

VIC



National Strategy General Stakeholder Workshop in Melbourne, Victoria

Date	Tuesday 30 August 2011	Hosted by	Greg Tweedly, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian WorkCover Authority
Location	Melbourne	Facilitator	Professor David Caple



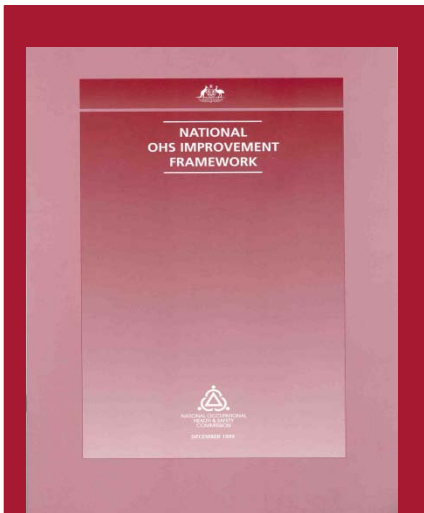
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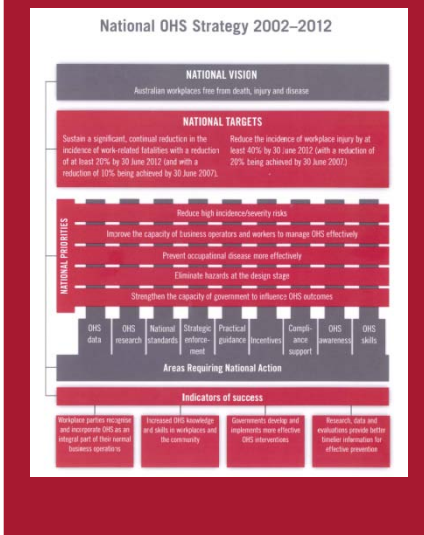
Disclaimer: The views of participants expressed in this document are not necessarily the views of Safe Work Australia.

History of National Strategy



The 10 year National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Improvement Framework (NIF) was in place in the 1990s providing Australia with a nationally coordinated “roadmap” for improving workplace health and safety. The NIF signalled the commitment to OHS improvement in Australia by the Workplace Relations Ministers’ Council (WRMC), the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) and NOHSC members. It set out to improve prevention, share knowledge, foster partnerships and collaborations, and compare performance among the key OHS stakeholders in Australia.

The National OHS Strategy (National Strategy) was endorsed in May 2002 with the vision of Australian workplaces free from death, injury and disease. This was a tripartite initiative of NOHSC and unanimously endorsed by Federal, State and Territory Ministers. The 10 year timeframe was chosen to span political terms and provide the time to develop evidence based policies and programs. The Workplace Relations Ministers’ noted the successes of the National Road Strategy and its associated targets, and believed the inclusion of targets in a new document would help sharpen the national focus and efforts to improve Australia’s OHS performance.



The National Strategy set out the basis for nationally strategic interventions that were intended to foster sustainably safe and healthy work environments, and to reduce significantly the numbers of people hurt or killed at work. Five national priorities and nine areas that required national action were agreed. These collectively aimed to bring about short and long-term improvements in OHS, as well as longer-term cultural change. Reports on progress to achieve the objectives of the National Strategy were provided annually to WRMC.

NOHSC provided the original leadership and took carriage of the National Strategy until it was replaced by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council in 2005.

Safe Work Australia and the National Strategy

In 2009 Safe Work Australia – an independent Australian Government statutory body - was established. It has primary responsibility for improving work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia.

Safe Work Australia represents a genuine partnership between governments, unions and industry working together towards the goal of reducing death, injury and disease in workplaces.

The current and future National Strategy are key documents to guide the work of Safe Work Australia and others to achieve this goal. The current historic commitment to work health and safety is illustrated by the joint funding by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments of Safe Work Australia, facilitated through an intergovernmental agreement signed in July 2008.



Safe Work Australia members:

Back left to right:

Mr Mark Goodsell Australian Industry Group; Mr Brian Bradley Western Australia; Ms Michele Patterson South Australia; Ms Michelle Baxter Commonwealth; Mr Rex Hoy Chief Executive Officer; Mr Peter Tighe Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

Front left to right: Ms Anne Bellamy Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr John Watson New South Wales; Mr Tom Phillips AM Chair; Mr Michael Borowick (ACTU)

Absent: Mr Greg Tweedly Victoria; Mr Barry Leahy Queensland; Ms Liesl Centenera ACT; Mr Roy Ormerod Tasmania; and Ms Laurene Hull Northern Territory

National Work Health and Safety Strategy Consultation and Development

Safe Work Australia is now developing a new National Work Health and Safety Strategy to supersede the previous Strategy that expires in June 2012.

