

# Workers' compensation claims paid in Australia 2000-2012

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research

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prevention



support



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# Key issues

- Occupational exposures to carcinogens are estimated to cause over **5,000 new cases of cancer** in Australia each year
- Approximately **3.6 million** Australians could be exposed to one or more carcinogens at work
- Priority carcinogens applicable to the Australian industrial profile should be the focus of scientists and regulators

# Key issues 2

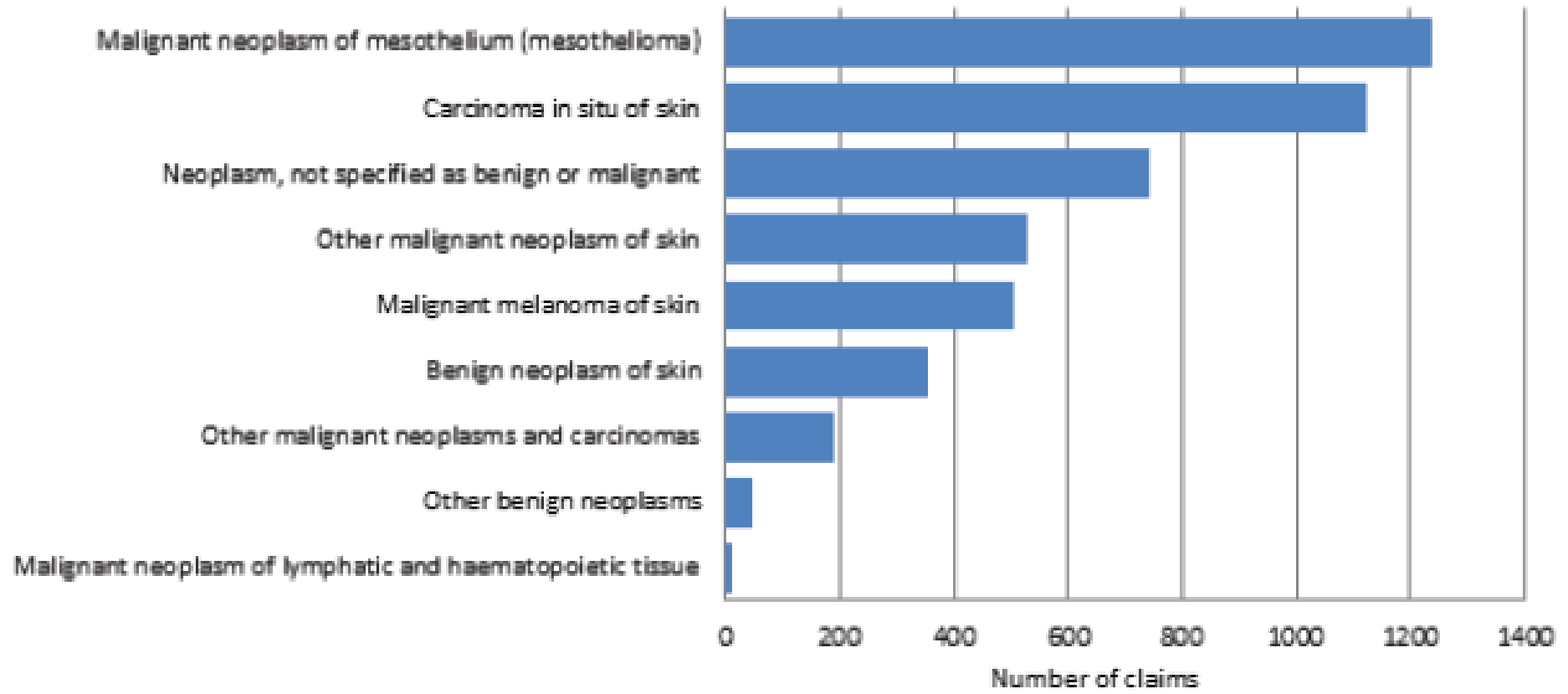
- The number of occupationally caused cancers compensated each year equates to **less than eight percent** of the expected number
- Under-compensation may be a result of
  - lack of awareness of occupational risk factors among workers and health professionals,
  - inherent difficulties in assigning a specific cancer case to an occupational cause

# Occupationally related cancers in Australia

2000 to 2012

- **Number of workers' compensation claims paid for occupationally related cancers from 2000 to 2012, 4,745 claims - average of 395 claims made per year.**
- **This is out of a total of 4.16 million claims or 361,000 pa so cancer is around 0.1% of claims**
- **Risk factors like ultraviolet radiation (UVR - sun) and asbestos contributing to skin cancer and mesothelioma are most common**
- **Sun related cancers melanoma and non melanoma skin cancer made up 53% of claims**
- **Asbestos related disease (eg mesothelioma) made up 26% of claims.**

