



Media Release

12th February 2015

A wake up call for the OHS profession

The *Safesearch* remuneration survey 2014-15 released this week revealed that senior OHS managers believe that safety is plateauing and that a 'step change' is required for OHS professionals to be front and centre in a 'challenging commercial environment' <http://www.safesearch.com.au/>. While formal qualifications and technical knowledge are important so is being a capable business leader who can engage and execute changes. The survey also found that while the talent pool for OHS roles has increased companies are encountering difficulty in attracting suitable candidates and are prepared to pay a premium for quality OHS talent.

This finding is supported by the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board which is working on three fronts to promote such a step change in OHS professional practice.

The Accreditation Board has been working with the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Associations (INSHPO) to develop a Global Framework for OHS Practice. This framework takes a capability approach to describe activities, knowledge and skills for both the OHS Practitioner and OHS Professional roles. In a first for the OHS profession, the skills component addresses not only technical skills but personal skills such as communication and professional presentation, and professional practice skills which include empowerment, leadership and management; all skills which employers often say are missing in OHS professionals and practitioners.

The Accreditation Board is custodian of the OHS Body of Knowledge on behalf of the Safety Institute of Australia. In addition to defining the technical knowledge, the OHS Body of Knowledge is being expanded to address the more complex areas of OHS such as risk and decision making, complexity in organisations and leadership.

The core activity of the Accreditation Board is accreditation of university level OHS qualifications to ensure they meet both OHS knowledge and education requirements. With 80% of Australian universities providing OHS in Australia having achieved accreditation, and others working towards accreditation, the Board is having an impact on the education of new OHS professionals. A review of the accreditation criteria and process will ensure that the education provided by accredited universities equips OHS professionals to be part of the 'step change' in OHS practice.

Safesearch is a Supporting Partner of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board and as such supports quality OHS education and OHS professional practice.

See www.ohseducationaccreditation.org.au and www.ohsbok.org.au

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