To inform the development process, workshops are being held in all capital cities and a number of regional centres. These will seek ideas and comments from invited participants including employers, employees, regulators, work health and safety professionals, academics and interested community members.

Safe Work Australia will also continue to consult with key stakeholders through a range of other mechanisms including ongoing bilateral consultations and by commissioning topic papers from experts on selected issues.



These consultations will allow Safe Work Australia Members to decide on priority areas, targets and the Strategy's duration.

Once a draft National Work Health and Safety Strategy has been agreed by Safe Work Australia Members this will be released for public comment early in 2012. The comments will be analysed and used to further inform the development of the new Strategy.

Welcome to participants

Greg Tweedly, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian WorkCover Authority, welcomes participants to the Melbourne workshop.



Workshop Introduction

Mr Tom Phillips AM, the Chair of Safe Work Australia gave an introduction to the workshop. He noted that the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012 provided a basis for developing sustainable, safe and healthy work environments and for reducing the number of people hurt or killed at work.

He noted that the current Strategy set very clear and ambitious goals for work health and safety, and was a key initiative to improve Australia's work health and safety performance from 2002-12.

He thanked participants for attending and indicated that the workshops are an important part of the extensive stakeholder consultation process for the development of the New National Strategy. Mr Phillips invited participants to stay engaged and review the development progress reports on the new Strategy on the Safe Work Australia website as they are released.

Mr Phillips provided data on the progress and limitations of the current Strategy and lessons learnt.

He also noted the public comment period for the new Strategy early next year and welcomed participants' comments at that time.

Mr Phillips' presentation slides are available on the Safe Work Australia website.

Participant comments on the workshops and new National Strategy themes can be sent to nationalstrategy@safeworkaustralia.gov.au



Melbourne Workshop Participants' Profile

30 August 2011	Number
Academic/Specialist	13
Community based organisation	5
Company/General	19
Employer association	5
Legislative/Legal	1
Public policy	7
Regulator	7
Union	4
WHS professional	27
Grand Total	88

Session Scopes

To assist participants, all tables displayed scopes outlining what was meant by the key discussion topics. These are noted below:

- **Social/Economic/Emerging Issues in the Workforce, Business and Technology**
 - *The Workforce: Changing worker demographics such as ageing, young workers, casualisation, contractor work, shift work, and individual needs such as literacy, disability, mental health*
 - *Business: How business is changing to meet emerging challenges and to remain viable and competitive, such as outsourcing, subcontracting, casualisation, etc*
 - *Technology: Innovations in the workplace that have already or may have a future impact on Work Health and Safety , such as nanotechnology, green technology, innovations in genetics, electronics and IT systems.*
- **Hazards – Enhancing the capacity of workplaces to respond to:**
 - *Disease-Causing Hazards - includes noise, hazardous substances, chemicals and asbestos*
 - *Injury-Causing Hazards - includes work practices, manual tasks, slips trips and falls*
 - *Psychological Injury-Causing Hazards - includes the design, management and organisation of work and work systems to achieve resilient productive and safe psychological working environments.*
- **Work Health and Safety Systems – Challenges and Solutions in Safe Design and Work Systems, Skills and Training, and in Safety Leadership and Organisational Culture**
 - *Safe Design and Organisational Systems: the systems and principles that facilitate the elimination of hazards at the design or modification stage of products, buildings, structures and work processes*
 - *Skills & Training: the skills and training that employers and workers need to deliver safe workplaces.*
 - *Safety Leadership and Organisation Culture: Safety leadership generates organisational cultures that view safety and productivity of equal importance, validated by the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values of the workforce.*

Session One: What will success look like in 10 years?



- The mass media includes work health and safety in programs such as “renovators delight” and border protection, providing examples that influence children to consider work health and safety as a career option or a profession they want to participate in.
- Work health and safety is incorporated into contracts.
- Work health and safety induction is mandated.
- Government departments are work health and safety exemplars.
- The gap between what we know and what we do is closed.

Session One: What will success look like in 10 years?

