

ISCRR Annual Report 2014-15



Status of the Institute's Activities

The 2014/15 financial year was the 6th full year of institute operations since establishment. The vast majority of institute activity is supported through three separate agreements between our major partners. In addition the institute attracts funding from other sources including nationally competitive academic grants and from other federal and state government agencies, and conducts research internally.

Activity in each of these five areas is summarised below.

The First Research Institute Collaboration Agreement (RICA)

This agreement was between WorkSafe, the TAC and Monash for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2013.

Fifty-two (52) research projects were established under this agreement. These projects have been mainly undertaken by the institute's Monash research network. Researchers from other universities have been engaged where the appropriate expertise is not available at Monash.

In total, more than sixty-five (65) researchers across seven Australian universities have been involved in this research program. These included four PhD student projects and four fellowships led by early career researchers.

Thirty nine (39) of the approved projects were complete as at 30 June 2015. A further ten projects will produce a final report in the 2015/16 financial year.

The institute's major activity with the research program established under the RICA is to communicate and translate the findings to ensure that benefit is delivered to WorkSafe and the TAC.

Major dissemination and translation activities occurred during the year, including:

- Multiple internal research presentations with TAC and WorkSafe staff, hosted either at WorkSafe or the TAC. These included forums on the long-term outcomes of work injury, independent medical examinations, health effects of compensation systems, impact of pre-existing conditions on recovery after injury, development of a leading indicator for health and safety, and use of prescription medication.
- The 4th Australasian Compensation Health Research Forum (ACHRF) was hosted in Melbourne and was a huge success, with more than 200 people attending (including over 30 WorkSafe and TAC staff.)
- A half-day research forum focussed on Return to Work (RTW) showcased four ISCRR supported RTW projects. This event successfully shared our RTW research findings with employers, industry representatives, WorkSafe and the TAC.
- Three ISCRR research presentations during WSV's Health and Safety week in October 2014.
- The developments of new products, including:
 - 58 research reports/summaries
 - 14 specialist presentations to the partners
 - 150 research outputs (including journal articles, posters and conference abstracts)
 - Summaries of brain injury research to coincide with the opening of the Alfred Health ABI Rehabilitation Centre in Caulfield, along with the commencement of a process to summarise a substantial portfolio of WorkSafe research
 - The commissioning of a special summary of the Independent Neurotrauma Program review
 - Regular mailouts to our stakeholders with eight external newsletters/ 'eNews' editions, a 'ACHRF

- Takeaway' product for attendees, the launch of ISCRR's 3D program and updates from our CEO
- External communications materials, including several press releases showcasing OHS research and highlighting the achievements of ISCRR's Neurotrauma research. This was supported by media exposure where possible
 - Supporting the availability of ISCRR research outputs and project plans through the new TAC Library system

Neurotrauma Funding Agreement

This agreement was between the TAC and Monash University for the period June 2012 to 30 June 2015.

Forty-seven (47) research projects were established under this agreement by 30 June 2015.

Research was commissioned from the most expert and appropriate group, with a preference for Victorian-based research leadership.

This program has engaged more than forty-five (45) researchers across nine universities and research institutes throughout Australia.

Eleven (11) projects are now complete and a further 20 will produce a final report in the 2015/16 financial year.

During the year, the institute worked closely with the TAC to identify projects that would address major issues of relevance to the TAC and its seriously injured clients.

These included:

- A clinical intervention to support the management of Behaviours of Concern in TAC clients with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
- A pharmacological intervention to support the management of Behaviours of Concern in TAC clients with TBI.
- A community-based project seeking to maximise social connection and improve the independence for people with severe TBI.
- A suite of projects looking at practical ways to improve secondary urological complications in clients with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI).
- Pre-and post occupancy evaluations of the RIPL developments on the quality of life of TAC clients.
- Continuation of two long-term outcomes registries for seriously injured TAC clients, including the Victorian State Trauma Registry and the Longitudinal Head Injury Outcomes Study.

As at 30 June 2015, the institute had committed \$19.1m of the \$20m funding provided by the TAC to brain and spinal cord injury research and associated activities.

