

Ms Marie Boland
Safe Work Australia
2018review@swa.gov.au

13 April 2018

Review of the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws

Dear Ms Boland,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Review of the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

The Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF) is a peak body representing many professional institutes, industry associations, and specialist trade and sub-contractor organisations in the industry. ACIF meets four times a year in forum to formulate policies, position statements and practice notes on industry best practice and to offer advice on all matters regarding building and construction.

Many of ACIF's members will also provide written submissions to the Review of the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

The policies of the Australian Construction Industry Forum on Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) are as follows:

Overview

1. The incidence of fatalities and serious injuries in the construction industry has shown improvement over recent years, but ACIF considers that the industry has the capacity to further improve on the current positive trends.
2. Moves by Australian governments towards standardisation of workplace health and safety laws are a welcome and substantial step to enabling industry to develop and implement more effective systems, policies and procedures aimed at further reducing workplace injuries and fatalities.
3. However, the laws are not fully standardised, integrated with or consistent with building industry organisational practices. Taking this into account, there is still further action required to achieve a fully integrated and harmonised set of legislation, codes and practices for the construction industry. This needs to be progressed expeditiously.
4. To move to the next level of improvement in preventing workplace injuries requires a commitment from all stakeholders. Employers, workers, consultants, designers, suppliers and clients need to work cooperatively in identifying and minimising workplace risk.

Policy Objectives

1. Workplace culture and the "human" factor are critical issues that must be addressed if the industry is to achieve a further reduction in workplace injuries and generally lower workplace risk.
2. The industry and regulators should be concentrating efforts on preventative activities as well as identifying why injuries occur and developing systems, procedures and educative tools to ensure that risks are identified and the risk of injury eliminated.
3. All persons involved in construction projects need to understand the important roles that they each have in ensuring safer workplaces and safety should transcend the pursuance of industrial relations objectives

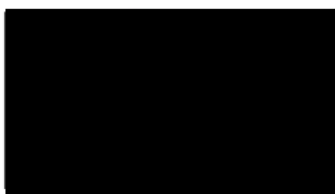
by any stakeholder. In particular, workplace health and safety needs to have a greater profile across all levels of management.

ACIF Policy Statement

1. Governments need to complete the move to harmonisation of workplace health and safety laws to enable industry to further its action to achieve continued improvements in workplace safety.
2. Safety consciousness should be incorporated as a central component of any project by all team members (consultants, contractors, workers, suppliers and clients).
3. Safety in design is a key issue in eliminating workplace hazards and risk and must be incorporated as a central component of any project.
4. Employers need to identify the required leadership capabilities and competencies appropriate for supervisors, managers and company boards and provide relevant training for these individuals.
5. As workplace health and safety affects all of those that work, a clearer and more connected health and safety educational process should be implemented by governments during secondary, vocational and higher education.
6. Delivery of appropriate studies within the various Built Environment professional discipline higher education programs is of the utmost importance. These specific subjects should be delivered by appropriately qualified people.
7. It should be mandatory that those who lead the various education providers, including design professionals, have a good understanding of the safety requirements of construction managers.
8. Consistent communication of safety principles and systems across worksites is essential to achieving a lowering of injury and fatality rates. Communication systems and training and educational programs should have regard to the ethnicity of the workforce and be practical and easily understood by all workers and visitors to worksites.
9. Better and expeditiously available data from government agencies and the industry should be a priority so that stakeholders are able to expeditiously identify the major causes of incidents and take appropriate action.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further explanation of the above feedback provided by the Australian Construction Industry Forum.

Yours sincerely,



James Cameron
Executive Director
Australian Construction Industry Forum



Norman Faifer
Chair
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