- Safe design is embedded across the board in all workplaces and throughout the supply chain.
- Knowledge, expertise, information and solutions are shared across industries in Australia and globally.
- Data supply is improved and covers a broader range of topics, and reported without fear of repercussions.
- Cultures have changed, and now focus on prevention rather than compliance.
- Quality, professional work health and safety capability and education is in place in schools, trade training and degree courses.



- There is a more sophisticated understanding of home based work; including the interactions with individual factors and illnesses caused by a combination of work and the outside environment.
- Research relies on the evidence base, not opinion.

Session One: How do we get there?

- Ensure whole of Government accountability, where the Minister or Prime Minister alert businesses and the community when we're not doing well enough.
- Use technology, mandate registration, and provide access to online reporting and to work health and safety information to any business that is registered with an ABN.
- Develop relationships with finance managers.
- Mandate work health and safety induction.
- Accept that, per Patrick Hudson, work health and safety is not rocket science – it's actually harder than that.
- Instigate better reporting and evaluation.
- Ensure effective compliance and enforcement from regulator.
- Tell stories around positive culture and effort.
- Encourage and enable leaders to talk about different issues, including work health and safety in the community, and to celebrate successes.



Session Two: Emerging Issues in the Workforce

What will success look like in 10 years time?

- Positive partnerships are in place that unite work health and safety researchers, regulators and industry.
- Organisations have anticipatory work health and safety mindsets.
- The emerged work patterns of Fly-in/Fly Out, home based work, second jobs and longer work lives has ensured the development of innovative solutions to guarantee work health and safety excellence.
- Regulators and service providers are available 24/7 (e.g. to report incidents or seek advice) to cover the longer hours workers work.
- As the need to rely on immigration becomes greater, there is ample training made available, ensuring that those who come from a different culture or where English is their second language have the appropriate safety knowledge.



- Safety is a whole of life choice, as it is in the environmental movement.
- Employers offering better work-life balance attract and retain workers.
- Employers of choice have positive workplace cultures integrated throughout their entire workplace.

Session Two: Emerging Issues in the Workforce

How do we get there?

- Harness the vitality and survival skills of refugees and migrants, and apply them to work health and safety.
- Promote self management of health among workers.
- Provide a basic, consistent and transferable sets of skills to workers who transfer between jobs.
- Develop programs so that ageing workers (50+) can mentor young workers and migrants as they enter the workforce.
- Tailor safety messages appropriately for relevant demographics.
- Strongly promote and emphasise an improved work-life balance.



Session Two: Emerging Issues in Business

What will success look like in 10 years time?

- Despite skills shortages, and the mining, construction and service sectors drawing skilled workers into them, workers entering secondary careers later in life are well supported and quickly familiarised with industry hazards.
- Business processes and structures fully incorporate work health and safety.
- Knowledge is freely shared.
- Safety consciousness is raised among both workers and employers.
- Regulators' advisory role is separated from their prosecutor role, so that employers can seek advice without being penalised.
- Induction processes are rigorous, and as a result migrant workers are well prepared and competent when starting work.
- Workers have an advocacy group.



- Businesses have moved from vertical integration to network integration; cycles and changes occur more frequently, but the workforce is flexible and can expand and contract with the demands of economic pressures without compromising safety.
- SMEs have the work health and safety message communicated to them via partners and customers and through the supply chain.
- There is a consistent framework for implementing and measuring work health and safety practices within a particular industry.

Session Two: Emerging Issues in Business - How do we get there?



- Integrate work health and safety into business practices, standardise business systems and processes, and ensure that business diversity does not lead to fragmentation.
- Develop industry-specific information, but recognise that solutions should be based on hazards, so that common hazards are dealt with the same way across sectors.
- Promote guidance and develop a communications strategy for regulators to inform businesses on compliance, based on evidence based models that intensify messages but if not effective, apply levers if required.
- Ensure responsive regulations, with the cycle of education → design → persuasion → enforcement, ensuring that consequences are clear, and tightening the cycle with more education and less prosecution.
- Assist officers to understand due diligence, and help them to benchmark what safe practice looks like and how to achieve it.
- Produce useable and meaningful reference material.
- Protect vulnerable workers.
- Provide or facilitate more regulator training and growth in competencies to ensure a common standard across industries and jurisdictions.



Session Two: Emerging Issues in Technology

What will success look like in 10 years time?



