

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2011-2012

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No. EW0104_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

Refers to previous Question No [EW0717_11](#).

Follow up questions: 1.How did this SIG come to this decision on 25 August 2010? 2.How did the SRCC and Comcare predicting this decision in March 2010? 3.What is the Strategic Issues Group? Who are the members of this group? Do they release public consultation papers? 4.In reference to Comcare's answer, Comcare confirm that the model national OHS laws do not prescribe the delivery mechanisms. So would Comcare agree that earlier arguments that have been made that the policy change was necessary for the implementation of national OHS laws were false?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response

The Strategic Issues Group on Occupational Health and Safety (SIG-OHS) was established in 2009 by the Safe Work Australia Council (the Council). The role of the SIG-OHS is to assist the Council in performing its functions as outlined in the *Safe Work Australia Council (Establishment and Constitution) 2009* and Strategic and Operational Plans. Specifically, the SIG-OHS: oversees the work on the model Act and regulations; considers other occupational health and safety matters as required; assists the Council to identify and obtain input from relevant stakeholders; and makes decisions on certain matters on behalf of the Council. The SIG-OHS comprises: a Chair; one representative from each of the Commonwealth/State/Territory jurisdictions; one representative from employee representatives; one representative from employer representatives; and one representative of Safe Work Australia.

Decisions of the SIG-OHS are made following due deliberation by members.

The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and Comcare did not predict the decision of the SIG-OHS of 25 August 2010.

The SIG-OHS does not release public consultation papers. Safe Work Australia has released public consultation papers which have been agreed to by the SIG-OHS. For example, the model Work Health and Safety Regulations and Priority Codes of Practice.

Under the draft model Work Health and Safety regulations, there is a requirement for health and safety representative training to consist of five days training. The delivery mechanism for this training requirement is not prescribed by the draft regulations.

Comcare does not agree that earlier arguments that have been made that the policy change was necessary for the implementation of national OHS laws were false. As advised in

response to [EW0717 11](#), the SIG-OHS of 25 August 2010 agreed that health and safety representative training should consist of five days face to face training and be non-competency based. A SIG-OHS technical advisory group is currently looking at national content requirements of training courses and is due to report in August 2011.