NATIONAL WHS CAPABILITIES ACTIVITY PLAN 2014-2019 – CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The *National Work Health and Safety Capabilities Activity Plan 2014-2019* (WHS Capabilities Activity Plan) outlines key national activities undertaken by Safe Work Australia and Members which are designed to improve work health and safety capabilities.

Background

Health and safety capabilities is one of seven key Action Areas contributing to the vision of *healthy, safe and productive working lives* under the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022* (Australian Strategy). Every person requires the capabilities – the knowledge, skills and resources – to fulfil their role in relation to work health and safety.

The WHS Capabilities Activity Plan expands opportunities for learning and continuous improvement in the quality of training and education. Activities in this area will also contribute to improved work health and safety infrastructure, which is one of the outcomes of the Australian Strategy.

Many initiatives to improve work health and safety capabilities are being conducted, for example by industry sector bodies, universities and technical and further education (TAFE) institutions, business and government departments responsible for training and education.

Outcomes

The *Health and safety capabilities* Action Area identifies four strategic outcomes to be achieved by 2022:

1. Everyone in a workplace has the work health and safety capabilities, i.e. knowledge and skills they require.

2. Those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have the appropriate capabilities, i.e. knowledge, skills and experience.

3. Inspectors and other staff of work health and safety regulators have the work health and safety capabilities, i.e. knowledge, skills, experiences, and resources to effectively perform their role.

4. Work health and safety skills development is appropriately integrated into relevant education and training programs.

These outcomes require that the skills and knowledge acquired are applied and developed in the workplace.

Activities will be undertaken by the Agency, by individual Safe Work Australia Members or groups of Members, particularly regulators, and by business and other bodies. A number of the activities will require liaison and cooperation between several agencies – the purpose of including these activities on the Activity Plan is to begin the necessary conversations with all the bodies that have a role to play in improving work health and safety capabilities.

Priority industries and disorders

The Australian Strategy identifies seven priority industries and six priority work-related disorders for prevention activities based on the severity of consequences for workers, the number of workers estimated to be affected and the existence of known prevention controls.

Activities in this Activity Plan act to strategically effect change in the priority industries and prevent or minimise the priority disorders through improved work health and safety capabilities.

Supporting activities

The activities that comprise the WHS Capabilities Activity Plan are consistent with the following criteria:

1. a significant activity that involves:

    - one or more Members or national bodies

        i. at least six months' duration or

        ii. a major investment of resources, or

    - multiple States or Territories (where relevant) or on at least a state-wide scale.

2. an existing or planned activity that is likely to contribute to achieving the 2022 Outcomes and targets of the Australian Strategy under the Action Area: Health and Safety Capabilities

3. the activity targets one or more priority industries or disorders

4. there is an existing or proposed evaluation plan, and

5. the results can be publicly reported and shared.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The WHS Capabilities Activity Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to report on progress and incorporate additional initiatives. Activities undertaken by other stakeholders contributing to improved work health and safety capabilities will be monitored by Safe Work Australia.

A more comprehensive evaluation at three years (followed by another at the conclusion of the five year plan) will be based on the sum of the individual project evaluations, the reporting of activity progress/outcomes and the available data. Further studies may be initiated.

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Current WHS Capabilities activities

Activity Description	Outcomes	Status	Responsible
Everyone in a workplace has the work health and safety capabilities, i.e. knowledge and skills they require			
1. High risk work licensing – uniform assessment and competency for licensing	Improved capabilities of those undertaking high risk work	Ongoing	Safe Work Australia; WHS regulators
2. Develop consistent approved construction induction training, including liaison with ASQA	Improved capabilities of construction workers	Ongoing	Safe Work Australia; WHS regulators
3. Workplace chemicals safety training Small Business Online SDS and Label training, GHS for Manufacturers seminars	Improved capabilities for duty holders in chemical manufacturing	Underway	Safe Work Australia
4. Nanotechnology training – practical guidance to help people work safely with engineered and manufactured nanomaterials	Improved capabilities of workers handling nanomaterials	Underway – to be completed mid 2014	Safe Work Australia
5. Small business assistance programs	Improved capabilities of small business owners	Ongoing	WHS regulators
6. Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) targeted compliance campaigns	Improved capabilities of duty holders	Ongoing	WHS regulators
7. Health and Safety Representative training	Improved capabilities of HSRs	Ongoing	WHS regulators
8. IPaM – case management approach. For identified poor performing businesses and sectors that have either workers' compensation premiums capped at twice the industry rate or have high statutory cost and/or number of claims compared to similar sized businesses in their industry, advisors work with targeted employers to help build management systems relevant to the company's issues.	• Long term engagement which provides comprehensive assessments into health and safety systems and organisational culture. • Sustainable positive impact on work health and safety and injury management in participating employers.	Ongoing	Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and WorkCover Queensland (WCQ).

