

Safe Working and Learning

Occupational Health and Safety Strategy

2009 - 2012



Director-General's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Department's second Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan, ***Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012***

Effective teaching through quality and continuity can only take place within a safe working environment.

Over the past three years we have seen major improvements in safety, including our performance in safety against National and State benchmarks, our introduction of a rigorous Safety Management System, improved Return to Work outcomes and reductions in our premiums.

Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012 aims to build on these achievements and bring about lasting change in the culture of our organisation.

The Strategy will build the capacity of our staff, raising awareness and encouraging good safety practice through effective organisational systems, where workplaces continue to build effective safety practices into day to day activities.

We will all need to play a part. Health and safety is everyone's responsibility and the success of the strategy depends on the participation of all staff, in every part of the organisation, across every school and TAFE.

I look forward to working with you all on improving our health and safety over the next three years.

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Director-General of Education and Training
Managing Director of TAFE NSW



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Introduction

The Department has demonstrated its commitment to improving health and safety across all its workplaces and ensuring a safe working and learning environment for all through its previous Strategy, *Safe Working and Learning 2005–2008*. The Strategy's targets were consistent with, and in some cases went beyond those in *Working Together: Public Sector Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Management Strategy*.

The Department aims to further improve safety. Striving for healthy people in safe workplaces is critical to our success as an organisation and one to which we all need to be committed. *Safe Working and Learning 2009–2012* provides a framework for implementing these responsibilities and a mechanism for reporting against our achievements.

The Strategy is aimed at significantly improving the Department's health and safety performance by:

- Raising awareness of workplace health and safety
- Helping to coordinate and prioritise the actions of different occupational classifications within the Department, and
- Improving the overall infrastructure that supports occupational health and safety.

The Strategy is consistent with the Public Sector OHS and Injury Management Improvement Strategy 2009-2012. It seeks to encourage and achieve higher levels of occupational health and safety performance in the Department than we would have through compliance and enforcement alone. As outlined in the Public Sector Strategy, "targets are important to focus attention toward improving workplace safety and injury management performance and drive accountability and positive change.

As outlined in the strategy, It is a basic right that every person works in safe, secure workplaces and that injured workers are afforded care, with dignity and respect, to ensure they are able to make an early, safe and durable return to work. The Department already has systems and processes in place to ensure that this occurs. The new *Safe Working and Learning* strategy seeks to build on established processes for improving its overall performance in occupational health and safety and injury management.

Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012

Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012 is a Three-Year Occupational Health and Safety Strategy to support continuous improvement in the Department of Education and Training's health and safety performance. It reinforces the Department's long term commitment to maintaining a safe workplace environment and ensuring the health and wellbeing of its staff, students and visitors.

The Strategy seeks to build on the Department's past achievements and successes in order to provide an improved safety culture resulting in better outcomes for our staff, students and visitors.

All staff have a responsibility in implementing this Strategy. Any successes or achievements resulting from this Strategy depend on the cooperation and the participation of everyone in the Department.

Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012 consists of five priority areas:

- Accountability and Leadership
- Prevention of Workplace Injury
- Improving Workforce Capability
- Financial Responsibility
- Statutory and Regulatory Compliance



These priority areas are aligned to the *Public Sector OHS and Injury Management Improvement Strategy 2009-2012*, and capitalise on the successes and achievements of the Department's previous Occupational Health and Safety Strategy, *Safe Working and Learning 2005-2008*.

They provide a focus for the Department in managing its health and safety performance, through clear, measurable and achievable targets. The Department's Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Management performance will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated and the results reported as key indicators based on overall performance. This will be able to be analysed with performance and trends across the Public Sector.

Key Priority Areas

Priority 1: *Accountability and Leadership*

In order to achieve the Department's vision of "*ensuring a safe working and learning environment for all staff, students and visitors*", strong and accountable leadership is essential. This priority focuses on ensuring that occupational health and safety remains a priority on all agendas at each level throughout the Department. It ensures that all areas are constantly striving to achieve the targets and objectives established through the Strategy enhancing our ability to deliver on all five priorities and thereby establishing and maintaining a healthy and positive safety culture.