- Workers are empowered and take personal responsibility for safety both at home and at work.
- Nanotechnology is monitored and we have made sure it is not a “new asbestos”.
- Software is improved to output a solution when parameters are inputted.
- We have got rid of the mouse and keyboard, and best practice centres of technological excellence act as a one stop shop, providing simulators for training for the use of remotely controlled technology, developing infrastructure guidelines, competencies and standards, conducting peer reviewed research, and monitoring health at an individual (cellular) level.
- Emerging technology is used to build connections between remote and rural workers to reduce isolation and increase work health and safety awareness and improved practices.
- Designing for safety is consistently monitored and old hazards are not forgotten.
- Harmonisation advice and regulatory guidelines include examples of good technological solutions.

Session Two: Emerging Issues in Technology

How do we get there?

- Develop a centre of excellence for knowledge on work health and safety technology and all related policy.
- Remove personal protective equipment from the hierarchy of control.
- Target programs at industry groups by using data to give us evidence of best practice, including examining industry sub sectors and injury types.
- Become involved with the US Centre for Safety and Health Sustainability, and develop global indicators and social reporting.



Session Three: Disease causing hazards

What will success look like in 10 years time?

- Resources are made available, informed by a mature understanding of the consequences and economic drivers of not dealing with disease causing hazards.
- Occupational diseases are recognised, exposures identified, and priorities agreed against a set of criteria.
- Hazards are either entirely eradicated or substituted for less hazardous materials or processes.
- Exposure standards are updated, including occupational exposures, and disease monitoring differentiates between work and lifestyle induced exposures.
- Extant (old, but still in existence) materials and research are not ignored.



Session Three: Disease causing hazards

How do we get there?

Enhance the capacity of workplaces to respond by:

- updating occupational exposures
- ensuring that chemical labelling as well as intelligent and pragmatic non-technical MSDSs are in place
- developing indicators for health performance measurement that are not based on LTIs
- assessing outputs versus benefits
- creating opportunities for chemical suppliers to share knowledge regarding hazards, eg developing product stewardship legislation
- publicising best practice stories, eg substituting quiet equipment for loud
- mandating hazard reporting, and
- targeting certain chemicals and following up to see whether control mechanisms are working.



Session Three: Injury causing hazards

What will success look like in 10 years time?

- Cumulative and acute hazards are redefined and treated separately, based on the already extensive knowledge gathered about cumulative injury.
- More focus is brought to the need for multi-factorial approaches, and tool kits are provisioned for and disseminated.
- Regulators do not just focus on individual hazards, but rather apply themselves to systemic work health and safety audits.
- Enforceable undertakings are used to encourage improvement in work health and safety systems.
- Influencers are not confined to the direct supply chain, with more creative sources considered, including the Department of Primary Industries, customers, and the Country Women's Association.
- The importation of sub-standard plant and machinery, especially when imported direct to end user, is met by a rigorous regulatory response.



Session Three: Injury causing hazards

How do we get there?

Enhance the capacity of workplaces to respond by:


- dispelling the myth that work health and safety costs money, and demonstrating the benefits of getting it right
- developing tables of high risk activities such as those used in the construction industry safe work method statements to be used by other industries, thereby identifying hazards in advance rather than after the event
- motivating senior managers and providing better business cases and lead indicators



- taking a zero-tolerance approach to transgressions involving well-known hazards and controls
- empowering individuals to rectify recognised and emerging hazards
- developing more accountability for managers at multiple levels across organisational hierarchies
- using evidence based interventions and applying secondary interventions at workplace levels at the first sign of trouble
- dealing with legacy plant and workplaces where new design is not optimal, and providing appropriate resources to make them more suitable, and
- managing injuries that occur outside work (pre-existing injuries).

Session Three: Psychological injury-causing hazards

What will success look like?

- A better definition of psychological injury is in place that incorporates job control, demand, personal and social support, does not resort to jargon, and clearly outlines the meaning of good and poor psychosocial qualities of work, including what is reasonable.
 - Workers are empowered, and understand how work systems contribute to improve and/or reduce psychological health or harm.
 - Better, clearer and more guidance material is provided.
 - Compensation and insurance are integrated.
 - Early intervention, e.g. for depression, avoids the compensation victim mentality that arises out of successfully claiming for psychological injury.
 - The relative contribution of individual versus the workplace (“exchanging”) is recognised.
 - Job descriptions define psychosocial quality of work as well as physical demands.
 - There is better work-life balance, and leading practice knowledge is shared internationally as well as in Australia.
- 
- Effective leaders are supported by organisations which are designed to allow managers to understand what workers have to deal with, and are resilient enough to deal with both organisational and individual factors.

