

# Operational Plan

## 2026–27

### 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 Safe Work Australia Corporate Plan 2026–2030.

### Our purpose

Safe Work Australia is the national policy body with an important role to support reductions in the incidence of work-related death, injury and illness and to support improved 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 work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements.

This collaborative model recognises that national work health and safety 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 2026–27. Safe Work Australia will receive total agency funding of \$26.8 million for the financial year.

Consistent with our Corporate Plan, the intended outcome from our Operational Plan is *healthier, safer and more productive workplaces through improvements in Australian work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements*.

### The activities we will undertake in 2026–27

**The activities we will undertake in 2026–27 support the strategies outlined in the Safe Work Australia Corporate Plan 2026–30 and reflect the priorities agreed by Safe Work Australia Members and include:**

- completing a best practice review of the model work health and safety laws in the context of strengthening and maintaining a harmonised approach
- implementing the recommendations and findings of the engineered stone ban review and progressing Safe Work Australia's contribution to delivery of the Silica National Strategic Plan 2024–2030
- progressing Safe Work Australia's contribution to the delivery of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan 2024–2030, including a comprehensive review of the model work health and safety asbestos framework
- supporting the transition to new workplace exposure limits, including updates to the model WHS laws, guidance and model codes of practice, and introduction of an improved hazardous chemicals information system
- delivering communication and education activities to increase awareness of work health and safety and workers' compensation, including a joint silica communications campaign with the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency
- implementing the 2026 Research Workplan to advance Safe Work Australia's Research and Evaluation Strategy
- developing advice on options for potential updates to the model WHS laws relating to quad bike safety, dispute resolution processes, crowd platform requirements, crane licencing, exposure to carcinogens and lead, welding safety and health monitoring and air monitoring
- developing and piloting an online portal to support families impacted by workplace fatalities
- developing guidance and resources including on preventing gendered violence in hospitality and small business, electric vehicles and lithium batteries, and managing the risks of slips, trips and falls
- delivering the Australian Worker Exposure Survey to provide contemporary data on exposure to dangerous substances and psychosocial hazards
- updating key national workers' compensation guidance and the deemed diseases list

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

- advising WHS ministers on national policy matters and initiatives relating to WHS and workers' compensation
- developing accessible, effective and practical material to support the model WHS legislative framework to aid understanding and compliance
- developing proposals to improve workers' compensation arrangements, including return to work, and to promote national consistency
- collecting, analysing, and disseminating high quality evidence
- undertaking and publishing research to inform the development and evaluation of WHS and workers' compensation policies and strategies
- developing and implementing national education and communication strategies and initiatives to increase awareness and support improvements in WHS outcomes and workers' compensation arrangements
- delivering new data insights and fostering innovative and high-quality evidence to improve national work health and safety outcomes and workers' compensation arrangements, and
- collaborating with our national and international counterparts.

## How we will measure our performance

Our performance in delivering the activities identified in this plan will be measured against the performance criteria and targets included in the Safe Work Australia 2026–27 Portfolio Budget Statements and reported in the Safe Work Australia Annual Report.