

# WCB Nova Scotia Report to the Community



## EARLY SIGNS OF PROGRESS

### Workplace injury's impact reduced as Nova Scotians return to work sooner

WCB Nova Scotia continued to support workers and employers through the second quarter of 2021, beginning to deliver on new [Strategic Priorities](#), with a significant focus on return to work, and better safety outcomes in long-term care and home care.

There were signs of progress. After months of trending upward, the time lost from work in the province due to workplace injury is beginning to show signs of decrease.

A new measure – the percentage of claims that achieve return to work after six months – is trending in the right direction. While the number reflects the reality as of the end of December, due to statistical lag time, it's up by nearly a full percentage point since June.

On the prevention side, while claim volume is up slightly overall as the province began to re-open and more people returned to the workplace, there were encouraging declines in time-loss injury in long-term care and home care.

These two sectors are also a major focus of our new Strategic Priorities, and reflect the tireless efforts of health-care workers and leadership across the province.

The WCB has also helped many Nova Scotians receive the long-term benefits to which they are entitled, with nearly double the number of extended-earnings replacement benefits being written compared to the same time period last year. And, with the ever-increasing number and complexities of traumatic psychological injuries, a new model is supporting workers and employers in their prevention and treatment.

Dennita Fitzpatrick, WCB's Vice President of Prevention and Return to Work, says she is encouraged by the new numbers but stresses the need for continued effort.

She notes that the pandemic and the significant increases in psychological injury have both had impact on the time lost from work in Nova Scotia, but we're beginning to see signs of progress.

"These are early days in our journey," Dennita says. "We've made a lot of interesting changes in the way we manage claims, leveraging health services in new ways, beginning

to rethink vocational rehabilitation – and there's more to come. But success, over the long term, will only come from continued commitment of not only our own people, but the workers and employers that we serve."

The WCB's financial position remains strong as of June 30, 2021. Our funded percentage is 104.2 per cent compared to 102.9 per cent at December 31, 2020.

"Our financial story is a good one, but we need to never forget where we have been," says WCB Chief Executive Officer Stuart MacLean. "Our focus needs to be how we ensure the system will be sustainable going forward, as we continue to discuss a funded range with lower and upper thresholds that would be guideposts for when changes to benefits and rates would be sustainable."

The WCB also spent time in the first half of 2021 leveraging new ways of working enabled by technology – including a decision to maintain a hybrid workplace model of on-premises and remote work into the future. Stuart says it's a change enabled in large part by the WCB's investments in technology under the previous Strategic Plan.

Looking forward, Stuart says he's very optimistic.

"A new government and a new Minister and Deputy Minister speak to the opportunity for fresh perspectives," he says. "The WCB looks forward to continued positive relationships with our closest partner, the new Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI)."

Deputy Chair of the WCB Board of Directors Robert Patzelt and LSI Deputy Minister Ava Czapalay will update stakeholders on key outcomes from 2020 at the Workplace Safety and Insurance System's Annual Meeting in October.

"There has been so much change in this province, and in the world. Workplace injury is changing – and so are the ways we support workers and employers in reducing its impact," Stuart says.

"As we look forward from a place of financial stability, and as we establish new partnerships, I am motivated by the opportunities ahead, as we continue to work together to make Nova Scotia a stronger, safer place to live and work." **Q2**

## OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### 2022 Assessment Rates shared with employers

Employer [assessment rates for 2022](#) were shared with employers in early September, and remain stable overall. The average assessment rate has been \$2.65 per \$100 of payroll for the past 18 years.

### Rod Burgar concludes term as WCB Chair

After five years of leadership covering some of the most challenging times for the organization – and also some of our greatest accomplishments – Rodney Burgar’s term as Chair of the Board of Directors has expired.

“I can’t say enough about Rod’s leadership, and our accomplishments during his tenure. We are so grateful for his service and we wish him well in the future,” says CEO Stuart MacLean. “Rod leaves the Board of Directors and the organization with a visionary Strategic Plan charting a new course for innovation, new ideas, and a laser focus on return to work and prevention in key sectors.”

