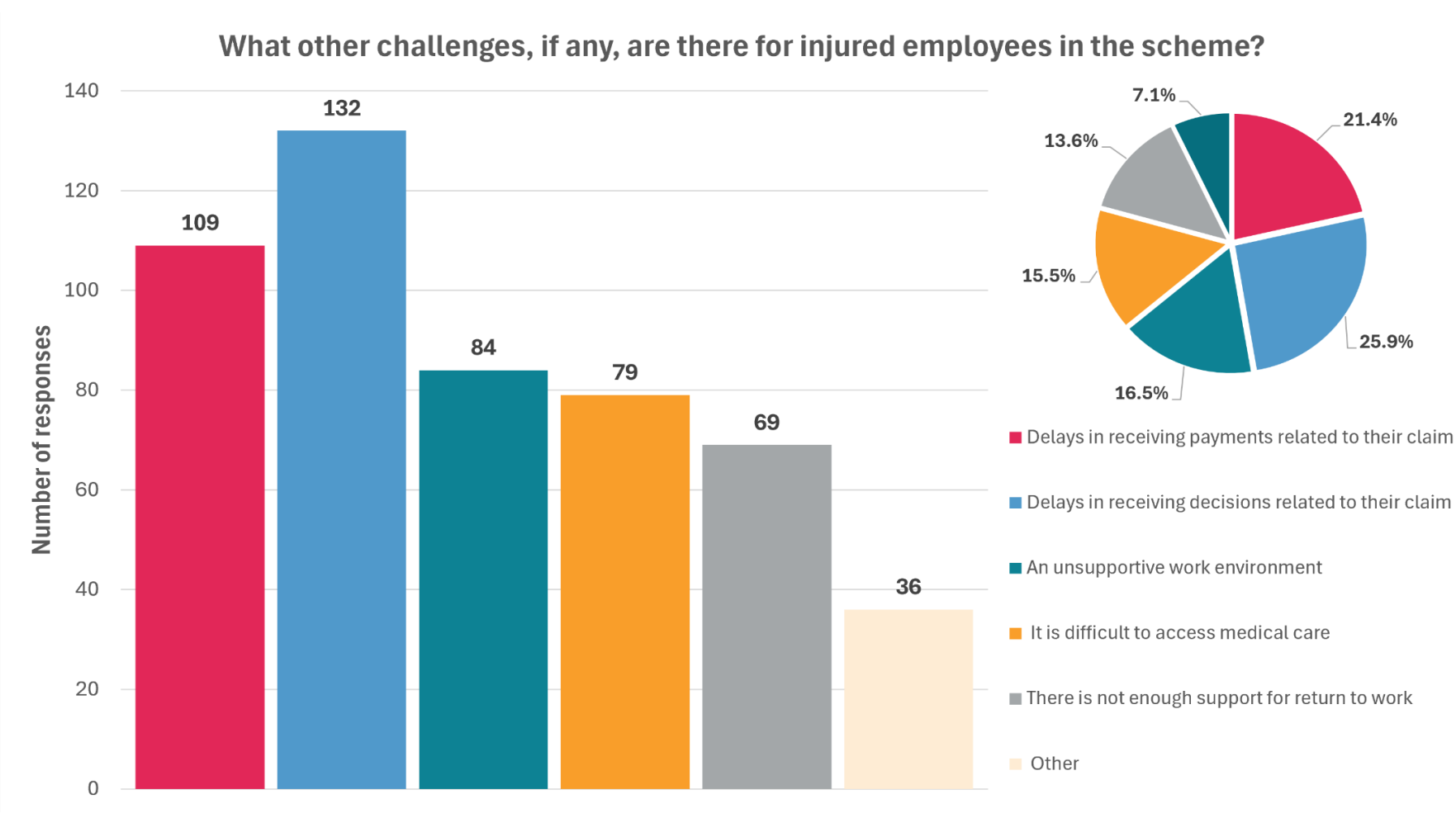
Question 5a: What challenges, if any, did you encounter throughout your claim? (responses from people with a claim)

What challenges, if any, did you encounter throughout your claim?



Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. The challenges respondents encountered most throughout their claims included delays to receiving payments and decisions, a lack of ongoing communication, stigma associated with lodging a claim and a lack of financial support. This includes where respondents answered 'other' to this question.

Question 5b: What other challenges, if any, are there for injured employees in the scheme? (all other respondents)



36 respondents selected 'other' for this question. The most common responses were about delays in receiving medical treatment and decisions on claims.

Question 6: What changes or improvements would you suggest to the Comcare scheme? (all respondents)

Free text question. Responses to this question fell into 8 broad categories, shown below.

Category	Themes
Claims and injury management	Address dissatisfaction with claims management, return to work processes, injury support
Bullying, disability and support needs	Address workplace bullying, disability discrimination, and have trauma-informed support
Legislation and information access	Address delays in accessing information, support for legislative reform
Psychological injury and workplace culture	Improve handling of psychological injuries and mental health support, and improve workplace environments
Treatment delays and case management	Improve communications with case managers, relieve financial stress for claimants due to payment delays
Legal processes and independent review	Make the system less adversarial, clarify processes for legal challenges
Medical assessments	Ensure the independence of medical assessments
Employer conduct and systemic reform	Address employer misconduct, oversight and governance concerns

Question 7: What improvements to the SRC Act would support injured workers with diverse backgrounds or needs? (responses from people who indicated they were First Nations, a person with disability or a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background)

Free text question. 42 responses received, with 13 excluded from analysis for indicating they were not from a diverse background or had no opinion about the question. Responses to this question fell into 5 broad categories, shown below. Some responses spanned multiple categories.

Category	Number of responses	Themes
Better communication, including language support and streamlined claim processes	12	Better response times from staff, provide alternative communication channels including online portals
Support with lodging a claim, including provision of alternative lodgement processes	12	Assist claimants from diverse backgrounds to complete claims forms, provide better explanations of important claim processes
Provision of culturally appropriate services	5	Assist First Nations claimants to get support from community-led organisations, ensure claims managers receive cultural awareness training and ensure training materials are regularly reviewed
Trauma and disability-informed approaches to service delivery	3	Train staff to understand the effects of intergenerational trauma on First Nations people, make processes accessible for disabled people
Financial assistance, including early access to compensation	4	Provide early payments to assist claimants while they lodge a claim

Further information about respondents

344 out of 599 respondents answered questions about themselves.

Demographics

Demographic	% of responses
First Nations	3.8
Person with disability	32.2
Culturally and linguistically diverse	11.6

Gender

Demographic	% of responses
Male	46.2
Female	49.7
Other or prefer not to say	4.1

Employer

Employer type	% of responses
Australian Government	81.7
Private sector company	8.1
ACT Government	5.8
Other or prefer not to say	4.4

Age

Age range	% of responses
Under 34	5.5
35-44	17.4
45-54	39
55-64	29.1
65 and over	6.1
Prefer not to say	2.9

Reason for lodging a claim

Reason for claim	% of responses
Physical injury	45.9
Psychological injury	48
Disease or ailment	3.2
Other or prefer not to say	2.9