

The University of Melbourne

Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Minutes of Meeting 2/08

Meeting 2/2008 of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee was held in Pierre Gorman Room, 1888 Building on Thursday 14 August 2008 at 11.30am.

1. Welcome and Attendance

1.1-2 Apologies and welcome

11/08/2008 11:47

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	Mr Nigel Waugh Ms Julia McQuillan Mr Steve Lake (acting for Colin Reiter) Ms Diana Harrison attending for Pr Ken Hinchcliff Mr Stefan Delaney Mr Garry Thomson	
Employee Health and Safety Representatives Six Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) elected by the Health and Safety Representatives	Mr Paul Donald Ms Jennifer Scott Ms Sarah Epskamp Mr Lindsay Rayner Ms Kate Nowell	Mr Steven Adams
Student Observers One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Student Union One student nominated by the University of Melbourne Post Graduate Association	Mr Tony Williams	Mr Scott Bloodworth
Occasional Observers Other observers as determined by the Committee and invited by the Chair.	Ms Alison Hunt-Sturman Ms Elisa Ilarda	
Standing Observers WorkCover & Rehabilitation Manager	Mr Peter Robertson	
In Attendance	Ms Belinda Rule (Minutes Secretary)	

2. Minutes of the previous Meetings 04/2007 and 01/2008

2.1. Meeting 04/2007 of 30th October 2007

Minutes approved as distributed with the change: item 5.4 should be "Meeting calendar for 2008"

2.2. Meeting 01/2008 of 5th February 2008

2.2.1. HSR members' proposed changes approved as the minutes with minor changes as discussed.

3. Action items from meeting 04/2007 and 01/2008

3.1. Occupational Health & Safety Strategic Plan 2007-2010

The OHS Strategic Plan received support from Planning & Budget Committee. It is now published on the EHS Unit website at <http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/riskmanagement/riskregister.php3>

3.2. EHS Manual review: Travel & Off Campus Risk and International Travel Policy

No further progress on this matter, which had been delayed due to dissent in the former Planning & Budget Committee.

PBC has since been disbanded as part of the Senior Vice-Principal's "Taking Responsibility" initiative, and the new approving group will be the Administrative Policy & Procedure committee. Mr Delaney will pursue the matter with this group.

Ms Rule will seek clarification of any implications of "Taking Responsibility" for the OHSC and provide to the committee.

3.3. WorkSafe Universities Intervention Program - Update

The project has been confirmed as completed by WorkSafe. It had been significantly scaled back due to WorkSafe's resourcing problems. The following is a statement of the results:

No. of Inspectors	No. of Workplaces visited	Total number of Inspector visits	No. of Notices AND Voluntary Compliances
18	25	63	9 Notices and 11 VC's

A summary of the OHS issues addressed in the Notices is as follows:

Issues	Number
Plant — inadequate guarding and other safeguarding controls	3
Forklifts — seatbelts not fitted	2

Manual Handling controls	2
Ergonomic issues with workstation	1
Asbestos	1
TOTAL	9

3.4. Letter to Faculty EHS Committees on referring matters to OHSC (complete)

This was completed on 23 January 2008. No committees have referred matters in response to the memo.

3.5. Standing Resolution: HSR member ceasing to be HSR (complete)

The Standing Resolution was documented as agreed and is now available online at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/committees/ohsc/OHSC_standing_resolutions.p hp3.

The committee noted that HSR member Jenny Scott was currently affected by the Standing Resolution as her term of office as HSR had recently expired. The committee agreed to allow Jenny to remain, noting that an election in the DWG of Chemistry will take place shortly.

3.6. Meeting calendar for 2008 (complete)

This item dated to late 2007. The calendar for 2008 had been determined as agreed.

4. Reports

4.1. Workload Advisory Committee

Mr Waugh reported that three meetings of the Workload Advisory Committee (WAC) have taken place. The WAC is discussing workloads management as governed by the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and the Personnel Policy & Procedures Manual (as opposed to specific issues, which should be resolved locally or via grievance procedures).

The WAC is looking to establish focus groups on how workloads are being managed, and is taking a particular interest in email, communications and meeting protocols, and how these contribute to workload.

Mr Waugh had supplied a report on staff-student ratios, which showed that these ratios had improved between 2002 and 2006. The WAC is investigating the reasons for the particular increase in the Architecture Building & Planning and Music Faculties. Mr Waugh clarified that the WAC has no jurisdiction over student organisations including UMPA.

A general discussion of email protocol ensued.