Uncommitted funds of \$890,917 were retained by the TAC.

The Second Research Institute Collaboration Agreement (RICA)

This agreement is between WorkSafe, the TAC and Monash for the period 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2018.

As at 30 June 2015, twenty-one (21) research projects had been established under this agreement.

These projects have been mainly undertaken by the institute's Monash research network. Researchers from other Universities have been engaged where the appropriate expertise is not available at Monash.

Thirteen of the projects are complete and a further eight will produce a final report in the 2015/16 year.

In total more than 35 researchers across four universities have been involved to date.

Projects established during the year include:

- An evaluation of the WorkHealth Improvement Networks program.
- A mixed methods study responding to the Labor government election commitment to examine the long-term outcomes in injured workers.
- A project examining asbestos reporting to local government.
- An evaluation of the impact that changes in WorkSafe's policy for treatment approvals had on injured worker outcomes, healthcare providers, claims agent experience and productivity.
- A review of the WorkSafe Injured Worker Survey, to support WorkSafe's transition to a new worker experience metric for agent remuneration.
- An evaluation of WorkSafe guidance for managing occupational violence in the workplace, in response to a Victorian Auditor General Report.
- A comparative study examining the impact of compensation system policy and practice on RTW outcomes.
- Continuation of the Horizon Scanning project to support TAC, WorkSafe and HDSG strategy and policy development.

As at 30 June 2015, approximately \$6m of the funding allocated in the 2nd RICA remains available for commitment to research projects.

Throughout the past year ISCR, WorkSafe and the TAC worked collaboratively to identify major future research topics

This has culminated in identification of five 'big questions' that are aligned with the emerging strategic priorities of WorkSafe and the TAC, and where research approaches can add value.

These include the following:

1. How can WorkSafe/TAC influence the safety and/or compensation systems to optimise outcomes for their clients, and the system as a whole?
2. Which strategies and interventions are most effective to influence health and disability service providers to enhance outcomes for TAC and WorkSafe clients?
3. Why do some TAC and WorkSafe clients with seemingly mild injuries have very long-term and complex claims? How can TAC and WorkSafe best identify and/or manage clients with persistent pain or poor mental health?
4. What strategies, policies and practices do employers adopt for preventing injury and illness and improving RTW? Which of these are effective and under what circumstances?
5. How can WorkSafe and TAC maximise the value of their existing data? What additional data would enable WorkSafe/TAC to better understand and manage the safety and compensation systems?



Externally Funded Research

The institute had a successful year attracting funding from external organisations.

The following major projects have secured funding:

- A national Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) for Recovery after Road Traffic Injury. This is a collaborative research partnership between Monash/ISCR (via Professor Alex Collie) and national experts in the field based at Griffith University, the University of Queensland and the University of Sydney. The CRE program of \$2.48m was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and was one of only 5 awarded nationally for the 2014 calendar year. The CRE will operate for 5 years and will fund post-doctoral and PhD students to seek more effective system design and treatment to improve recovery in people with motor vehicle related injury.
- Compensation Policy And Return to work Effectiveness (ComPARE) project. Funding of \$260k was secured from SafeWork Australia for this comparative RTW policy project. This supplements funding provided by WorkSafe Victoria.
- A Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) project grant. This project is a collaboration between ISCR, the University of British Columbia and the Institute for Work and Health. This is the Canadian sister project to the ComPARE project.
- General Practice Guidelines for Work-related Mental Health Conditions. The federal government Department of Employment provided \$300,000 towards this project prior to the end of the financial year. A further \$300,000 has since been raised from state governments in Western Australia and South Australia. The project will run over three years and will establish national guidelines for use by GPs in their interactions with workers with mental health conditions.
- Several Enforceable Undertakings (EU) were directed to ISCR to provide specific research, funded by employers as part of legal settlements. The most recent of these is on Supply Chain Safety.

In addition, researchers at ISCR remain involved in projects for which external funding was secured in previous financial years.

These include Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council funded projects, as well as a major study funded by the Motor Accidents Authority of NSW.

Internal Research Activities

The institute's in-house research capacity includes a small team working on data management and analysis, as well as an in-house evidence review program. There have been major advances in both areas during the year.

