

Safe Work Australia

# Operational Plan

**/** 2022-2023



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## Legislative context /

Safe Work Australia was established under the *Safe Work Australia Act 2008* (Cth) (the SWA Act). In accordance with the SWA Act, this operational plan details the activities to be undertaken by Safe Work Australia and the planned expenditure for the year. Further, it is consistent with, and supports, the strategies in the Corporate Plan 2022-2026 and does not deal with the allocation of resources for the performance of Safe Work Australia's functions.

## Our purpose /

Safe Work Australia has an important national role to achieve significant and continual reductions in the incidence of work-related death, injury and illness and to improve outcomes for injured workers and their employers. It is a tripartite forum representing the interests of the Commonwealth, states and territories, as well as workers and employers in Australia to:

- collaborate on national work health and safety (WHS) and workers' compensation policy matters
- lead the development of evidence-based policy and supporting education and strategies, and
- promote consistency in WHS and workers' compensation arrangements.

This collaborative model recognises that national WHS and workers' compensation outcomes are improved when all relevant views and interests are considered.

This plan describes the activities to be undertaken by Safe Work Australia in performing its statutory functions during 2022-2023, within the total operating budget of \$22.857m.

# Operational Plan

## / 2022-2023

## The activities we will undertake in 2022-2023 /

The activities we will undertake in 2022-2023 support the strategies outlined in the Safe Work Australia Corporate Plan 2022-2026 and reflect the priorities agreed by Safe Work Australia Members.

During 2021, we continued our efforts to respond to the unprecedented situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022-2023, given the ongoing WHS implications for Australian workplaces, COVID-19 will remain an ongoing priority. Safe Work Australia will continue to assist Australian workplaces to manage the ongoing health and safety risks of COVID-19. We will also consider the relevance of our COVID-19 guidance and tools in relation to other infectious diseases in the workplace. This work will contribute to the ongoing Australian economic recovery from the pandemic by helping to ensure safe workplaces and providing assurance to Australians that they are able to return to their usual activities.

Notwithstanding the importance and ongoing priority of the COVID-19 response, we will also continue to progress other key activities.

These activities include:

- implementing WHS ministers' responses to the recommendations of the 2018 independent review of the model WHS laws
- finalising the review of the workplace exposure standards and progressing the recommendations to WHS ministers for approval
- providing ongoing guidance and information to support the national transition to GHS Revision 7
- progressing the occupational lung diseases workplan initiatives, including regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to minimising the risks of silicosis and silica-associated diseases in Australian workers
- building on existing guidance and information on WHS relating to the gig economy
- finalising and publishing a model Code of Practice on managing psychosocial hazards at work and developing a framework of supporting guidance and communications materials
- publishing a new Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy
- progressing national initiatives under the National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030 to address the barriers to affected workers returning to work, and

# Operational Plan

## / 2021-2022

- continuing to enhance our data holdings and evidence base, including through the Data Improvement Project and by undertaking high-quality research on priority WHS and workers' compensation issues.

In addition to these key activities, we will also continue performing our core activities by:

- developing accessible, effective and practical material to support the model WHS legislative framework to aid understanding and compliance, particularly for small business
- driving and leveraging national action to improve return to work outcomes for workers with work-related injury or illness
- collecting, analysing and disseminating high quality evidence
- collaborating with our national and international counterparts, and
- increasing awareness and education through our online multimedia hub and National Safe Work Month.

## How we will measure our performance /

Our performance in delivering the activities identified in this plan will be measured against the performance measures and planned performance results included in the 2022-2023 Safe Work Australia Portfolio Budget Statements and reported in the Safe Work Australia Annual Report.