

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No.EW0720_11

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

**REVISED GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL OF HEALTH AND SAFETY
REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM**

Concerning the revised guidelines for the approval of health and safety representative training program. Are these guidelines are a pre-cursor to a harmonised approach? a. If so, what relevance is it to stop a course being conducted prior to harmonisation?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response

At its December 2008 meeting, the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (SRCC) endorsed the scope for a review of the HSR Training Course Accreditation Program (the Program).

In March 2009, Comcare engaged consultants to undertake the review of the Program. The objectives of the review were to provide advice to the SRCC on the:

- (a) capacity of the current accreditation model to deliver best practice for the HSR education and training to the jurisdiction
- (b) effectiveness of the assessment process in delivering cost effective and quality training courses to the jurisdiction. This could include such issues as examination of the role of the OHS Training Panel and governance arrangements, i.e. the SRCC role and the role of Comcare
- (c) capacity of the learning objectives contained in the guidelines to provide HSRs with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their roles as prescribed in the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1998*.

The primary goal of the revision of the guidelines was to deliver best practice for HSR education and training for the jurisdiction. By the time the review was completed, the government had announced its intention to harmonise OHS legislation across Australia. In view of this, Comcare engaged with Safe Work Australia and other OHS regulators to determine whether a harmonised national HSR training scheme would be progressed and to align, as far as possible, the revised guidelines with the direction of harmonisation. However, irrespective of harmonisation, Comcare and the SRCC decided to accept the recommendations made in the review, as best for the jurisdiction.

All courses found not to comply with all the requirements of the current guidelines have been given an opportunity to revise their courses accordingly. Those that have chosen not to do so have had their accreditation suspended or cancelled until such time as they comply with the guidelines' requirements.