The annual plan for 2014/15 included an objective for ISCRR to exploit the potential in its in-house research platforms, including the Compensation Research Database (CRD).

This has been a focus of discussions with WorkSafe and the TAC and has culminated in the development of 3D – an enhanced program of data management, data linkage and data analytic projects and initiatives.

This program builds on the work done to date, to leverage and derive greater value from scheme data to help address complex, longer-term issues.

The program has three 'dimensions' of data-related activity and represents a substantial extension of current activity under the CRD. Each dimension has been developed following consultation with WorkSafe and the TAC during late 2014.

To continue development of the Evidence Reviews, we have recently developed a model for predicting new trends in partnership with the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health (CADTH), called Horizon Scanning.

This collaboration is the first of its kind in Australia to focus on compensation health. The purpose is to identify and track emerging health technologies, treatments and services of relevance to compensation health, in order to better inform the activities of WorkSafe and the TAC.

During 2014, the first phase of the project was completed. This involved the development, implementation and evaluation of a horizon scanning process that focused on new and emerging health technologies, treatments and services that have the potential to improve the lives of TAC/WorkSafe clients and carers.

The ISCRR/CADTH HS protocol has now been completed.

In the last year, 16 evidence reviews were delivered. Some of the topics covered are listed to the right.

- Determining the clinical effectiveness of a number of treatments (including Platelet Rich Plasma Injections for Epicondylitis), and updating previously conducted on radiofrequency denervation, and Implantable Pain Therapies (IPT).
- Understanding the current research evidence in relation to occupational violence in health care;
- Assessing the effectiveness of occupational rehabilitation programs, with a focus on determining if 'stand-alone' occupational rehabilitation programs are effective in assisting injured workers to return to paid employment;
- Identifying what intervention(s) are effective in improving RTW outcomes in individuals with work-related mental health conditions;
- Defining what constitutes 'rehabilitation' in the disability context, including any specific parameters, guidelines or measures that indicate whether a particular service or item has a rehabilitative effect;
- Understanding best practice in measuring surgical outcomes;
- Horizon Scanning, which aimed to identify new and emerging health technologies, treatments and services that have the potential to impact the lives of people injured on the roads or at work;
- Reviewing what whole-of-organisation public information and education strategies exist for organisations similar to WorkSafe, including understanding their outcomes and how the strategies have been evaluated;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of mass media health and safety campaigns, nationally and internationally, in shifting health and safety attitudes, knowledge and behaviour;
- Exploring the practice and experiences of front-line claims managers in personal injury compensation;
- Investigating the use and effectiveness of service standards in the compensation/insurance industries and/or in public service;
- Synthesising research conducted as part of the Neurotrauma strategy; and
- Developing a comprehensive overview of ISCRR's translation research and what has been implemented at ISCRR to date.

Outcomes of the Institute's Activities

The institute and its partners have developed an approach to deriving value from research that emphasises co-production of research including activities that seek to ensure use of research by the TAC, WorkSafe and their stakeholders. For the TAC and WorkSafe, activities that have been identified as linked to outcomes from research investment include active engagement in research design, involvement in research communication, and then responsibility for considering the implications of research and taking action.

ISCRR and its research network have specific tasks including leading research design collaboratively, effectively communicating research findings, and supporting TAC and WorkSafe to consider findings and to take action.

This approach also recognises that the benefits of research can take many shapes. These may include financial impact, changes to client and worker well-being, improvements in productivity or workplace safety, and less direct benefits such as enhancing understanding of a complex issue, or filling gaps in knowledge that aid scheme policy or practice.

This approach recognises that in some cases benefits will be delivered in the short term, but that often research outcomes occur over long time frames.

During the year a number of major projects delivered outcomes for the TAC and WorkSafe. The neurotrauma work program was also formally evaluated for its impact and for the effectiveness of the partnership in delivering the program.

Finally the approved annual plan of the institute included some specific actions to achieve both research and other desired outcomes.

The following sections summarise each of these areas.

