

## Quick facts

### Quick Facts about OH&S in Australia

- The ILO estimates that in Australia 6700 people die each year of injuries or diseases from work.
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, over 477,000 people a year receive work related injuries or illness in Australia.
- Only 40% of those who experienced a work-related injury or illness received workers' compensation.
- More than 76,000 workers' compensation claims are from body stressing.
- The cost to the economy of workplace injury and illness is estimated at \$34.3 billion – 5%GDP.
- 200,000 Australians have permanently reduced their hours of work or change jobs as a result of occupational injury or disease.

### The 2001 ACTU National Survey of Health and Safety Representatives found:

- Less than half say the employer regularly carries out workplace health and safety inspections. More than one in ten say the employer never does.
- Almost one quarter of health and safety reps do not believe that their workplaces meet safety standards and regulations.
- Over 30% say that sick or injured workers are pressured by management to return to work before they are ready.
- Around one quarter say that they have been pressured by the employer and/or management to not raise health and safety issues.
- Almost one in five say they have been bullied or intimidated by the employer and/or management because they raised health and safety issues.

### Regulations and institutions

- Every state and territory and the commonwealth has an **OH&S Act** covering workplaces within those jurisdictions. These laws, while slightly different in each jurisdiction, provide the requirements on employers/managers, employees, the self-employed and sub-contractors in relation to OHS; enforcement provisions; principles to eliminate hazards and; basic rights of workers, among other things. Each state and territory also has regulations and other Acts that affect health and safety. These are also legally binding.
- Every state and territory and the commonwealth has a **workers' compensation scheme**. These schemes generally require employers to insure against their statutory and common law liability to compensate workers for injuries and illness at work that result in incapacity, impairment or death. Compensation benefits paid to injured workers differ between jurisdictions.
- The **Australian Safety and Compensation Council** (ASCC) is the Department of Employment and Workplace Relation's (DEWR) OH&S Standards and Codes of Practice development body. These standards are picked up by state and territory law, either amended or unamended. The ASCC replaced the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC). This body has representatives from business, workers (ACTU) and government.
- **Standards Australia** develops technical standards or adopts international technical standards. There are over 1500 Australian Standards. Standards Australia is a non-government business and union representation on the committees that develop standards varies. Some standards are referred to in state and territory laws.