

HEALTH SERVICES UNION

Work Health and Safety Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

The Health Services Union NSW/ACT/QLD (HSU) is dedicated to providing a safe work environment that prioritises the well-being of all individuals involved in its operations, including elected officials, employees, contractors, visitors, and others. The HSU will do everything reasonably practicable to identify, eliminate and control risks that arise from hazards associated with the workplace and work performed by workers.

The purpose of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy (the Policy) is to establish and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. The HSU's commitment to safety extends to compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (the WHS Act), the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017, and all other relevant laws that apply to our work.

The HSU has established WHS policies and procedures that outline the safety practices and principles to be followed by all workers of the organisation. These policies and procedures provide ongoing opportunities for consultation and management of safety-related matters.

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the HSU additional policies related to health and safety.

2. Scope

The Policy outlines the HSU's approach to WHS including the governing principles that will apply to all related WHS policies and procedures. The Policy applies to the person conducting a business or undertaking (the PCBU) and all officers, workers and other persons as defined in Section 3 below and in the WHS Act.

3. Definitions

Terminology Acronym	Definition
Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)	A "PCBU" (person conducting a business or undertaking) under the WHS Act refers to any entity that conducts a business or undertaking. They have a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers and others who may be affected by their work and are responsible for complying with relevant WHS laws and regulations.
Officer	The senior management of the HSU will usually be officers under the WHS Act. The term "officer" under the WHS Act refers to an individual who holds a position of authority in an organisation and has a

	<p>significant influence over the management or operations of the business. This includes people who make or participate in making decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part of the business.</p> <p>Officers have a duty of due diligence under the WHS Act, which means they must take reasonable steps to ensure that the business complies with its health and safety obligations.</p>
Worker	A "worker" under the WHS Act is any person who performs work for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including employees, contractors, subcontractors, self-employed persons and volunteers.
Health and Safety Representative (HSR)	A worker elected by members of their work group to represent them in health and safety matters.
Other Persons	Includes any visitors to the HSU.
Hazard	A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm. Hazards can be physical or mental.
Hazard Identification	<p>The process of recognising that a hazard exists and defining its characteristics. Different methods may be used to identify hazards including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observation • consultation with workers, clients, or other users • trial of models or prototypes • review of technical standards and other information sources • monitoring and measurement.
Accident	An accident is an event which causes an injury to a person, and/or damage to property and/or equipment.
Incident	An event that has led to or could have led to an injury or illness. Incidents include near misses, accidents, and injuries or illness.
Injury or Illness	The result of physical or mental harm.
Risk	A risk is the likelihood that death, injury, or illness might result because of a hazard.

4. Relevant Legislation

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

5. Responsibilities

HSU Secretary:

The Secretary as the PCBU must:

- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all officers, workers, and other persons who may be affected by the work of the HSU.
- Develop and implement safe work practices, procedures, and systems that identify, assess, and control work-related hazards and risks.
- Provide information, instruction, and training to HSU employees to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to work safely and to protect themselves and others from harm where practicable.
- Consult with HSU employees and their representatives on health and safety matters that may affect them and encourage their participation in improving health and safety at work.
- Monitor and review health and safety performance regularly to ensure that HSU WHS policies and procedures remain effective and up to date.
- Investigate all work-related incidents, injuries, or illnesses to identify the root cause and take corrective actions to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future where practicable.
- Comply with relevant health and safety statutory instruments and ensure that workers are aware of their obligations under the WHS Act and other relevant statutes.
- Ensure that contractors and subcontractors working for HSU also comply with HSU WHS policies and procedures.
- Implement and maintain effective health and safety management systems.

HSU Assistant Secretaries and managers:

HSU Assistant Secretaries and managers, as officers, are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. This includes:

- Leading by example in promoting and implementing the HSU's WHS policies and procedures within the organisation.

- Demonstrating a commitment to good health and safety performance by regularly discussing safety, ensuring safe work procedures are followed, encouraging prompt reporting of incidents and hazards, assessing risks, and ceasing unsafe activities.
- Fostering a strong WHS culture where worker input is valued.
- Acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of WHS matters, including legislation, regulations, and industry standards.
- Understand the operations of the HSU and the hazards and risks associated with its activities and participate in the identification and management of these hazards and risks.
- Verify the provision and effective use of the resources required to maintain a safe and healthy work environment, including appropriate training, equipment, and support.
- Reporting all known hazards, accidents, and incidents as soon as possible.

Workers:

Workers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety while at work and ensure their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves or others. They must comply with any reasonable instruction given by an officer and follow HSU WHS policies or procedures. Contractors, sub-contractors, and self-employed persons working for the HSU in any capacity are considered "workers" under the WHS Act.

On a day-to-day basis, this includes:

- Working safely to the extent of their control over working conditions and methods.
- Properly using all appropriate safeguards, safety devices, and personal protective equipment.
- Following safe working practices and rules.
- Reporting all known hazards, accidents, and incidents as soon as possible.

Workers may cease or refuse work if they have a reasonable concern that the work would expose them to a serious risk to their health or safety. Workers who cease work must notify the relevant manager as soon as practicable. Workers are required to remain available to carry out suitable alternative work. They are not required to remain at any place that poses a serious risk to their health or safety.

Other Persons:

For visitors to the HSU, it is important to abide by HSU WHS policies and procedures. Visitors have responsibilities which include:

- Taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and for the health and safety of other people.
- Complying with all reasonable safety directions provided by HSU employees.
- Reporting any safety related incidents to HSU employees.
- Ensuring adequate supervision of any accompanying children.

