

The University of Melbourne
Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Minutes of Meeting 4/06

Meeting 4/2006 of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee was held at 2.15pm on Tuesday 31 October 2006 in the Plaza Conference Centre, Room 1.

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

MEMBERSHIP	In Attendance	Apologies
Employer Representatives Vice-Principal nominated by the Vice-Chancellor (Chair) Vice-Principal, Human Resources or nominee Vice-Principal, Property and Buildings or nominee Dean of a laboratory based Faculty General Manager, Environment Health and Safety Unit Academic Registrar or nominee	Ms Elizabeth Baré Ms Peri Hall attending for Ms Julia McQuillan Mr Colin Reiter Mr Stefan Delaney	 Prof. Ivan Caple 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 Bruce Greenwood Mr Lindsay Rayner Mr Steven Adams Mr Ken Young	
In Attendance	Ms Belinda Rule (Minutes Secretary)	
Student Observers One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Student Union One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Post Graduate Association (vacant)		Mr Nic Halliwell
Occasional Observers Other observers as determined by the Committee and invited by the Chair.		
Standing Observers		Ms Clare Murphy

2. Minutes of the previous meeting 03/2006

The minutes of meeting 03/2006, held on 18 July 2006, copies of which had been distributed, were confirmed.

3. Action items from meeting 03/2006

3.1 Consultation Procedure

The subcommittee of Ms Baré, Mr Delaney and Mr Greenwood that had been delegated the power to ratify the Consultation Procedure had not met, as Mr Greenwood had been away.

The HSR members advised they had not yet resolved their concerns about the new draft of the procedure. Mr Delaney expressed his concern that the existing procedure continues to be in force while the new draft remains unratified by the Committee.

The subcommittee of Ms Baré, Mr Delaney and Mr Greenwood agreed to meet again in 2006 to resolve the matter. Mr Donald asked whether a further HSR member could join the subcommittee, and the Committee agreed. The HSR members are to decide on and advise Ms Rule of the name of the fourth subcommittee member. *[Update, 6 November 2006: The fourth member chosen by the HSRs was Paul Donald.]*

3.2 HSR On-campus Refresher Training

Mr Delaney reported that he had investigated the training providers whose details had been supplied to him by the HSR members.

- Holmesglen TAFE has one existing course that could be suitable, and has another in development. They are able to target their case studies to lab-based and non-lab-based hazards respectively.
- Swinburne has little information available, and is priced quite high (though cost is not a primary concern).
- Trades Hall has existing hazard-based courses on various relevant topics, and a legislative update course.

Mr Delaney proposed that either Holmesglen or Trades Hall be engaged to run a legislative update course on campus on one day this year. Next year, Trades Hall could also do one lab-based hazards course and one non-lab-based (ie. ergonomics etc) hazards course. Sufficient numbers (which would be about 14 or 15 participants) will be required to make each session viable, as there is a flat fee per session. There is a maximum of 20 per session, but more than one can be run if required.

Mr Greenwood advised he believed HSRs preferred Trades Hall in general.

Mr Delaney and Ms Baré agreed to promote the training among the University's HSRs, and asked that the HSR members do so as well.

Mr Donald asked whether the OHSC could approach HSRs' managers to ensure their support. Ms Baré agreed to work with Mr Delaney to contact HSRs' managers to make them aware of this issue.

4. Reports

4.1 Faculty and Department Safety Committees

No reports were referred to the OHSC.

4.2 Health and Safety Representatives

Mr Young advised he had been part of a meeting about asbestos removal in the Architecture library.

Mr Reiter advised this was part of an ongoing series of planned removals co-funded by Property & Campus Services and the Faculty of Architecture, and was proceeding to plan.

4.3 Workload Advisory Committee Report

No reports received.

4.4 Significant Incidents

Mr Delaney provided a report on three significant incidents, together with a verbal account.

4.5 Regulatory Activity

Members were provided with a consolidated list of WorkSafe visits from 12 July 2006 to 23 October 2006 together with a verbal report from Mr Delaney.

Mr Delaney clarified that the Lift Strategy developed in relation to WorkSafe's High Risk Plant (Lifts & Escalators) intervention program mostly relates to hazards to technicians rather than to passengers. The upgrades required are mostly retrospective compliance upgrades.

Mr Reiter reported that he understood WorkSafe were impressed with the Lift Strategy and its details of a five year upgrade and replacement plan.

Mr Donald enquired about a service lift and a dumbwaiter in Baillieu library. Mr Reiter advised he believed the service lift was scheduled for upgrade in the backlog upgrade program, and the dumbwaiter was decommissioned.

Mr Young asked whether levelling of lifts had been checked. Mr Delaney confirmed that it had, as this was a disability access requirement.

4.6 EHS Management System

4.6.1 External Audits

Mr Delaney provided a report on the results of the external OHS audit follow-up visits of September and October 2006, as compiled by Peter McGrath of Internal Audit, together with a verbal report.

Mr Delaney advised that next year's audits were expected to be a five day surveillance audit in February, and a full re-certification audit in September. In December 2006, after planning has occurred, Faculties will be advised which areas are to be audited.

4.6.2 Internal Audits

Mr Delaney provided a report on the results of internal OHS audits to date in 2006, as compiled by Peter McGrath of Internal Audit, together with a verbal report.

Mr Greenwood asked Mr Delaney's opinion of the University's progress. Mr Delaney advised that in his opinion the University had turned the corner from about twelve months ago, and that renewal was occurring. A recent appointment of Manager, EHS Systems and Programs, Sue Butler, was now available to contribute to procedure writing and push renewal forward. However, further improvement was always necessary. He believed senior University committees were taking an interest in the progress of OHS matters, and were pleased with the improved results.

