

The University of Melbourne
Occupational Health and Safety Committee
Minutes of Meeting 2/07

Meeting 2/2007 of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee was held at 2.15pm on Monday 23 April 2007 in the Plaza Conference Centre, Room 1.

1. Welcome and Attendance

1.1-2 Apologies and welcome

MEMBERSHIP	In Attendance	Apologies
Employer Representatives Vice-Principal nominated by the Vice-Chancellor (Chair) Vice-Principal, Human Resources or nominee Vice-Principal, Property and Campus Services or nominee Dean of a laboratory based Faculty General Manager, Environment Health and Safety Unit Academic Registrar or nominee	Ms Julia McQuillan Mr Nigel Waugh Mr Colin Reiter Prof. Glenn Browning Mr Stefan Delaney Mr Garry Thomson	
Employee Health and Safety Representatives Six Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) elected by the Health and Safety Representatives (one vacancy)	Mr Paul Donald Mr Lindsay Rayner Mr Steven Adams Ms Jennifer Scott Mr Ken Young	
Student Observers One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Student Union One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Post Graduate Association	Mr Robert Anderson-Hunt Mr Jeff Flanagan	
Occasional Observers Other observers as determined by the Committee and invited by the Chair.		
Standing Observers	Mr Peter Robertson	
In Attendance	Ms Belinda Rule (Minutes Secretary)	

1.3 Call for Nominations for a HSR member

The first call for nominations ending Tuesday 27 March 2007 garnered no nominations. A second call is now in progress, closing Friday 27 April 2007.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting 01/2007

The minutes of meeting 01/2007, held on 23 January 2007, copies of which had been distributed, were confirmed.

3. Action items from meeting 01/2007

3.1 Consultation Procedure

The subcommittee of Mr Waugh, Mr Delaney, Mr Donald and Mr Adams had agreed on and ratified a version of the Consultation Procedure. This was then endorsed by the Risk Management Committee and published in the EHS Manual. A copy of the final version is attached for information.

3.2 Inclusion of EHS matters in Head Start Program

Ms McQuillan had contacted an Organisational Development consultant asking that an EHS module be considered for inclusion.

3.3 Inclusion of local area EHS contacts information on EHS Unit website

This information is now linked from:

<http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/>; and

<http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/general/contact.php3>.

Members agreed this information is now much more accessible.

4. Reports

4.1 Faculty and Department Safety Committees

No reports.

4.2 Health and Safety Representatives

Mr Young asked the committee to note an issue of stress in relation to payroll irregularities.

More specific information would be required about the scope of stress before this could be acted on as a health and safety matter. The first point of contact for resolving payroll issues is the local supervisor, followed by the Payroll Officer in Benefits and Remuneration Unit, HR Department. Complaints or unresolved issues should be directed to the Director, Benefits and Remuneration.

4.3 Significant Incidents requiring notification to WorkSafe

Mr Delaney gave a verbal report on the following significant incidents that had been reported to WorkSafe:

- Fire in contractor's vehicle at VCA and adjacent building. No injuries. WorkSafe has not investigated further.
- Student resident suffered serious laceration after tripping on shallow step and falling through glass door at International House. Glass has been laminated and trip hazard marked in a bright colour. WorkSafe has not investigated further.
- Student received immediate treatment as an in-patient in hospital following a fall from the ERC Library – this was a deliberate act by a student in a distressed state. WorkSafe has not investigated further.
- Staff member suffered serious laceration while unwrapping packaging – using scissors inappropriately. WorkSafe has not investigated further.

- Staff member suffered loss of bodily function (broken wrist) after falling down stairs in 1888 building. Factors seem to be warping of heritage floorboards and footwear of staff member. WorkSafe has not investigated further.
- Staff member suffered serious laceration when glass louvre broke and safety glass fragments fell in the atrium of the David Pennington Building (Bio21) – during fire system test. Louvres now isolated while architects, builders and engineers investigate. WorkSafe has discussed and is awaiting reports.
- Contract cleaner received treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance (vapours resulting from the trial of a waterless urinal system) in the Law Building. The system involves pellets and the spraying of a chemical (classified as non-hazardous) each night, but the problem vapours are understood to have come from a build up of ammonia. The trial has been discontinued pending further information.

Mr Reiter reported further on the waterless urinal system – strategies of introduction, including training of cleaners, will be reconsidered before any further trial. Other organisations use the system without difficulty.

Members enquired further about the David Pennington Building incident. The injured person was passing by, and it was normal to test the fire system during opening hours as it was required to work at any time. The louvres are also part of the ordinary ventilation system of the building. The Australian Standard requires six-monthly testing of such systems.