Evaluation of the TAC/ISCRR Neurotrauma Program

During the year the institute's neurotrauma research program was independently evaluated. The evaluation findings were delivered to the TAC in December 2014.

The evaluation found that;

- The Neurotrauma Research Program “is expected to deliver significant value to the TAC, well above the level of investment, and have a profound impact on many TAC clients.”
- A sample of six projects, accounting for \$4.2m of funding, are expected to deliver \$83.4m in benefits once implemented. These benefits were calculated in terms of the present value of reduced cost of lifetime care following the translation of research findings into patient treatment and care guidelines.
- The client impact of these projects was expected to be national or global within ten years and to have a major impact on TAC client outcomes.

The evaluation concluded that the Neurotrauma Research Program is generally running well, giving TAC greater control over the focus of neurotrauma research than its predecessor program, the Victorian Neurotrauma Initiative.

Projects funded were found to be well linked to the TAC Neurotrauma Strategy and the program was widely recognised for enabling collaboration between the TAC and the research community.

The major area for potential improvement was found to be managing the risks and issues associated with:

- The translation of program benefits;
- Delays in identifying and recruiting researchers with particular types of expertise and approving projects; and
- The low visibility of program benefits within TAC.

An overview of the evaluation findings has been shared with the TAC and WorkSafe as part of this annual reporting process.

Outcomes of Major Projects

The following projects are examples of outcomes delivered from projects during the year:

- Improvements in design of RIPL accommodation for seriously injured TAC clients. ISCRR initiated projects have delivered design insights that have been used by the TAC in its ongoing RIPL program. An evaluation of the RIPL facilities is ongoing with early results demonstrating improvements in client well-being and independence.
- Implementation of a new Certificate of Capacity for General Practitioners in the state of Victoria. ISCRR research provided a locally relevant evidence base for changing the Certificate of Capacity to emphasis fitness for work. An ISCRR research team also evaluated options for the new certificate. The new certificate was implemented by WorkSafe and the TAC during the year. An ISCRR team is now evaluating the effectiveness of the certificate in the field.
- Development of a tool that enables employers to measure the health and safety of their workplace before injuries occur. An ISCRR team has led the local validation of the Organisational Performance Metric (OPM), which provides a leading indicator of workplace health and safety. The same team is working with the WorkSafe inspectorate to develop a tool for inspectors to assess safety culture amongst Victorian employers.
- Development of a research program addressing the incoming government's election commitment to initiate an inquiry into long-term outcomes for injured workers. ISCRR has established a study that will provide answers to the Labor government's election commitment to investigate the impact that 'transition points' in the compensation scheme have on worker outcomes.
- Implementation of education and training for physiotherapists. Through the evaluation of a trialed delivery model, a cost-effective way to target and change the behaviour of allied health professionals has been identified. This model has significant potential to improve service delivery to TAC clients and injured workers.
- Updates to a number of evidence reviews that have been directly translated into treatment payment policy. These include reviews focussed on determining the clinical effectiveness of spinal injection therapy (radiofrequency denervation) in patients with chronic pain, and implantable pain therapies (IPT) via neurostimulation and intrathecal infusions.
- Development of a linked compensation health system database that has enabled greater understanding of the interactions between injury compensation and healthcare systems, and identification of worker-level factors that impact on return to work and claims costs.

Statement Against The Annual Plan

The institute's approved annual plan included a list of 28 actions aligned to the major proposed activities of the institute during the year. A statement of achievements against these actions is provided below.