Deputy Chair [Robert Patzelt](#) is fulfilling the duties as Acting Chair until a new Chair is appointed.

### WCB Nova Scotia names Deanna Harnish new Client Relations Officer

At the beginning of August, long-time WCB Nova Scotia leader Deanna Harnish stepped into her new role as the organization’s Client Relations Officer (CRO).

“I’m really looking forward to this new experience where I get to help people and continually find ways to provide excellent service to those we serve,” she says.

As CRO, Deanna will ensure quality service to Nova Scotians is upheld by providing fair and impartial oversight of complaints in regards to our service. She assumed the position following Tim McInnis’s retirement after more than 33 years of service, almost 17 of which he spent as CRO.

### Traumatic Psychological Injury Program offers new supports for workers and employers

WCB Nova Scotia’s new [Traumatic Psychological Injury \(TPI\) Program](#) is helping workers who have experienced workplace psychological trauma and their employers access a streamlined, accessible, and effective approach to diagnosis, treatment and support through the return-to-work process.

The program was developed in response to the increase in psychological injuries in the workplace we have seen in recent years, and with direct input from front-line workers and leaders across Nova Scotia.

### Summer campaign challenges Nova Scotians to make workplace safety the new normal

After Nova Scotians proved they could come together to protect each other from COVID-19, the WCB challenged them to do the same for other workplace injuries as part of our summer workplace safety awareness campaign.

It was a timely message as the province and economy reopened following the third wave of COVID-19, and as we often see a peak in workplace injuries in the summer months.

Online and social media ads and videos directed Nova Scotians to explore the injury prevention resources on [worksafeforlife.ca](#).

### WCB Nova Scotia adopting hybrid workplace model

After more than a year and a half of our employees working in a mix of at-home and on-site scenarios, WCB Nova Scotia will be implementing a hybrid workplace model, based on what we’ve learned about our ability to deliver service remotely throughout the pandemic.

This new model signals a major step forward for our organization and is an example of our innovative spirit, and the resilience and adaptability of our leaders and our employees. It has many benefits – a smaller footprint, less environmental impact, and opportunities for employees to work in a way that works both for them and those we serve.

### Stakeholders invited to provide input on policy revisions

This summer, WCB Nova Scotia invited stakeholders to provide input on a range of [proposed policy clarifications](#) through open consultations, which included general housekeeping and clarifications on policies related to re-employment after a workplace injury, to make the process easier to understand. These revisions are just one of the ways the WCB is doing its part to reduce the impact of workplace injury in our province by supporting and enabling safe and timely return to work.

Visit [annualreport.wcb.ns.ca](#) for the digital version of this report, including photos, graphics and more on WCB Nova Scotia’s story in Q2 2021.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at

	June 30 2021 (Unaudited) (\$000s)	June 30 2020 (Unaudited) (\$000s)	December 31 2020 (Audited) (\$000s)
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Cash & cash equivalents	\$ 7,977	\$ 5,282	\$ –
Receivables	40,760	41,222	36,369
Investments	2,232,306	1,951,286	2,139,748
Property and equipment	4,854	5,988	5,613
Intangible assets	27,072	30,537	28,632
	<b>\$ 2,312,969</b>	<b>\$ 2,034,315</b>	<b>\$ 2,210,362</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUNDED (UNFUNDED) POSITION</b>			
Bank indebtedness	\$ –	\$ –	\$ 2,740
Payables, accruals & lease liabilities	48,355	55,685	43,170
Post employment benefits	35,931	30,607	34,840
Benefits liabilities	2,123,085	2,078,765	2,067,519
	<b>2,207,371</b>	<b>2,165,057</b>	<b>2,148,269</b>
Deferred revenue	13,000	11,000	–
Funded (unfunded) position	92,598	(141,742)	62,093
	<b>\$ 2,312,969</b>	<b>\$ 2,034,315</b>	<b>\$ 2,210,362</b>

