Michelle Baxter: 00:05 Good afternoon everyone. It's a real pleasure to be here at the Singapore WSH Conference 2018. Today I'm going to give you some insights into how we approach Work, Health and Safety in Australia and how we're tackling the changing face of Work, Health and Safety that's being caused by new and emerging workforce trends. So, I'm very proud of the system that we've got in Australia. It's the product of much hard work, consultation, collaboration, and innovation. And over the past 10 years there's been a steady decline in workplace fatalities and injuries, which simply inspires us to work harder to make that decline even steeper.

So, in about 2011 Safe Work Australia developed a single set of model Work, Health and Safety laws for implementation by each of the governments of Australia. Most governments in Australia have done this and it's through this that we have broadly achieved national harmonisation of Work, Health and Safety in Australia. This is no mean feat in a country that's as large and as diverse as Australia and with its multiplicity of independent systems of government. There isn't one central federal government in Australia that controls everything, there are a number of jurisdictions and each of those had to implement the model Work, Health and Safety laws through its own parliament. There are two very important principles that underpin the Work, Health and Safety act. The first is the hierarchy of risk control and the second is good work design. So, I'm sure in terms of the hierarchy of risk control, you're all very familiar with that.

So, in Australia the onus is placed on what's called the person conducting the business or undertaking, the PCBU. (It) used to be the employer but it's shifted slightly to select and implement measures as close to the top of the hierarchy as far as reasonably practicable, such as elimination of the hazard or substituting the hazard with a safer alternative. And then the second principle is good work design, and this really does underpin the Australian approach to Work, Health and Safety. Good work design sits at the very top of the hierarchy of risk control and it means designing work, work systems, processes, and plant so that they are inherently safe. So that hazards and risks to workers’ safety don't even enter the workplace. Failure to consider how work is designed can be a breach of Australian Work, Health and Safety laws.

So in Australia, we're very proud of the laws that govern the minimum standards to achieving work health and safety compliance, but we want more than just compliance. We pursue the ideal of best practise to reach far beyond compliance, and to ask ourselves, "Okay, what's the next challenge? What are the new things that we can learn? How can we further innovate? And what more can we do to protect workers?"

Because work is changing, so must we. So we started a process in 2012 by developing the Australian Work, Health and Safety strategy, which is a 2012 to 2022 strategy. It's a forward thinking, long-term national strategy. It's halfway through at the moment, which promotes the vision of healthy, safe and productive working lives and provides measurable targets to be achieved by 2022. It places focus on a set of priority industries and that's those that experience the highest number of fatalities and industries, injuries, I beg your pardon, and places the emphasis on designing workplaces and work so that they are inherently safe. The National Strategy drives work nationally so that all of the Work, Health, Safety regulators across Australia have a common objective and a common aim to work towards.