

Occupational Health and Safety

Achieving a Just & Secure Society



This report is presented in accordance with the requirements of s.74 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* (the Act).

Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act

The Department has implemented a revised Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) policy and agreement. The revised policy and agreement are two separate documents, which comply with element 1 of Comcare's 'SafetyMAP' audit tool. The documents were made available to staff electronically, and promoted in the Department's newsletter *Upfront*.

Departmental Occupational Health and Safety Policy

The Department is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for all staff, contractors and visitors. It is important to recognise the value of prevention activities, which identify and eliminate hazards and which managers and staff are committed to integrating into day to day business.

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee have met regularly throughout the year and the minutes of the meetings are available to staff electronically. Selections were conducted for Health and Safety Representatives and Deputy Health and Safety Representatives.

Reporting requirements under the Act

Section 68 Occurrences (notification and reporting of accidents and dangerous occurrences)	There was one notification.
Investigations	No investigations were conducted.
Section 45 Directions (Power to direct that workplace etc. not be disturbed)	No directions were given to the Department under s.45 of the Act.
Section 30 Notices (Duties of employers in relation to health and safety representatives)	No notices were issued under s.30 of the Act.
Section 46 Notices (Power to issue prohibition notices)	No notices were issued under s.46 of the Act.
Section 47 Notices (Power to issue improvement notices)	No notices were issued under s.47 of the Act.

General outcomes

The Department continued conducting workplace inspections throughout 2000–01. The inspection teams consisted of the relevant Health and Safety Representative, OH&S Adviser and a representative from each Division. Reports were provided to Division Heads outlining suggested recommendations and improvements. There was a noticeable improvement across the Department, with Divisions displaying a greater commitment to eliminating OH&S hazards. Staff awareness of OH&S has also increased, resulting in early intervention and prevention of workplace injuries and illness. A submission was presented to the departmental Executive summarising the common OH&S issues identified across the Department.

A number of OH&S policies were reviewed and implemented during 2000–01:

- First Aid in the Workplace;
- Eyesight Testing for Screen Based Equipment; and
- Fitness for Continued Duty Procedures.

The Department continues to facilitate staff attendance at lunchtime activities designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of staff. Posture and flexibility classes are designed to stretch all parts of the body, although there is a strong focus on the back, neck and shoulders. Seated workplace massage aims to prevent occupational overuse syndrome, muscle strain, stress and other related injuries.

Priorities for 2001–02

The Department's priorities for 2001–02 are:

- revising the Accident and Occurrence Reporting policy and the Return to Work policy;
- analysing Comcare claim reports and developing a strategy for Premium management; and
- coordinating work station assessments.