

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2011-2012

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No. EW0108_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

Refers to previous DEEWR Question No [EW0721_11](#)

Follow up question: This answer seems to indicate that the harmonized approach is of no relevance, and yet in other places it seems to be of key relevance. Which is it?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response.

The previous question asked why the review was commenced prior to Safe Work Australia beginning the process. The response in [EW0721_11](#) stated that the review was not initiated as a pre-cursor to a harmonised approach to OHS laws. The decision to initiate the review was made by the Safety, Rehabilitation and Commission in December 2008.

However, 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.

That is, the issue of harmonisation became relevant after the review was commenced, and was foreshadowed in framing the report's recommendations.