



MEDIA RELEASE

Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities meet in Melbourne

3 December 2008

Australian and New Zealand Workplace Safety Authorities met in Melbourne last week to discuss the progress of a range of initiatives to further Occupational Health and Safety management across Australian workplaces.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (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.

Mr John Watson, Chair of HWSA, said that HWSA has agreed to conduct follow up targeted audits in 2009 to measure the long term impacts of the manual handling in manufacturing intervention campaign.

The project team for the *Manual Handling & Slips & Trips in Hospitals* campaign reported that the campaign has now concluded. Two hundred and three audits were undertaken, with approximately 96% of workplaces involved in the project having compliant risk assessment and control processes in place. This indicates improvement since the Design 4 Health campaign, which was performed in 2004.

As a part of the work undertaken by HSWA members in the hospitality industry it was agreed to undertake a number of compliance visits in an effort to reduce the risk of injury and illness to new and young workers in this sector.

In line with ongoing work to harmonise the activities of OHS regulators, HWSA members are developing a policy for the harmonisation of guidance material. This policy will assist jurisdictions to work cooperatively to reproduce information and guidance material with a view to maximising the harmonisation of information and guidance material across all jurisdictions. Harmonised guidance will also be available on the HWSA website at www.hwsa.org.au.

Mr John Tucker from Standards Australia briefed HWSA members on the new business model that was implemented on 1 October 2008. Mr Tucker discussed how Standards Australia play a major role in areas not covered by OHS laws, for example, electrical safety via the Wiring Rules, intrinsic safety in mining, explosive hazards control in mining, air ventilation and air supply.

Members discussed and reviewed the proposed campaign ideas for 2009/2010, and agreed to undertake the following campaigns:

- Forklift safety in Wholesale;
- Construction – scaffolding falls; and
- OHS in the Cleaning Industry

Project teams will be established for these campaigns and a detail project plan will be available for members consideration early in 2009.

Media Contact: John Kirby or Wendy McKenzie (02) 4321 5474 or 0413 186 799