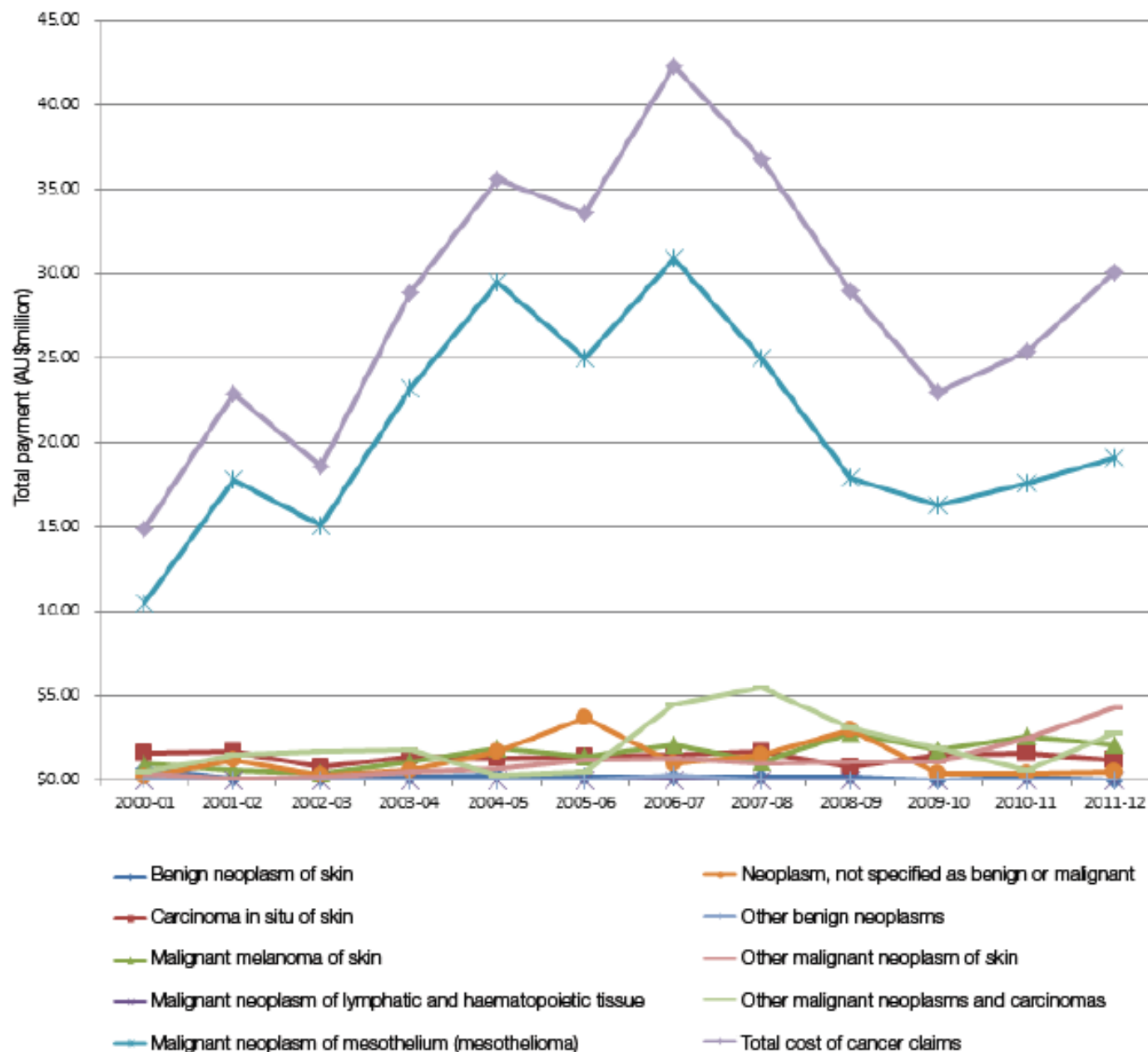
**Figure 3 Total number of workers' compensation claims for different neoplasms (cancers and benign tumours) between 2000–01 and 2011–12<sup>14</sup>**



# Cost of compensation paid

- A total cost from 2000-2012 of AU\$360.5 million
- At an average cost of AU\$30.0 million per year.
- Total spend over that time \$54 Billion or about \$4.5 billion pa. (74% for injuries)
- Cancer claims make up 0.006% of total claim cost.
- Compensation paid for cancer annually ranged from AU\$14.9 million (2000-01) to AU\$42.3 million (2006-07)
- Mesothelioma made up 73% of total cost of claims while skin cancer made up 15% of payments made.

**Figure 2 Cost of accepted workers' compensation claims between 2000-01 and 2011-12 for different neoplasms (cancers and benign tumours)<sup>14</sup>**





# Conclusions

- **Today there will be more detailed material exploring the causes and solutions to occupational cancer risks**
- **There is no doubt some progress has been made (eg Asbestos, UVR, tobacco smoke)**
- **Into the future it seems obvious to say we should be aiming to minimise exposure to known carcinogens in the workplace.**
- **In the meantime there seems a clear need to improve the means by which those who have had exposure in the past can gain access to appropriate compensation.**