Safe Work Australia
Strategic Plan

2012–2015
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Safe Work Australia is an inclusive, tripartite body representing the interests of the Commonwealth, states and territories as well as workers and employers in Australia. Safe Work Australia is reform-focused with the power to make recommendations directly to the Select Council on Workplace Relations.

The main focus of Safe Work Australia since its establishment has been the development of model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws. This development work is now largely complete with finalisation of model WHS (Mines) Regulations and model codes of practice continuing until the end of 2012.

The focus for Safe Work Australia will move to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the model laws and making changes to improve operational efficiency.

Safe Work Australia will continue to be a key source for high quality nationally significant data and research to inform the development of new work health and safety and workers’ compensation policy.

During 2012–2013 Safe Work Australia will launch the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022 (the Australian Strategy) as a strategic framework to guide national action. The launch of the Australian Strategy will facilitate the redevelopment of Safe Work Australia’s strategic plan in early 2013. The revised strategic plan will reflect the Australian Strategy’s vision, goals and outcomes.
OUTCOME

Work health and safety is regarded as a key community issue.

RATIONALE

The Australian community and their attitudes are a key influence in bringing about positive change. Reducing the tolerance the community has for the ongoing level of death, injury and disease resulting from work and motivating the public to take action to improve work health and safety is a vital part of the national vision.

STRATEGIES

1.1 Work with stakeholders through a range of mechanisms to deliver a consistent national message on the importance of work health and safety.

1.2 Develop and disseminate national publications on key strategic objectives and work health and safety and workers’ compensation matters.

OUTCOME

Work health and safety is improved through understanding what influences Australian workplace cultures and putting in place mechanisms to effect change.

RATIONALE

How to effect sustainable improvements to health and safety in the workplace remains a significant challenge. Understanding how risks at work are perceived and how these perceptions might be changed is essential to help improve workplace culture and organisational behaviour.

STRATEGIES

2.1 Undertake research to identify the factors that positively influence workplace culture and organisational behaviour.

2.2 Develop and maintain collaborative Australian and international partnerships on work health and safety.
OUTCOME

Australia has harmonised work health and safety laws complemented by consistent compliance and enforcement policies that contribute to improved safety for all workers.

RATIONALE

Inconsistent work health and safety laws cause inequitable safety standards for workers and additional costs and confusion for businesses across jurisdictions and industry sectors. Inconsistency also leads to duplication and inefficiencies for governments in the provision of policy, regulatory and support services. The harmonisation of work health and safety legislation is part of the COAG National Reform Agenda aiming to reduce regulatory burdens and create a seamless national economy.

STRATEGIES

3.1 Continued development and assistance with the implementation of the model work health and safety laws.

3.2 Monitor the effectiveness of the model work health and safety laws.

3.3 Identify and recommend areas for improvement related to harmonisation, efficiency, equity and the standard of safety provided.

OUTCOME

National work health and safety and workers’ compensation policy is informed by knowledge, evidence, understanding and prioritisation of existing and emerging issues.

RATIONALE

Policy development should be based on evidence. Processes to identify, assess and respond to emerging and current issues are required to ensure effective policy development. Following policy implementation, robust evaluation using both lag and lead indicators will determine if it has been effective in delivering change and if amendments are needed.

STRATEGIES

4.1 Collect, analyse, monitor and report on data and research to inform national work health and safety and workers’ compensation policy development and evaluation.

4.2 Identify, assess and report on current and emerging work health and safety and workers’ compensation issues.


OUTCOME

Continuous improvement of Safe Work Australia.

RATIONALE

A well functioning and continuously improving Safe Work Australia will assist stakeholders to meet the challenges which have been identified and are likely to emerge in Australia in coming years. The CEO and staff of Safe Work Australia are committed to improving the people, the organisation and the way it operates. The staff of Safe Work Australia is committed to providing high quality policy advice and development, research, data analysis, communication and secretariat services.

STRATEGIES

6.1 Identify and develop areas for improvement so that the workforce continues to be safe, empowered, productive and committed.

6.2 Continued provision of effective governance, resource management and statutory reporting.

6.3 Manage, develop and support working relationships with key stakeholders and deliver high quality services.

OUTCOME

Opportunities for greater improvements in workers’ compensation arrangements are identified and assessed and policy proposals developed.

RATIONALE

Inconsistent workers’ compensation arrangements across Australia can lead to less equitable, effective, efficient, comprehensible and sustainable workers’ compensation arrangements for both workers and employers, particularly for employers with workers in more than one jurisdiction. Policy proposals will be developed to identify and assess opportunities for improved responses to and management of work related injury and illness.

STRATEGIES

5.1 Undertake policy research on high priority workers’ compensation arrangements, particularly for employers with workers in more than one jurisdiction.