The key strategies for implementing *Accountability and Leadership*:

- Establish business continuity systems for the Department
- Establish an effective and robust regional service delivery model to meet operational business requirements
- Review and update performance agreements to incorporate the new strategy's targets
- Develop and implement tri-level performance reports to inform and advise workplace managers on current performance, trends and progress towards key performance indicators
- Provide a support service to enable internal contributing stakeholders to achieve the Department's vision of ensuring a safe working and learning environment for all staff, students and visitors

The targets for *Accountability and Leadership*:

- All workplaces to have emergency management plans lodged online by 2009
- Regional service delivery model to be updated and in place by 1 July 2009
- Performance agreements to incorporate new targets by December 2009
- Delivery of quarterly performance reports at each level to commence last quarter of 2008

Priority 2: *Prevention of Workplace Injuries*

Everyone has a part to play in ensuring the safety of their workplace. This priority will enable all employees to contribute to good safety practices in their workplace. This will be achieved through the introduction of programs targeting occupational health and safety and injury management issues, as well as the prevention and early intervention of these issues from a broad range of perspectives. The holistic application of effective risk management strategies will assist in the prevention of workplace injuries.

The key strategies for implementing the *prevention of Workplace Injuries*:

Develop a prevention and early intervention program for:

- Psychological Wellbeing
- Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Student Health and Wellbeing
- Slip, Trips and Falls
- Equipment Safety and related Operating Procedures
- Prevention of Violence in the Workplace

The targets for *prevention of workplace injuries*:

- A 15% reduction in the frequency of workplace injuries
- A reduction in the overall number of liability cases

Priority 3: *Improving Workforce Capability*

This Strategy recognises the need to increase the understanding of all staff within the Department of their roles and responsibilities in occupational health and safety and injury management. This will be achieved by providing support and guidance to all employees, and facilitating the sharing of skills to promote best practice in occupational health and safety and injury management. The outcome of this priority will be an effective contribution by all staff to the Strategy's outcomes and targets.

The key strategies for *improving workforce capability*:

Develop a comprehensive learning and development Strategy in line with Units of Competence from relevant National Training Packages.

Develop a systemic framework to address organisational capability requirements through a staged development model in line with the existing professional learning model:

- Entry level requirements
- Core skills development
- Continuing professional development/ compliance requirements
- Progress discussions with unions on moving to alternative agreed arrangements for Occupational Health and Safety Consultation Training

The targets for improving workforce capability

- Development of a learning and development program in the first year of the strategy. Pilot and evaluation of the program to be concluded by the second year of the Strategy and full implementation to occur by 2011.
- Provide compliance training to 5000 employees over the life cycle of the Strategy

Priority 4: *Financial Responsibility*

Establishing financial responsibility as a key priority will allow the Department to target the overall reduction of costs related to workers' compensation, through a reduction in the frequency of workplace injuries and effective return to work and injury management strategies. Reducing spending in this area will allow savings to be diverted back into Schools or other areas of the Department. This will be achieved by reducing operational costs associated with poor health and wellbeing, effectively managing external providers to ensure a cost effective service with value for money, and reducing the factors that contribute to the costs associated with Occupational Health and Safety prosecutions.

The key strategies for improving *Financial Responsibility*:

- Develop an effective workers' compensation and Injury Management Model
- Achieve cost efficiencies by reviewing:
 - HealthQuest
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Concurrent Relief
- Implement policies and procedures to improve management of temporary placement of staff into above establishment positions due to health and safety issues
- Develop a financial accountability model for workers' compensation costs
- Introduce and review service level agreements to ensure quality and cost effective service delivery from external providers
- Establish a cross portfolio working party to investigate the causes of occupational health and safety incidents and recommend mitigation strategies to reduce the human factors associated with occupational health and safety prosecutions

The targets for improving *financial responsibility*:

- A 10% reduction in the workers' compensation premium
- A 10% reduction in hindsight adjustment costs
- A 15% reduction in the number of days lost for workers' compensation
- A reduction in the overall number of public liability cases
- A 15% reduction in the cost of temporary placements
- A 10% reduction in the number and duration of Section 38 claims
- A 10% reduction in the average cost per claim

Priority 5: *Statutory and Regulatory Compliance*

Organisational and individual compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations are crucial, both to ensure that the Department is meeting its obligations and to ensure that employees are supported in meeting their obligations. This priority will be achieved through the development of robust systems and processes, specific policies and procedures and expert guidance and advice. Regular performance reports will be published in relation to this target.