Session Three: Psychological injury-causing hazards

How do we get there?

Enhance the capacity of workplaces to respond by:

- providing home as well as workplace support to help people through times of crises
- educating managers on psychological injuries
- developing base line data and targets around psychological interventions, including industry specific interventions
- helping organisations to deal with organisational and individual factors
- assessing pre-employment strategies with transient workforces, and using a precautionary approach
- focusing on an integrated approach when attempting to change behaviours and attitudes, not just fixing one thing, and
- researching how to change attitudes and beliefs before trying to change behaviours.



Session Four: Safe design and work systems

What will success look like in 10 years time?

- All engineers, designers and architects use safe design packages.
- Environmental aspects are included in safe design packages.
- We capture the true sources of risk, and do not oversimplify causes by not looking deep enough.
- When we identify design flaws that contributed to the causes of an injury, feedback is given to designers.
- A freely available up to date 3D anthropometric database reflects the true size and shape of Australians.
- Suppliers assess the work health and safety risks of the products they supply.



- Safe design information is useable and accessible.
- Designers and engineers undergo a process of work health and safety registration.

Session Four: Safe Design and work systems

How do we get there?

- Ensure that the concept of safe design includes systems of work and processes as well as built structures.
- Develop and maintain an up-to-date anthropometric database to provide the true picture of the size and shape of Australians.
- Ensure that safe design includes whole of life cycles of plant, including maintenance and decommission.
- Ensure ownership of the design certification and verification process i.e. the person who signs off to say a design is safe to use ensures that the design is safe for all, including builders, vendors, and buyers.
- Ensure there is consultation between designers and end users.
- Develop sound models for design processes that don't discourage innovation.



Session Four: Safety skills and training

What will success look like in 10 years time?



- Everyone in the community has an active knowledge and understanding of work health and safety.
- We have identified a knowledge and skill base for work health and safety professionals.
- Businesses know the consequences of injury, the impact on home, family, and sporting life.
- Benchmarking and measuring processes are in place.
- All industries are regulated.
- Training is targeted to all those who need it.
- Government funding options are assessed to ensure they don't adversely affect the way training is rolled out.
- Training matches workforce diversity.

Session Four: Safety skills and training

How do we get there?

- Promote a changed mind set where work health and safety is a part of life, rather than a barrier to getting things done.
- Include a requirement for employers to demonstrate their work health and safety knowledge as part of their business registration.
- Teach work health and safety at all tertiary courses/schools.
- Teach managers/supervisors how to manage work health and safety.
- Educate people before they enter the workforce.
- Coordinate knowledge transfer between old and new workers.
- Research how training effects change in work health and safety.
- Provide evidence based training and education.
- Encourage regular refresher training.



- Encourage employers to support a centralised training and licensing system.
- Encourage 360 degree feedback where workers are comfortable to point out hazards to managers.
- Benchmark and measure how training effects change in work health and safety.

Session Four: Safety leadership and organisational culture - What will success look like in 10 years time?

- All businesses agree and understand that safety is good for business, and their symbols, systems and strategies show it.
- Organisations have a positive safety culture that ensures that work health and safety is on all management agendas.
- Worker empowerment is driven from the top down and the bottom up.
- Organisations have a just, no-blame culture that seeks bad news without retribution, promotes people on the basis of their technical skills only if they have corresponding leadership skills, produces informed managers, and recognises that cover ups are worse than errors.
- Work health and safety is a key performance indicator, is synergistic with and as important as productivity and profitability, and is reported in all annual reports, board reports etc.



- The work health and safety narrative resonates for organisations as well as the whole of the community.
- Work health and safety managers are empowered to give bad news without fear or favour.

Session Four: Safety leadership and organisational culture - How do we get there?

- Accept that different organisations have different approaches and views, but insist on honest reporting if using behavioural based approaches or aiming for “zero harm”.
- Develop lead indicators for business to use as a key performance indicator.
- Demonstrate that leadership and culture affects the bottom line.
- Develop guidance on what businesses should measure to develop a safety culture.
- Connect leadership to business planning.
- Develop nationally harmonised investigation processes that make it easier for regulators to identify trends, not only measuring claims, but also pre-claims incidents and hazards.
- Ensure that accountability is industry specific.



- Accept that improving an organisational culture is a long journey (between 2- 5 years).
- Narrow the gap between management and the shop floor so that work health and safety can be discussed on an equal footing.
- Assist SMEs to understand what leadership is.

