

Appendix H – Occupational Health and Safety

The following information about occupational health and safety in DVA is provided in accordance with section 74(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*.

Health and safety management arrangements

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* employers are required to develop written health and safety management arrangements (HSMAs) in consultation with their employees. HSMAs are one of the main ways in which employers demonstrate their commitment to meeting their duty of care under the Act.

The HSMAs provide DVA with a flexible framework for the management of occupational health and safety. The HSMAs also provide consultative forums for staff to raise occupational health and safety issues, with the creation of both national and location-based Occupational Health and Safety Committees. They also include the role of health and safety representatives to represent the concerns of staff in their designated work groups, and provide another mechanism for staff to get occupational health and safety concerns addressed.

DVA's national Occupational Health and Safety Committee is the peak consultative committee for occupational health and safety in DVA and focuses on strategic issues. Location sub-committees deal largely with local issues but provide input into the national committee. Work the committee(s) have undertaken include consulting on, and finalising, the HSMAs and reviewing occupational health and safety Designated Work Groups.

Initiatives in 2008–09

Activities undertaken during the year to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of DVA staff included:

- ▶ having a network of human resource practitioners across all locations to identify best practice in OHS policies and programs
- ▶ providing annual influenza vaccinations
- ▶ managing a national contract that provides free, confidential counselling for employees and their families through the Employee Assistance Program
- ▶ undertaking health promotion activities, including fitness and wellbeing programs and circulation of information on healthy lifestyle activities and the prevention of injury and illness
- ▶ providing a healthy lifestyle financial subsidy to supplement costs for health programs, gym memberships and fitness activities
- ▶ providing a range of flexible working arrangements, such as part-time work, home-based work and flexible working hours
- ▶ providing a free confidential service for employees and their immediate families to provide information and assistance on childcare, aged care, health and support services and assistance for employees who may be relocating
- ▶ providing eyesight testing and a subsidy for spectacles used with screen-based equipment

- ▶ having a network of workers' compensation case managers and a strong partnership with Comcare to put strategies into place to prevent work-based injuries and to implement return to work and rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees
- ▶ undertaking a series of workstation assessments to ensure that employees have their work area set up correctly and that equipment is being used safely
- ▶ conducting training in each location on how to build a workplace culture based on courtesy and respect with no harassment.

Outcomes

Health and safety outcomes achieved as a result of these initiatives include:

- ▶ reduced workers' compensation premium
- ▶ HSMA in place by 14 September 2008, as required under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*
- ▶ revitalisation of active location-based OHS sub-committees
- ▶ establishment of a national Wellness Committee as a sub-committee of the National Consultative Forum.

Reporting requirements

There were no accidents or dangerous incidents during the year that required the Department to give notice under section 68, nor were any investigations conducted that required notice under sections 29, 46 or 47.

Performance measure

Our workplace – occupational health and safety

During the year, 22 claims for workers' compensation were accepted, compared with 25 in 2007–08. The workers' compensation premium reduced from \$2.78 million last year to \$1.75 million in 2008–09.