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Activity Description	Outcomes	Status	Responsible
9. PErforM – manual tasks risk management program that involves workplace-based teams devising solutions for their hazardous manual tasks. Research evidence supports that a PE approach can decrease manual tasks risks and reduce musculoskeletal injuries, workers' compensation claims and days lost due to illness. Provides resources, case studies, workshops, and support and assistance to industry via regional staff and an industry network.	• Improve industry awareness of manual tasks risk management • Increase workplace capacity to manage manual tasks risks and comply with legislative standards • Increased control of hazardous manual tasks risk and in the long term decreased injury. • PErforM resource package including case studies	Ongoing	Research collaboration between Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, the University of Queensland and Curtin University.
10. People at Work – program to assist industry to implement risk management systems for work-related psychosocial hazards. In the long term it aims to decrease work-related psychological illness and stress mediated physical illness. Provides a wide range of resources, case studies, workshops and support and assistance to industry from regional staff. The data gathered from the risk profiles of participating organisations will contribute to a database on the risk exposures related to work-related psychological injury.	• Provision of a freely available electronic risk assessment tool, reporting processes, and associated case studies and resources for industry • Increased number of workplaces implementing risk management systems for work-related psychosocial hazards • Increased number of industry stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and abilities to support the implementation of risk management systems for work-related psychosocial hazard • Supplement normative database from the previous ARC People at Work project • Align People at Work with other national WHS initiatives and programs to support improvements in national mental health outcomes.	Ongoing	QLD, NSW, VIC, SWA, Comcare, Beyond Blue, QUT, ANU

Activity Description	Outcomes	Status	Responsible
Those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have the appropriate capabilities, i.e. knowledge, skills and experience			
11. Contribution to the Generalist OHS Body of Knowledge project	Improved capabilities of WHS professionals	Underway – to be completed August 2014	Safe Work Australia
Inspectors and other staff of work health and safety regulators have the work health and safety capabilities, i.e. knowledge, skills, experience and resources to effectively perform their role			
12. National Workplace Inspector Training and Development Reference Group (NWITDRG) continue its work directed by HWSA	Improved capabilities of WHS inspectors	Underway	WHS regulators
13. Develop and implement training for inspectors on workplace bullying	Improved capabilities of WHS inspectors	Underway	WHS regulators
Work health and safety skills development is appropriately integrated into relevant education and training programs			
14. Collaborate with Engineering Australia to develop and deliver certification requirements for integrating Safe Design for engineering students	Improved capabilities of designers and engineers	Underway	Safe Work Australia
15. Input into relevant policy reviews on education reform including comment/input into reviews of VET sector	Improved WHS education that is responsive to required WHS capabilities and reflects the needs of employers	Ongoing – for example, consultation with CPSISC on the review of the Construction White Card	Safe Work Australia
16. Develop and promote young worker and school-based programs including Young Worker Toolkit	Improved awareness of young workers' safety issues	Underway	WHS regulators

Activity Description	Outcomes	Status	Responsible
17. Liaison with relevant professional associations – Australian Safety and Health Professionals Alliance	Improved capabilities of professionals involved in providing advice to others	Commenced	Safe Work Australia
18. MOUs with ASQA	Influencing improved national WHS infrastructure	Ongoing	WHS regulators