Members had questions about the relationship of workloads to stress and stress-related injuries in different areas of the University. Mr Waugh reported:

- It is difficult to get objective data on rates of stress (for instance, if surveyed, virtually everyone would say they are stressed), which is why the WAC has proposed to use focus groups to gain deeper insight.
- The University's incident statistics do not indicate any patterns of reporting of stress injuries according to organisation group.

Mr Robertson reported that while the University does experience WorkCover claims for stress injuries, there have been no claims that are workload-specific – workload is cited as one stress factor among many. Sometimes computer overuse injuries can indirectly indicate excess workload.

4.2. Workplace Bullying Advisory Group Report

This item was discussed after 4.3.

Ms Ilarda reported on the implementation of the new Management of Workplace Bullying and Occupational Violence Policy. This policy was launched on 25 July 2008. A Working Group had been convened to advise on implementation. Mr Donald was appointed to the Working Group as a representative of the University's HSRs, and Su Butler from the EHS Unit is also a member.

The policy is being implemented similarly to the sexual harassment and anti-discrimination programs. A network of anti-bullying advisers has been recruited and trained – they or the supervisor will be the new first point of contact, rather than Human Resources Consultants. New posters and a new website at <http://www.hr.unimelb.edu.au/strategic/equity/issues/bullying> have been made available. Training for work units is being provided, and uptake by Heads of Department has been strong. Training can be targeted to particular work areas.

Ms Ilarda left the meeting after this item.

4.3. Faculty and Department Safety Committees

This item was brought forward and discussed prior to 4.2.

4.3.1. MDHS Report: Students/Staff ill during class

Ms Hunt-Sturman reported on the need for central guidance on the extent of staff responsibility when a person presents as unwell, especially when s/he appears to require an ambulance.

Members discussed this difficult issue, and noted:

- The health of an injured or ill person may be compromised if an ambulance is not called. Cost issues should not be a consideration in determining whether to call an ambulance. In the event of uncertainty about the seriousness of injuries, staff should err towards calling an ambulance;
- Asking an injured person to sign a form confirming s/he has refused treatment does not offer protection from liability, as the person could later claim to have been mentally unfit to have signed;
- Persons needing immediate treatment should not be transported to the Health Service, as the Health Service is not able to provide emergency medical care. However, advice on whether a person requires immediate treatment may be gained by seeking telephone advice from the nurse at the Health Service;
- It is noted that the Health Service has recently begun to charge staff for treatment – however, it has discretion to continue to see those who cannot pay;
- The scope of this problem is not large – estimated at approximately a dozen cases per year;

- Centralised funding of costs of emergency treatment for non-work-related injury would be difficult to govern and administer;
- There may be interdependencies with academic progress or examination protocol policies where these mention student illness.

Members agreed to the following guidelines in determining whether to call an ambulance:

- If it is clear that an injured or ill person is not incapacitated and does not require urgent medical treatment, then the injured or ill person retains responsibility for seeking any further non-urgent medical care or making any transport arrangements s/he may require. There is no requirement for a supervising staff member to intervene in transport or medical arrangements.
- If the supervising staff member is uncertain whether the injured or ill person is incapacitated or requires urgent medical treatment, advice may be sought by telephoning the University Health Service and speaking to the nurse. The supervising staff member should follow the advice of the nurse as to whether to call an ambulance.
- If it is clear that the injured or ill person is incapacitated and/or does require urgent medical treatment, the supervising staff member should call an ambulance regardless of any statements by the injured or ill person. Attending ambulance personnel have the responsibility for evaluating the person's medical condition and determining what, if any, medical treatment and/or transportation is required. Ambulance personnel will make a record of any refusal. In the event of refusing treatment, the person is responsible for any medical adverse medical outcomes. The supervising staff member should note the refusal in the EHS Incident Report regarding the incident.

Regarding costs associated with an ambulance or other medical care:

- Costs associated with a work-related injury may be subject to payment by Workers' Compensation insurance;
- Costs associated with an injury caused by any negligence of the University may be subject to payment by University insurance;
- The University is not liable for costs associated with a personal injury or illness that is not work-related and not the result of University negligence. However, if requested to pay such costs, a department may choose to do so at its discretion.

Mr Delaney will draft and issue a Safety Bulletin to all staff concerning this agreed protocol.

Further discussion ensued about management of emergency contacts information. Mr Delaney will investigate technology to place information in mobile phones. The Safety Bulletin is to include reminders for staff to update their emergency contact information in Themis Staff Self Service. Merlin is currently used to provide emergency contact information about students.

4.3.2. MDHS Report: NAT/SafetyMAP Gap Analysis

Ms Hunt-Sturman spoke to her report. Mr Delaney confirmed that there are significant gaps between SafetyMAP and the National OHS Self Insurer Audit Tool, which we must comply with by 1 January 2009. Planning is in progress to fill these gaps.

