

APPENDIX 1

Occupational Health and Safety

The occupational health and safety policy and agreement 2002–03

The department is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment that allows employees to perform to their full potential and contribute to achieving the department's goals.

This commitment is reflected in the department's *Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Agreement 2002–03*. The agreement was endorsed by the Community and Public Sector Union and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance in February 2002.

The agreement fosters consultation, while also providing for any other matters agreed between the parties consistent with the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1991*. The agreement also clarifies the responsibilities of managers, supervisors and individuals in relation to occupational health and safety.

Occupational health and safety committees

The department's occupational health and safety consultation arrangements, set out in part 3.6 of the agreement, are made up of:

- ▶ a National Occupational Health and Safety committee, covering staff from National Office and state and territory offices;

- ▶ a National Office Occupational Health and Safety committee, covering staff from National Office; and
- ▶ an Occupational Health and Safety committee or people management committee covering staff from state and territory offices.

All committees meet at least quarterly. Every alternate national committee meeting takes place at a venue in one of the department's regions to ensure the widest possible participation of departmental people.

Selection of health and safety representatives

The department was restructured during the year to reflect changes to its business. A number of these changes resulted in elections to fill vacant health and safety representative and deputy health and safety representative positions.

Measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and contractors

The department continued its focus on proactive measures aimed at raising employee awareness of how to prevent workplace injury and minimise the impact where workplace injury occurs.

An occupational overuse syndrome prevention strategy introduced during 2001–02 was continued in 2002–03. The strategy involves a series of activities aimed at increasing awareness of occupational overuse

syndrome and putting in place systems to support early intervention.

Over the two years the strategy has operated in the department, it has increased awareness of the importance of early intervention in avoiding occupational overuse syndrome. As a result, the department has achieved a significant reduction in the personal and organisational cost of overuse injuries, with the average total number of weeks lost to overuse injuries reduced from 82.3 to zero since 2000–01, and the average anticipated cost per claim reduced by more than 90 per cent. The strategy was highly commended by the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission at the 2003 Safety Awards.

During 2002–03 the department provided all employees with guidance on relevant health and safety issues, such as deep vein thrombosis and severe acute respiratory syndrome. The provision of this information ensures employees have access to practical advice on managing risk in the workplace and an understanding of how the department can assist individuals in this regard.

Section 68 notices

Comcare Australia was notified of four incidents pursuant to section 68 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* in 2002–03.

Investigations undertaken

Comcare Australia did not undertake any planned or reactive investigations in 2002–03.

Section 45 directions and section 30, 46, 47 notices

No section 45 directions, or section 30, 46 or 47 notices, were issued in 2002–03.