



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities meet in Canberra

19 August 2009

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) met in Canberra last week to progress a range of initiatives to harmonise occupational health and safety management across Australian and New Zealand workplaces.

HWSA Chair, John Watson, said the group viewed the priorities for the next two years and discussed upcoming work for the administration of regulatory functions that support the implementation of the national OHS legislation.

“Further work is being undertaken to progress a proposed framework for harmonising the administration arrangements of a national OHS model among workplace safety regulators,” Mr Watson said.

“A range of initiatives to build industry capability to improve OHS performance and develop national safety standards were addressed,” he said.

“Members agreed to establish a working party, lead by New South Wales, to develop an national safety standard for the design and handling of surgical loan kits, following a 2008 HWSA campaign, which aimed to reduce the number of slip, trip and manual task injuries sustained by non-clinical hospital workers.

“The campaign, *Safe Steps - Manual Handling, Slips and Trips in Hospitals*, identified key focus areas to reduce risks associated with manual handling tasks - including the design of containers and handling of surgical loan kits.

“When completed, the national standard will provide practical advice on the role of designers, manufacturers and suppliers of surgical loan sets with particular emphasis on the safe design of road cases and tubs and an outline of the obligations of employers and workers,” Mr Watson said.

Another new working party was endorsed, to be lead jointly by Queensland and New South Wales, to improve quad bike safety, will examine common risks and hazards and identify barriers to safety controls with their use.

The 2009 Australian and New Zealand OHS Inspectors Forum will be held in Sydney from September 16 to 17 and will involve around 150 workplace safety inspectors and executives from across Australia and New Zealand.

The forum’s theme *Moving Forward: Harmonised Approaches* will examine issues around a national OHS framework including the role of regulators and identifying practical solutions for inspectorate work under future arrangements.

HWSA brings together senior executives from Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory workplace safety authorities, and New Zealand, to progress national consistency, harmonisation and best practice in occupational health and safety.

For information on projects and initiatives including the final report on the *New and Young Workers in Hospitality* campaign is available from the website [www.hwsa.org.au](http://www.hwsa.org.au)

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