A significant point is personnel accountability for health and safety performance. Ms Hunt-Sturman would like to see EHS responsibilities included in the Human Resources Performance Development Framework (PDF). Mr Waugh advised that Human Resources did not support this as the PDF is not a compliance monitoring tool. Ms Hunt-Sturman and Mr Waugh will discuss out of session.

4.4. Health and Safety Representatives Report

4.4.1. Discussion paper on OHSC Terms of Reference, protocol and membership

The committee noted the discussion paper. A subcommittee of two Health & Safety Representatives and two Management Representatives will be formed to discuss changes to the TOR, and report back at next meeting. Ms Rule is to be advised of identity of members, and will calendar.

The University has recently restructured its central committees and adopted a new governance model for the central administration, in which decision-making is delegated to responsible officers rather than to committees. A review of the Terms of Reference will need to take account of this. Mr Delaney will seek advice from the University Secretary about the implications of these changes for the OHSC, and report back.

HSR members also discussed HSR recruitment and visibility. Mr Delaney advised various ways information has been provided to staff and departments about HSRs.

4.4.2. Cleaning on campus

A meeting of HSRs had produced comments that the standard of cleaning, especially toilets, was poor, and constituted a health and safety risk.

The committee agreed it was difficult to substantiate this when the particular areas affected are not specified. Where a person observes a genuine health and safety risk, this should be escalated urgently through the person's supervisor to the responsible officer. In relation to cleaning, the responsible officer is the Manager, Facility Services, Mr Alan Smith.

Mr Delaney agreed to invite the Manager, Facility Services, and the General Manager, Campus Operations, to attend the next meeting, to discuss avenues for communicating problems with cleaning.

4.4.3. ERC work environment

The HSR members had received a report from the HSR for Scholarly Information (Education, Law, LFR, Vet Sciences, ABP & Sciences), Mr John Lott, which raised concerns about the hazards staff had been exposed to as a result of the ERC library remaining open during refurbishment in early 2008. The report was tabled for the Chair, but copies for further circulation were not available.

Mr Waugh provided a verbal summary of the report. The report recommended that in future decisions on keeping buildings open during refurbishment be based on health and safety issues not political issues.

The committee was unable to support this recommendation in its entirety, as the allegation that decisions had been made for political reasons was unsubstantiated.

The committee agreed that a statement of the process of assessing the impact of building works on occupants was needed. Mr Waugh will write to the Vice-Principal, Property & Campus Services, to seek this advice. Ms Rule will draft the correspondence.

4.5. Significant Incidents Requiring Notification

The committee noted the Notifiable Incidents Report from 26 October 2007 to 7 August 2008.

4.6. Regulatory Activity

The committee noted the Regulatory Activity Report from 26 October 2007 to 7 August 2008.

Mr Delaney will consider combining or cross referencing the Regulatory Activity and Significant Incidents Requiring Notification reports to improve clarity.

4.7. EHS Audit Reports

4.7.1. External Audits

The committee noted the report.

4.7.2. Internal Audits

The committee noted the year to date results report, and noted that results continue to improve, suggesting that the EHS Budget Incentive is an effective motivator.

4.8. Review of EHS Manual

The committee noted the legislative reference and minor administrative updates report.

4.9. Safety Alerts & Bulletins

The committee noted that these had been circulated.

5. Other business

5.1. Further meetings for 2008

The remaining calendar for 2008 will be adjusted to bring the total meetings to four, to meet compliance requirements. Ms Rule will advise members of the new dates.

5.2. Staff use of heaters from home

This item was discussed between items 4.4.3 and 4.5.

Mr Lake raised a concern about staff bringing their own heaters into the workplace, without these being tested and tagged for electrical safety.

Mr Delaney will produce an updated or further Safety Bulletin on this issue.

Ms McQuillan and Mr Lake left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

The next meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be held on Wednesday 5 November 2008, at 10am, in Room G27, Melbourne Law School, Pelham St.

MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2008

Tuesdays at 2.15pm in 2008:

- 5 February Old Quadrangle Moot Court Room
- ~~8 April~~ ~~Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics~~
- ~~8 July~~ ~~Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics~~
- 14 August @ 11.30am Pierre Gorman Room, 1888 Building
- ~~28 October~~ ~~Jim Potter Conference Room, Old Physics~~
- 5 November @ 10am Room G27, Melbourne Law School
- 2 December Moot Court Room, Old Quadrangle

BJR

20 November 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BJR', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.