



Office of Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate

Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations

Mr Oliver Moon
Chief Executive Officer
Combined Small Business Alliance of WA (Inc)
PO Box 253
JOONDALUP WA 6919

Dear Mr Moon

Thank you for your letter of 12 April 2011 to Senator Chris Evans MP, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations, concerning Uniform National Workplace Safety Laws. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

All Australian governments have committed, through a Council of Australian Governments Inter-Governmental Agreement, to adopt uniform occupational health and safety (OHS) laws by the end of 2011, complemented by a nationally consistent approach to compliance and enforcement policy. This will help reduce red tape and complexity for business, replacing 10 separate pieces of legislation and more than 400 codes of practice currently in operation across the country. It has been estimated that this will create savings of \$179 million each year.

Safe Work Australia (SWA) has been progressing the development of harmonised OHS laws in partnership with state and territory governments, workers and employers. Employers are represented by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Australian Industry Group.

The draft model Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations and priority Codes of Practice have been developed as part of the whole OHS harmonisation legislative package. The content of these drafts are based on existing OHS Regulations in each of the nine jurisdictions all of which vary in length, detail and matters covered.

These were made available for public comment for a period of 4 months from 7 December 2010 to 4 April 2011. SWA invited submissions from all members of the Australian community, particularly workers, employers, their organisations (union or professional bodies), safety groups, community forums and regulators. This was an opportunity for everyone to contribute to the regulatory framework being used to harmonise work health and safety laws across Australia. SWA is now working through the 1342 submission received and analysing the matters raised in all submissions. The model WHS Regulations and Codes of Practice will be revised as a result of the public feedback.

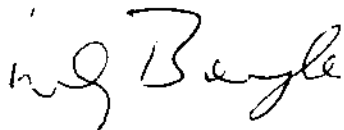
The proposed draft WHS Regulations address hazards such as noise, confined spaces and falls, or specific industries such as construction, major hazard facilities or diving. Businesses will not need to be familiar with all the regulations, only those relevant to their own business.

The objective of the harmonisation process is to ensure uniform safety standards are in place in each jurisdiction throughout Australia.

Should you wish to discuss these issues further, the contact person in this office is Ms Rachel Livingston, Adviser, who can be contacted on (02) 6277 7320.

I trust the information provided is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Boyle'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Michael Boyle
Chief of Staff

20 MAY 2011