6. Communication

Communication is essential to ensure that everyone within the HSU is aware of their responsibilities and that all safety information is disseminated in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, the HSU will ensure that:

- All workers are informed of HSU WHS policies and procedures when they commence their work and when such policies and procedures are revised.
- All HSU employees receive appropriate WHS training.
- All workers are provided with the necessary resources to help them understand and comply with WHS policies and procedures.
- All WHS-related incidents, hazards, and risks are promptly reported to relevant HSU workers.
- All workers have access to a HSR to report WHS concerns.
- Conduct regular WHS meetings and consultations to enable workers to raise concerns, discuss WHS matters, and provide feedback on the implementation of the WHS policies and procedures.
- Communication regarding WHS matters is documented and retained as required by relevant legislation.

7. Health and Safety Representatives

HSRs are elected by members of a work group to represent the interests of that work group on WHS matters. HSRs are elected for a three-year term. The HSU will maintain a minimum

of two HSRs one for the workers based in the Pitt St office and another for HSU field staff. Other workgroups may elect their own HSRs as appropriate.

HSRs may:

- Consult with workers on a regular basis.
- Participate in workplace inspections.
- Participate in workplace accident and incident investigations.
- Participate in discussions on matters that may affect the health and safety of workers.
- Provide advice to managers on the welfare of workers in their work group.
- Direct workers in their work group to stop work if they have a reasonable concern that doing the work would expose them to a serious risk to their health and safety from immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.
- Access personal or medical information about a worker where express consent has been given or if the information is non-identifying and general in nature.

HSRs cannot exercise their powers under the WHS Act unless they have received the approved training. HSRs are not liable for acts or omissions that are undertaken in good faith.

Should an election for an HSR be necessary any HSU worker from the relevant work group can put themselves forward. Those from the same work group will vote anonymously for the nominees, and the one with the most votes wins. The Secretary, or their delegate, will communicate the outcome of the election.

8. Work Health and Safety Committee

Purpose:

The purpose of the WHS Committee is to provide a forum for consultation and cooperation between the HSU Secretary and HSU employees on work health and safety matters. The WHS Committee will help to identify and assess potential risks and hazards and develop appropriate controls to prevent or mitigate these risks.

Membership:

The WHS Committee will be made up of:

- HSU Secretary (or their delegate) as chair;
- Duly elected HSRs; and
- A representative from Human Resources to fulfill secretariat duties.

Meetings:

The WHS Committee will meet weekly either in person or virtually. The WHS Committee may also hold additional meetings as required.

Functions:

The functions of the WHS Committee will include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing and reporting on WHS performance and compliance.
- Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the HSU's WHS policies and procedures.
- Identifying and assessing potential risks and hazards in the workplace.
- Developing and implementing control measures to prevent or mitigate risks and hazards.
- Investigating accidents, incidents, and near misses, and making recommendations for improvements.
- Consulting with workers on work health and safety matters and providing feedback to management.
- Promoting a positive WHS culture across the organisation.

Reporting:

The WHS committee will report to HSU employees on matters discussed and decisions made that affect their health and safety. The minutes of WHS Committee meetings will be made available to all workers and posted on the HSU's Employee Portal.

9. Hazard and Incident Reporting

A crucial aspect of maintaining a safe workplace is the identification and reporting of hazards and incidents. This section outlines the procedures for the reporting of hazards and incidents to promote a safe and healthy work environment.

If a worker becomes injured or ill at work, the primary focus is to ensure they are administered first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible if required.

Workers should report any hazard or incident. This includes:

- injuries, illnesses and fatalities
- near misses
- damaged or faulty equipment

- health and safety hazards

If a hazard is identified and can be immediately and safely rectified, and the worker is capable to do so, then this should occur.

Workers should report any incident or hazard to their manager. Following this the worker should complete a hazard / incident reporting form using the HSU employee portal system.

Human resources will action hazard and incident reports.

10. Training

The HSU provides all workers with WHS information at the commencement of employment.

The HSU is committed to ensuring workers are adequately trained for safety sensitive tasks and training will be arranged as required.

11. WHS Issue Resolution

The HSU is committed to resolving WHS issues as soon as possible. Where an issue is identified the following steps will be followed:

1. Any worker who identifies a WHS issue must report it immediately to a manager, Human Resources or HSR.
2. If this issue cannot be resolved, the matter will be referred to the HSU Secretary.
3. If the HSU Secretary is unable to resolve the issue, the worker may request that the matter be referred to an independent mediator. If requested, the HSU Secretary will engage an independent mediator.
4. An independent mediator will be appointed within 14 days, other than in exceptional circumstances. The HSU will meet the costs of engaging the independent mediator.
5. The HSU Secretary will give genuine consideration to any recommendation or report provided by the independent mediator.
6. The final decision on any dispute rests with the HSU Secretary.

Workers are entitled to be represented by their union or any other person of their choosing during this process. The HSU Secretary shall recognise the representative for all purposes involved with the resolution of the issue.

The HSU Secretary will generally respect the status quo while the above process is being followed. In exceptional circumstances where immediate changes are necessary to address urgent safety concerns the HSU Secretary may take necessary actions to ensure the health and safety of workers. The HSU Secretary may direct a worker to perform different work or work at a different location, on full pay, if it is reasonable to do so to protect the safety, health or welfare of employees.

All workers involved in the resolution of WHS issues are protected from any form of retaliation or victimisation. The HSU will provide support and guidance to workers who report WHS issues and ensure that all issues are resolved in a timely and effective manner.

12. Records

WHS records are stored electronically and are managed by the HSU's Human Resources Division.

13. Review and Document Control

The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner should the WHS Act be amended within that time period.

14. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with the requirements within this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Policy Version Control

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