The key strategies for *statutory and regulatory compliance*

- Develop an occupational health and safety framework, through the use of key policies and procedures, to assist the Department in meeting its statutory and regulatory obligations
- Develop an audit program in accordance with the occupational health and safety and injury management improvement standard and its policies and procedures
- Develop performance reporting mechanisms to monitor compliance in accordance with Public Sector targets
- Provide expert advice on strategic risks within workplaces to assist them in meeting compliance requirements
- Ensure compliance with Departmental asset management obligations

The targets for *statutory and regulatory compliance*

- 100% of all NSW Government Schools and TAFE campuses audited (in each audit cycle) in accordance with the Department's OHS Audit program
- Review all policies and procedures to ensure continuing relevance and compliance
- Provision of reports in relation to compliance to be provided each term
- Provision of a report in relation to asset management outcomes and emerging issues

Corporate Governance

The priorities and targets within *Safe Working and Learning 2009-2012* provide a framework for directing and implementing performance in line with the Department's Corporate Strategy. Occupational Health and Safety is fundamental in delivering capability and has been integrated into the governance arrangements already in existence for the Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee. The Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategy, and will in turn report on progress to the Department's Executive.

The Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee's is responsible for overseeing the implementation of *Safe Working and Learning* and for making decisions that assist the Department in meeting the targets set in the strategy. The committee provides direction and assesses performance in delivering those results with an emphasis on the longer term.

The Occupational Health and Safety Directorate is the principal Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Advisor to the Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee and is responsible for the provision of occupational health and safety strategic and compliance direction and occupational health and safety governance frameworks.

Other Directorates will also be responsible for delivery against the Occupational Health and Safety Strategy and will continue to work with the Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee on occupational health and safety issues in accordance with the relevant aspects of their service delivery for the organisation.

Regional Directors and Institute Directors are responsible for the occupational health and safety performance of their areas and reporting to the Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategy.

Evaluation and Reporting

The Key Priority Areas (KPA's) for this Plan are outlined in Appendix 1. The Key Priority Areas have been selected to ensure that:

- Each priority has performance indicators identified to measure improvement in line with *Public Sector OHS and Injury Management Improvement Strategy 2009-2012*
- The effectiveness of the implementation, performance management and improvement activities can be measured and reported to the Occupational Health and Safety Steering Committee
- Sustainable success can be demonstrated, and

- All corporate occupational health and safety reporting is consolidated in one set of Key Performance Indicators.

Indicators have been chosen based on the performance targets specified in *Public Sector OHS and Injury Management Improvement Strategy 2009-2012* in order to ensure that the Department is able to report against these targets in line with other State Government Agencies.

Detailed reporting and monitoring processes will be developed in consultation with Regions and Directorates to meet the Department's needs. The first edition of the Strategic Plan includes specific targets for the selected key performance indicators, which can be applied to Regional Business Plans. They will provide improved accountability and recognition of the work being undertaken in improving occupational health and safety outcomes.

Reporting on the selected indicators will assist the Department and key stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating improvement in occupational health and safety performance. Reporting of performance against the strategy will be directed to the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate, aided by regional Occupational Health and Safety support staff.

Targets noted in the strategy will be measurable against baseline data from 2007/2008.