Annual Plan ACTION	Status	Comments
Establish a research partnership agreement with the following three areas of Monash University (Medicine, MIRI, BusEco).	Achieved	ISCRR has developed partnership arrangements with three key Monash faculties where the majority of required capacity and capability resides.
Work with major research partners to build capacity and capability in IS-CRR's areas of need.	Achieved	ISCRR and faculties have identified lead academics with expertise relevant to the TAC and WorkSafe, and continue to develop capability through projects.
Identify opportunities for leveraging funding via competitive academic grants.	Partially achieved	Some opportunities taken during the year (e.g. Centre of Research Excellence in road traffic Injury, NHMRC project grant linked to VSTR). Further discussion with research partners planned for early new financial year under future RICA funded projects.
Establish an efficient reporting and administration model with major research partners.	Achieved	High level principles defined in agreement. Financial administration approach defined and implemented in Q2 2014/15. Reporting approach has been developed and implemented.
Seek representation on TAC and WorkSafe internal strategy committees as a means of ensuring alignment of research with funder priorities and effective communication of research findings.	Achieved	ISCRR has supported WorkSafe to establish its Research Governance Committee, and has been a regular attendee at the TAC Claims Governance Committee (quarterly).
Strengthen our existing research management and communication arrangements with both the TAC and VWA.	Achieved	A channel for interaction between ISCRR Communications Manager and WorkSafe, TAC and Monash counterparts has been established. CEO and Research Leads now meet routinely with Relationship Managers of the TAC and WorkSafe, including at RMC meetings and out of session.
Involve specifically targeted community groups in research development, oversight and dissemination of research findings.	Partially achieved	Arrangements in place for some research themes. Interactions are now occurring with Trades Hall, Industry groups, WorkSafe claims agents and Occupational Rehabilitation providers.
Develop and implement mechanisms for identifying the research priorities of injured people and other individuals and groups involved in the Victorian workplace safety and injury compensation systems.	Achieved	Involvement of stakeholders is occurring via projects. For example, the engagement of seriously injured participants in neurotrauma projects. Some peak bodies are also involved in specific projects (e.g. RACGP in GP guidelines project).

Establish theme-level advisory groups that involve expert researchers, research funders, and end-users.	Partially achieved	Experts are being engaged on projects rather than on programs of work. For example, the SmILE steering committee is up and running, the Primary Care expert advisory group is in development and other advisory groups will be established around major research initiatives.
Convene meetings of the advisory groups to review current research activity and develop plans for future research activity within each theme.	Not actioned	Not actioned as advisory groups are being developed around major projects rather than themes/programs.
Disband the current Program Advisory Groups (PAGs).	Achieved	HDSD PAG has been disbanded. OHS PAG disbanded. The Final VNAC meeting was held in February 2015. RTW&SD PAG disbanded.
Specific research initiatives as identified within each theme	Achieved	Numerous major new research initiatives have been started and approved by the board during the year.
Commission reviews of research and other evidence that seek to identify medium and long-term trends that are amenable to a research response.	Achieved	16 evidence reviews were completed during the year.
Convene future-focussed discussion amongst our major partners to identify medium and long term trends that are amenable to a research response.	Partially achieved	With ISCRR support, TAC and WorkSafe have now established internal consultative mechanisms to identify research needs. Future research priorities will be pegged to TAC and WorkSafe identified strategic priorities as these are established.
Develop and initiate research that addresses identified future needs of our major partners.	Achieved	Multiple major new projects were commenced during the year addressing TAC and Worksafe priorities. These included, for example, the injured worker outcome study for WorkSafe, and RIPL evaluations for the TAC.
Complete an evaluation of the TAC/ ISCRR Neurotrauma Strategy 2011-2015	Achieved	A review was undertaken by an independent evaluator with results delivered to the TAC. TAC management developed a business case for future neurotrauma research investment in response to this and delivered it to the TAC Board in June. Discussions on future investment are continuing with the TAC.
Complete at least two case studies for the ISCRR Return on Investment Report	Partially achieved	A draft case study of the Evidence Review Service was completed in December. A second draft case study of the Victorian Orthopaedic Trauma Outcomes Registry is underway.