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the six months ended June 30 (unaudited)

	Second Quarter 2021 (\$000s)	Second Quarter 2020 (\$000s)	YTD June 30 2021 (\$000s)	YTD June 30 2020 (\$000s)
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Assessments	\$ 87,113	\$ 67,610	\$ 162,110	\$ 142,328
Investment income (loss)	92,993	162,119	92,937	(5,532)
	<b>180,106</b>	<b>229,729</b>	<b>255,047</b>	<b>136,796</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Claims costs incurred				
Short-term disability	15,364	11,394	29,026	23,578
Long-term disability	24,585	24,661	51,047	48,209
Survivor benefits	(25)	8	500	693
Health care	16,860	12,854	31,155	27,890
Rehabilitation	228	207	382	416
	<b>57,012</b>	<b>49,124</b>	<b>112,110</b>	<b>100,786</b>
Growth in present value of benefits liabilities and actuarial adjustments and adjustment for latent occupational disease	38,269	45,429	72,482	65,467
Administration costs	15,759	14,543	30,025	29,021
System support	252	249	503	499
Legislated obligations	4,647	4,017	9,422	8,601
	<b>115,939</b>	<b>113,362</b>	<b>224,542</b>	<b>204,374</b>
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues) applied to increase (decrease) the funded position	<b>\$ 64,167</b>	<b>\$ 116,367</b>	<b>\$ 30,505</b>	<b>\$ (67,578)</b>

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN THE FUNDED (UNFUNDED) POSITION

For the six months ended June 30 (unaudited)

	Second Quarter 2021 (\$000s)	Second Quarter 2020 (\$000s)	YTD June 30 2021 (\$000s)	YTD June 30 2020 (\$000s)
<b>Funded (Unfunded) position excluding accumulated other comprehensive income</b>				
Balance, beginning of period	\$ 28,431	\$ (258,109)	\$ 72,516	\$ (66,962)
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues) applied to increase (decrease) the funded position	64,167	116,367	30,505	(67,578)
	92,598	(141,742)	103,021	(134,540)
<b>Accumulated other comprehensive income</b>				
Balance, beginning of year	–	–	(10,423)	(7,202)
	–	–	(10,423)	(7,202)
<b>Funded position, end of period</b>	\$ 92,598	\$ (141,742)	\$ 92,598	\$ (141,742)

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the six months ended June 30 (unaudited)

	June 30 2021 (\$000s)	June 30 2020 (\$000s)
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Cash received from:		
Employers, for assessments	\$ 174,337	\$ 151,877
Investment income (loss)	11,516	(3,444)
	185,853	148,433
Cash paid to:		
Claimants or third parties on their behalf	(128,141)	(126,428)
Suppliers, for administrative and other goods and services	(35,331)	(30,794)
	(163,472)	(157,222)
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	22,381	(8,789)
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
(Decrease) increase in investments, net	(11,137)	3,929
Cash paid for:		
Purchase of equipment and intangible assets	(527)	(940)
<b>Net cash (used in) provided by investing activities</b>	(11,664)	2,989
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	10,717	(5,800)
(Bank indebtedness), cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	(2,740)	11,082
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of period</b>	\$ 7,977	\$ 5,282

**Halifax Office**  
5668 South Street  
P.O. Box 1150  
Halifax, NS B3J 2Y2  
Tel: 902 491 8999

**Sydney Office**  
404 Charlotte Street  
Suite 200  
Sydney, NS B1P 1E2  
Tel: 902 563 2444

**Toll Free**  
1 800 870 3331

**Email**  
info@wcb.ns.ca  
**Workplace Safety Tools  
and Resources**  
worksafeforlife.ca  
**Twitter**  
@worksafeforlife

**Corporate Website and  
WCB Online** wcb.ns.ca