Appendix 1:

Safety Objectives and Targets

Occupational Health and Safety Objectives and Targets

Priority	Objective	Key Strategies	Target
Accountability and Leadership	Providing strong effective leadership to deliver on priorities, in order to establish and maintain a healthy and positive safety culture	<p>Establish business continuity systems for the Department</p> <p>Establish an effective and robust regional service delivery model to meet operational business requirements</p> <p>Review and update performance agreements to incorporate the new strategy's targets</p> <p>Develop and implement tri-level performance reports to inform and advise workplace managers on current performance, trends and progress towards key performance indicators</p> <p>Provide a corporate support service to enable internal stakeholders to achieve the Department's vision of ensuring a safe working and learning environment for all staff, students and visitors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All workplaces to have emergency management plans lodged online by 2009 2. Regional service delivery model to be updated and in place by December 2009 3. Performance agreements to incorporate new targets by December 2009 4. Delivery of quarterly performance reports at each level to commence last quarter of 2008

<p>Prevention of Workplace Injuries</p>	<p>To prevent workplace injuries through the application of effective risk management strategies</p>	<p>Develop an early intervention and prevention programs for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychological wellbeing ▪ Staff health and wellbeing ▪ Student health and wellbeing ▪ Slip, trips and falls ▪ Schools for special purposes ▪ Equipment safety and related operating procedures ▪ Prevention of violence in the workplace 	<p>5. A 15% reduction in the frequency of workplace injuries</p> <p>6. A reduction in the overall number of public liability cases</p>
<p>Improving Workforce Capability</p>	<p>Building the capability of all staff to understand their OHS roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Enabling all staff to meet their operational objectives under Departmental requirements</p> <p>Enabling the proactive engagement of all staff in safety solutions</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive learning and development strategy in line with units of competence from relevant National Training Packages</p> <p>Develop a systemic framework to address organisational capability requirements through a staged development model in line with the existing professional learning and model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entry level requirements ▪ Core skills development ▪ Continuing professional development/ compliance 	<p>7. Development of learning and development program in the first year of the strategy, a pilot and evaluation of the program to be concluded by the second year of the strategy and full implementation to occur by 2011</p> <p>8. Provide compliance training to 5000 employees over the life cycle of the strategy</p>

		requirements	
		Progress discussions with unions on moving to alternative agreed arrangements for OHS Consultation Training	
Financial Responsibility	<p>Reducing the cost of workers' compensation through the implementation of effective return to work and injury management strategies, resulting in a reduction in the frequency of workplace injuries</p> <p>Reducing the operational costs associated with poor employee health and wellbeing</p> <p>Reducing the frequency and cost of OHS prosecutions</p> <p>Effective management of external contracts and providers</p>	<p>Develop an effective workers' compensation and injury management model.</p> <p>Achieve cost efficiencies by reviewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HealthQuest ▪ EAP ▪ Concurrent relief <p>Implement policies and procedures to improve management of temporary placement of staff into above establishment positions due to health and safety issues</p> <p>Develop a financial accountability model for workers' compensation costs</p> <p>Introduce and review service level agreements to ensure quality and cost effective service delivery from external providers</p> <p>Establish a cross portfolio working party to investigate the causes of</p>	<p>9. A 10% reduction in the workers' compensation premium</p> <p>10. A 10% reduction in hindsight adjustment costs</p> <p>11. A 15% reduction in the number of days lost for workers' compensation</p> <p>12. A 10% reduction in the public liability premium</p> <p>13. A 15% reduction in the cost of temporary placements</p> <p>14. A 10% reduction in the number and duration of section 38 claims</p> <p>15. A 10% reduction in the</p>

		OHS incidents and recommend mitigation strategies to reduce the human factors associated with OHS prosecutions	average cost per claim
Ensuring Statutory and Regulatory Compliance	Ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations by empowering staff within the Department	<p>Develop an OHS framework, through the use of key policies and procedures, to assist the Department in meeting its statutory and regulatory obligations</p> <p>Develop an audit program in accordance with the OHS and IM improvement standard and its policies and procedures</p> <p>Develop performance reporting mechanisms to monitor compliance</p> <p>Provide expert advice on strategic risks within workplaces to assist them in meeting compliance requirements</p> <p>Ensure compliance with Departmental asset management obligations</p>	<p>16. 100% of all NSW Government schools and TAFE campuses audited (in each audit cycle) in accordance with the Department's OHS Audit program</p> <p>17. Review all policies and procedures to ensure continuing relevance and compliance</p> <p>18. Provision of reports in relation to compliance to be provided each term</p> <p>19. Provision of a report in relation to asset management outcomes and emerging issues</p>