Mr Young enquired what the snags were to further progress. Mr Delaney advised that he felt that systems needed renewing, and he called on the Committee to pass the new procedures to allow this to occur. The new procedures endeavour to make responsibility for OHS matters clear, in order to encourage motivation and accountability where these may previously have been lacking – especially in middle management.

Mr Adams asked whether the EHS Unit would be visiting local workplaces more, to assess local hazards. Mr Delaney advised that extra funding had recently been approved for new EHS staff to be based locally in faculties. Higher risk faculties would be prioritised first, but the specific faculties in which this will go ahead have not yet been decided. In the interim, the new Manager, EHS Systems and Programs, Sue Butler, has been declared the EHS Unit Primary Contact for the Engineering Faculty. Ms Butler has a heavy industry background and may be expected to be an asset.

4.7 Review of EHS manual

4.7 (a) EHS Consultation Procedure (See Item 3.1).

4.7 (b) EHS Procedure Writing Procedure

Mr Delaney provided a draft of the EHS Procedure Writing Procedure. A first consultation draft of this had been published and circulated for comment. Two pieces of feedback had been received: one was on phrasing and format, which had been taken into account; the second was in relation to promotion of procedures, which was a separate issue to the content.

Accordingly, the following changes have been made to the initial consultation draft:

- Section renumbering
- The term "minor change" has become "minor amendment"
- The category of "urgent amendment" has been added (4.5.1.4.4). This category of amendment is a remedy for urgent compliance issues. Such an amendment would subsequently have to be ratified via the normal consultation process (4.5.1.4.2).

Mr Young asked who would determine urgency of amendments. Mr Delaney advised that the procedure stated that he (the General Manager, EHS) would determine this, in consultation with the Chairs of the OHSC and the Risk Management Committee (RMC).

The Committee supported the procedure.

4.7 (c) Incident Reporting Procedure and supplementary materials

Mr Delaney provided a draft of the Incident Reporting Procedure, as well as the supplementary materials: Incident Reporting Flow Chart, Incident Report S3 Form and Incident Investigation S4 Form.

Mr Delaney advised that the procedure's purpose was to explain the Incident Reporting process, define incident investigation process and method and explain how to get information about notifiable incidents to WorkSafe. The Flow Chart is an overview that provides additional guidance. The preferred method for incident reporting will be the electronic incident reporting system that has been developed to work in Themis. This is presently operational but has not been formally launched – the launch will occur once critical bugs in the system have been ironed out. The paper Incident Report S3 Form is for those who do not have access to Themis, and replicates the information in the electronic system. The Incident Investigation S4 Form guides incident investigations according the method in the procedure.

The procedure has already been to RMC to expedite its launch in light of the postponement of this meeting of the OHSC. RMC suggested the inclusion of a question about WorkCover lost time injuries – this has been included in the procedure and on the paper S3 form, and Information Services has been asked to add it to the electronic system.

Members agreed the electronic system seemed far superior to the current paper system.

Mr Adams sought clarification about responsibility for various matters in the procedure. Mr Delaney advised that each section of the procedure specified which staff were responsible for the matters described in it. He would write to every staff member individually as part of the launch to ensure that responsibilities were communicated.

Mr Young enquired about escalation and feedback to the reporter in the new system. Mr Delaney explained that there were automatic reminders to supervisors to act, and automatic escalations (the referral of un-actioned reports to a supervisor's own supervisor after a certain time), built in to the electronic system. Advisers from the EHS Unit also have a "super user" status whereby they can monitor the progress of reports. Acknowledgement emails are sent to the instigator of the report, and a record of the report and its progress remains available in Themis to the instigator indefinitely.

The Committee supported the procedure.

5. Other Business

5.1 Meeting Calendar for 2007

The proposed meeting calendar was ratified, with the proposed date in January changed to 23 January. The finalised calendar may be found at the end of these minutes.

5.2 HSR Recruitment

The HSR members reported that they had attended a WorkSafe seminar with HSRs from other organisations, and had formed an impression that HSRs at other organisations felt

more valued than those at the University do. Perhaps this was an issue in difficulties with recruiting HSRs at the University.

Ms Baré advised that in her opinion the misalignment of the outdated Designated Work Group (DWG) structure with the current management structure was contributing to difficulties in managers supporting the recruitment of HSRs and the work of HSRs. She noted that the HSRs had previously argued that the University had no role in involvement in the recruitment/ election of HSRs and it had agreed to that proposition, so currently the matter of HSRs for DWGs where there were vacancies is the responsibility of the staff in those DWGs. Mr Rayner enquired how the DWG structure could be reformed, and Mr Delaney advised that as his attempt to initiate whole-system reform had been rejected by the HSRs, he was now reforming DWGs piecemeal on request only.

The Committee discussed various strategies the HSRs could consider to promote recruitment, including the establishment of a HSR website, email mailing list or discussion board.

5.3 Call for nominations for remaining HSR member vacancy

Mr Delaney advised that the terms of reference require that the remaining HSR member vacancy on the Committee be filled via a formal nomination and election process, which he would request the University Secretary to initiate before the end of 2006.

The HSR members advised they understood that Jenny Scott, HSR for Chemistry, may be interested in nominating.

The next meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be held on Tuesday, 23 January 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
- 10 July 2007
- 16 October 2007

BJR
14 November 2006