



Commitment Statement (4)

Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-22: Healthy, safe and productive working lives

Strategic outcome: Those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have the appropriate capabilities

The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board shares the vision promoted in the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 of *Healthy, safe and productive working lives*. Through their activities the Accreditation Board will contribute at a national level to the strategic outcome that those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have appropriate capabilities. The Accreditation Board is committed to the target outcome that:

Managers and organisations have guidance on how to meet their due diligence requirements in ensuring access to appropriate and credible advice.

1 Problem/issue

OHS is legally and practically a management responsibility. In defining the role of an ‘officer’ the Australian Work Health and Safety Act (s27) requires the officer to exercise *due diligence* by taking *reasonable steps* to ensure compliance with OHS obligations. In describing what may constitute reasonable steps, Safe Work Australia advises that officers may meet their due diligence requirement in some respects by “proper reliance on advice from and the activities of others ...” while cautioning that:

To the extent to which an officer will seek to rely on others, the officer must be able to demonstrate the reasonableness of that reliance, which may be demonstrated through the receipt of credible information and advice from appropriate people.¹

Thus managers and senior officers of an organisation should have access to credible advice from appropriate people. However there are no mandatory requirements to practice OHS and until recently, no benchmark for assessing the competence of those in the OHS function. Thus managers have to consider what constitutes ‘credible’ and ‘appropriate’ which requires consideration of qualifications and experience and the context to which the advice applies. There are a number of ways in which this advice can be sourced.

2 Influence and action

¹ SWA (Safe Work Australia). (2011). *Interactive guide to the Australian Work Health and Safety Act: The Health and Safety Duty of an Officer Under Section 27*, p.5. Canberra: Safe Work Australia.



The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board has compiled the *Developing OHS capability package* to assist employers to evaluate their OHS capability requirements and identify strategies for addressing any gaps and provides advice and resources to support the implementation of the strategies to address organisational OHS capability. The documents included in the package include:

- Introduction and guidance for use
- Developing OHS capability – Background – Employers’ presentation
- OHS Professional Capability Statements
- OHS Body of Knowledge
- OHS Body of Knowledge Learning Outcomes
- OHS Capability Gap Analysis and Professional Development Plan
- Sample position profiles
- OHS Qualification Pathways
- OHS Accredited Program Register
- Guidance on international equivalence of OHS qualifications
- Certified OHS Professionals
- Guidelines for engaging consultants (to be developed).

The documents and resources are freely available to organisations via the Accreditation Board web site. The Accreditation Board is also planning workshops and other strategies to promote the use of the Capability package.

3 Evaluation of effectiveness and impact of activities

The Accreditation Board will evaluate the impact of the activities related to the *Developing OHS capability* package in the following ways:

- Response by those who use the package
- Monitoring of the ‘hits’ and downloads on the web site
- Response to workshops and webinars on the use of the Capability package. .

4 Reporting

A summary report will be included in the Accreditation Board Annual Report with a copy provided to Safe Work Australia.