Closing Reflections from the host

Greg Tweedly, Chief Executive Officer of the VWA, closed the workshop on behalf of the Safe Work Australia Chair, Mr Tom Philips. Greg thanked Mr Philips for introducing the workshop, the facilitator Professor David Caple, and all the workshop participants for their enthusiastic attendance and contribution. He reflected that the current 10 year National Strategy has contributed to safer and healthier workplaces, and that today had been an opportunity to get things on the table to assist the development of the next strategy.

Greg commented on some of the key themes which had emerged during the discussion, particularly the focus on the importance of data and research, which was needed at a sufficient level to make decisions and to demonstrate improvements. He noted the need to build on our current databases and to look internationally and draw from their experiences as well. He agreed with participants where they called for practical initiatives that are measured for their intervention effectiveness, and if they don't work, then we need to try other strategies. He particularly noted the need for holistic approaches to work health and safety when musculoskeletal problems arise, including understanding the risk factors and interactions with other hazards.

Greg noted participants' emphasis on the need for leadership, and the importance of an organisation's culture in promoting safety, as well as the challenge of moving community awareness and attitudes to a more positive outlook regarding work health and safety. He complimented the Melbourne attendees on their strategic approach to work health and safety and commented that while he was a regulator, he would like to see less of an emphasis in work health and safety on regulations and more on joined up public policy and on the many functions where the regulatory approach intersects with the National Strategy, e.g. on chemical labeling and SMEs. He emphasised the challenges the Strategy faced in getting the message out to SMEs, to sharing solutions and to interface with the outside world as the economy becomes more accessible.

Greg then went on to outline the need to develop policy positions to improve work health and safety infrastructures, including an appropriate and balanced regulatory framework, adequately skilled inspectors and work health and safety professionals, facilities to provide work health and safety training and education, and support for data collection and research.

Greg observed that the workshop themes chosen for exploration were just some of the many that are under active consideration by Safe Work Australia Members as they develop the new National Strategy. He closed the workshop by welcoming participants' ongoing engagement with the development of the new Strategy and noted that if they would like to provide further comments and ideas these may be sent to nationalstrategy@safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

Evaluation Outcomes

Overall, the feedback from the National Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 workshop which was held in Melbourne on 30 August was positive; however, in contrast to other workshop evaluations, a few of the qualitative responses were extremely critical.

Both quantitative and qualitative results were collected from 41 evaluation sheets collected via Survey Monkey, which reported 93% approval with the length of the workshop, the opportunity to contribute and the format of the day. There was 95% satisfaction with the facilitator, while the location and food rated 83% levels of satisfaction. The room set up found only 51% liking it, 41% disliking it, and 7% with no opinion.

Some found the facilitator to be excellent, while others would have liked Safe Work Australia to *ensure that every table had someone to keep discussion focussed and on track*. The ample opportunity for input was frequently commented on favourably with *thoughtful contributions from experienced personnel*. A number of participants found the workshop to be a good networking opportunity, and commented positively on *the calibre of the people in the room and the ideas being generated*. However, a couple of participants were unimpressed, with one stating that in their view *the workshop in no way got the best out of those in the room*, and another of the view that *the presenters were dominated either by Safe Work Australia/WorkSafe or those known to these bodies and I felt that often they didn't represent the views of the groups very well*.

Many suggestions were made on how to improve the quality of discussion, such as *ensure that blue collar representatives are also represented (i.e. HSRs) rather than just managers and professionals*, while others noted that *there was an abundance of experience in the workshop; these participants made a great contribution to the day*. Whilst most people appreciated the *chance to input into the strategy with people who were all committed*, and *welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the important discussion* others noted that *of course there is never enough time to discuss the issues in full but I can only hope that the combined input from the many workshops will provide a sufficient base for decision making*. One participant stated their preference to focus on five years at a time, while another participant felt *it was a completely wasted opportunity*. Yet another noted their *overall impression was the coming together of some pretty strong minded and intelligent people who genuinely were not trying to push a particular agenda but were willing to look at a bigger picture than their own individual interests*. *There was no doubting the professionalism of those who ran the event. I loved the range of opinions and experiences and the arguing - this had made me reflect and to reevaluate my attitudes and my state of knowledge. Please count me in next time*.

All of the input has been noted, and is being integrated into future workshops and into planning the new Work Health and Safety Strategy to make improvements.

NB. Text in italics indicates direct quotes from responders.



safe work australia