Strengthen capability in research platform areas via recruitment of expert evidence reviewers and data analysts.	Achieved	Recruitment completed.
Complete pilot of the horizon scanning project.	Achieved	First and second scans have been complete and a report is being prepared in consultation with stakeholders.
Expand the data under management via addition of the WorkHealth data and the National Dataset for Compensation Based Statistics.	Achieved	National Dataset of Compensation Statistics was received in October 2014. WorkHealth dataset was received in Nov 2014. Linked hospital datasets was received in early 2015.
Complete data linkage and analysis project with the Department of Health.	Partially Achieved	Linkage has been completed. Data was transferred to ISCR. Analysis plan is in development.
Begin comparative analyses of return to work outcomes between jurisdictions in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.	Achieved	National Dataset received. Project team has been established. First phases of project is underway.
Review and refine engagement with Monash based corporate services to ensure we are making effective use of these capabilities within the University.	Achieved	Discussions undertaken with HR, Finance, Purchasing, Legal Services and IT. New protocols are in place in some instances.
Review, develop and implement performance and development review processes that assist to align expectations with staff skill enhancement and support	Achieved	New process trialled for 14/15 performance plan development. The review by Monash HR of process was positive.
Convene four meetings of the Board of Management.	Achieved	Five meetings held.
Convene four meetings of the Relationship Management Committee.	Achieved	Five meetings held.
Develop modified research approval mechanisms that provide the TAC, VWA and Monash with oversight of resource allocation under new engagement model.	Achieved	Completed. This involves use of the Claims Governance Committee at the TAC and the development of a new research governance committee at WorkSafe.

Financial Indicators - (incl. Comparison to Budget)



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research

This audit opinion is prepared for the purposes of the 2013 Collaboration Agreement ("the Agreement") which commences on 1 January 2014, between the **Transport Accident Commission, Victorian WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe)** ("the Agencies") and Monash University (the "University").

Scope

We have audited the Statement of Income and Expenditure ("the Statement") for the period beginning 1 July 2014 and ended on 30 June 2015 provided by the University which specifies an amount of \$11,586,525 of expenditure on the Fund and an amount of \$11,516,522 of other revenue and funding contributions towards the State Government funds as a contribution to support the activities of the **Institute of Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research (ISCRR)** in order to express an opinion on it for the purpose of the agreement. The management of the Corporate Finance Division of Monash University are responsible for the preparation of the Statement, and for meeting the requirements of the Agreement.

We have conducted an independent audit of the Statement in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Agencies and the University. We disclaim any assumptions of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the Statement to which it relates to any person other than the Agencies and the University, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared for.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included an examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts within the Statement. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether the Statement is true and fair.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion:

- The Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period 1 July 2014 until 30 June 2015 is true and fair in all material respects;
- The funds have been expended in accordance for the Project and in accordance with the Agreement; and
- The balance of funds as at 30 June 2015 is \$3,567,996

RSM Bird Cameron
Chartered Accountants

Kristie Dundon
Director
17 September 2015
Melbourne, Victoria

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INSTITUTE FOR SAFETY, COMPENSATION AND RECOVERY RESEARCH

**Statement of Income and Expenditure
For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2015**
For purpose of compliance with the reporting requirements of the
Research Institute Collaboration Agreement

Statement of Income and Expenditure	Note	Core Funding				Non-Core Funding	2015 TOTAL
		WSV	TAC	Monash	Total Core Funding		
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue							
Funding revenue	2	3,539	2,020	241	5,800	5,093	10,893
Monash ancillary contribution		-	-	400	400	80	480
Interest income		31	29	7	67	77	144
Total revenue		3,570	2,049	648	6,267	5,250	11,517
Expenditure							
Research activities	3	2,752	1,662	-	4,414	3,882	8,296
Research development and translation	4	638	762	-	1,400	485	1,885
Operations	5	309	309	648	1,266	140	1,406
Total expenditure		3,699	2,733	648	7,080	4,507	11,587
Net balance for the financial year		(129)	(684)	-	(813)	743	(70)
Brought forward unspent funds		1,206	1,396	-	2,602	1,036	3,638
Accumulated unspent funds carry forward	6	1,077	712	-	1,789	1,779	3,568

The above Statement of Income and Expenditure should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes to the Statement.

Certification

We certify that the above Statement correctly reflects the income and expenditure as recorded in the Monash University Accounting and Financial Reporting System against the funding revenue received from the Transport Accident Commission, WorkSafe Victoria and Monash University and has been expended in accordance with the Research Institution Collaboration Agreement.


Joel Chibert

Director, Research and Revenue Accounting Services

Date: 17/9/15



Alex Collie
Chief Executive Officer
Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research
Date: 17 September 2015

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