4.4 Regulatory Activity

Members were provided with a consolidated list of WorkSafe visits from 17 January 2007 to 16 April 2007 together with a verbal report from Mr Delaney.

With reference to the visit on 8 February 2007, WorkSafe has now proven to have been in error about the serial number discrepancies.

4.5 EHS Management System

4.5.1 External Audits

Mr Delaney tabled a report treating the external audit results for 6-9 February 2007, and advising of the forthcoming full certification audit on 28 August-7 September 2007. Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance have congratulated all involved in the February audit on their cooperation and improved results.

4.5.2 Internal Audits

Mr Delaney tabled a report on internal audit results for 2007 to date which indicated that there had been some welcome improvements. However, some minor problem areas remained including training and specific hazard and risk controls; these are of lower severity.

Members raised concern about lack of clarity among supervisors in the Engineering Faculty in respect to appropriate training. It was noted that Sue Butler, Manager EHS Systems and Programs, is working with the Faculty to establish a specific training needs analysis.

4.6 Review of EHS manual

Mr Delaney provided copies of nine new procedures for inclusion in the EHS Manual, and tabled a summary of the feedback that was received, some of which had been incorporated into the revised procedures (attached to these minutes as Item 4.6).

- (a) **EHS Management Plans**
- (b) **EHS Purchasing Requirements**
- (c) **Smoking in the Workplace**

The procedure allows specific needs for tighter smoking restrictions (such as in the 1888 building courtyard) to be met via a specific Risk Assessment. Issues involving business tenants are difficult to remedy under current lease agreements, but tighter requirements can be built into future leases.

- (d) **Confined Spaces**
- (e) **Cooling Tower Management**
- (f) **EHS Signage**
- (g) **Hot Work**
- (h) **EHS Waste Management**
- (i) **EHS Workplace Inspection**

There is a concern about the potential increase in workloads of some HSRs in relation to signing off on workplace inspections. This signoff is demanded by legislation. However, it is merely an acknowledgement that an HSR has received the report, and does not imply participation in or endorsement of the inspection. This can be clarified on the Inspection Checklists.

The procedure allows any number of checklists to be created. General areas and grounds, stairways, and teaching spaces are noted as areas for future checklists. Responsibilities for conducting such inspections will have to be determined.

The Committee supported the nine procedures.

4.7 Occupational Health & Safety Strategic Plan 2007-2010

Mr Delaney tabled a copy of this document. It is a high level strategy document that serves as a template for each Faculty and Budget Division to create its own plan, and determine specific persons responsible for actions.

Ms McQuillan and Mr Delaney will meet to create an explanatory preamble to attach to the Plan for submission to the Risk Management and Planning and Budget Committees. Members were invited to submit comments or suggestions to Mr Delaney by the end of the week.

Terminology of roles will be clarified for the network of "safety officers" in objective 4.4. The OHS Leadership and Cultural Change program will encourage leaders to ensure these roles are filled.

Members agreed it was important not to take a "shoot the messenger" attitude in relation to objective 2.9, the reduction of WorkSafe interventions. This reduction should be achieved by proactive resolution of any difficulties internally, and the promotion of the OHS Issue Resolution Procedure.

5. Other Business

5.1 Gas leak of 23 April 2007, and Campus Security

Mr Delaney reported that a gas leak was detected at 10:30am on 23 April. The Emergency Response Plan was invoked and eleven buildings around Medical Road were evacuated. Building Emergency Controller processes worked well, the area was barricaded and the gas pipe sealed, and after fire brigade (MMFB) approval, the buildings were re-occupied by 12.45pm. The MMFB complimented the University on the success of the evacuation. The gas pipe is now being repaired.

This genuine evacuation compared well to the multi-building evacuation drill that had taken place only last week, on 19 April 2007. Such drills are part of an ongoing program.

Discussion ensued about campus security in light of the recent Virginia Tech shootings in the United States. The Committee noted that:

- The Emergency Response Plan has provisions for such a scenario.
- It is very difficult to "lock down" a campus, as Virginia Tech has been criticised for failing to do. Communications technology can mitigate risk: Property & Campus Services is continually looking at upgrades to centralise buildings communications.
- It is important the University be seen to be proactive in ensuring security.
- Staff with concerns about particular students who may pose a security risk should consult Mr Thomson's department, Student Services.

The next meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be held on Tuesday, 10 July 2007 at 2.15pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics.

MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2007

Tuesdays at 2.15pm in the Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics:

- 23 January 2007
- ~~3 April 2007~~ Postponed to Monday 23 April 2007, in the Plaza Conference Room 1.
- 10 July 2007
- 16 October 2007

BJR
24 May 2007

*De Quillan
Acting Vice-Principal, HR
18/7/07*