

The University of Melbourne
Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Meeting 2/05

Minutes

Minutes of meeting 2/05 of the Committee, which was held in the Jim Potter meeting room, Old Physics Conference Centre, at 3.00 pm on Tuesday 19 April 2005.

Present: Ms L Baré (Chair), Mr R Cappai, Mr J Carmichael, Mr S Delaney, Mr M Georgesz, Mr B Greenwood, Ms A Hunt-Sturman, Ms J McQuillan, Ms J Nam, Mr G Thompson

Apologies: Mr B Kehoe

In Attendance: Ms V Mimis, Mr C Reid (acting secretary)

1 Opening

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomes members. She noted that Mr Paul Donald, who had been nominated to a Health and Safety Representative position on the Committee, had been invited to attend as an observer but was unable to attend. The matter of Mr Donald's election to the Committee was taken up under item 3.2.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 1/05

The Committee confirmed the minutes of meeting 1/05, held on 15 February 2005, as circulated.

3 Action Arising from Meeting 1/05

3.1 Nominations to Fill Casual Vacancies on the OHSC

3.1.1 Postgraduate Representative

The Chairperson indicated that a Postgraduate student representative had not yet been identified.

3.1.2 Health and Safety Representative

This matter was considered under item 3.2.

3.2 Method of Election of Health and Safety Representatives to OHSC

For the purposes of discussion, it was agreed that the term 'HSR' should be used to refer to Elected Health and Safety Representatives.

The Committee noted that, at meeting 1/05, it had asked that a meeting of the University's HSRs be convened to consider the method of election of HSRs to OHSC and to consider whether alternates for HSR members of OHSC should be identified. The Committee was advised that a meeting of HSRs had been held on 24 March to discuss the matter. The Committee received a tabled paper outlining the outcomes of that meeting, including action taken to fill the present HSR vacancy on OHSC. However, OHSC had not asked the HSR meeting to take action to fill the present vacancy, but to submit advice on methods of election. The Committee agreed that the process of filling vacancies, including calling for nominations, should be undertaken by the University Secretary's Department and that, where elections are required, ie there is more than one nomination for a vacancy, the University Secretary's Department should conduct elections of HSRs to the OHSC. The Chair will now ask the University Secretary's Department to call for nominations to fill the HSR vacancy on OHSC.

The Chair indicated that she has asked the University's Internal Auditor to look into the conduct of last year's election of an HSR representative to the OHSC.

The Property and Buildings Division was asked to update the list of the University's Designated Work Groups and HSRs. It was suggested that the section of the Human Resources data-base that records staff qualifications could be used to record whether a staff member is an HSR. In relation to the role of HSRs, it was noted that HSRs are sometimes inappropriately required to act as Safety Officers. The question of whether casual staff are eligible to be HSRs was also raised.

3.3 HSRs Meetings and Reporting to OHSC

Ms Hunt-Sturman indicated that the 24 March meeting of University HSRs had discussed the method by which it should submit reports to the OHSC. The Committee agreed that HSR meeting minutes should be submitted to OHSC in future. Matters of safety that require urgent attention should continue to be referred directly to the Property and Buildings Division.

3.4 Grattan St Pedestrian Crossing Incidents

Mr Delaney reported on consultation between the University, VicRoads and the City of Melbourne concerning road safety in the vicinity of the Parkville campus, including the Grattan St pedestrian crossing and the intersection of Pelham and Barry Sts and the Pelham St/Elizabeth St crossing. Options they had discussed for improving safety include:

- Speed limit reduction
- Painting zig-zag lines on approaches to crossings
- Installation of coloured cross-walks at crossings
- Tree trimming (to improve visibility of signage)

- Modification of intersection lanterns
- The installation of speed humps.

The Committee noted that consultation is continuing, and appropriate steps will be taken.

3.5 Briefing on Impact of Revised OHS Act

The Committee received a summary of key issues, arising from the impending implementation of the new Victorian OHS Act, which had been presented to the Planning and Budget Committee. The Committee also received an overview and a summary of the new Act available from the WorkSafe web-site. It was noted that two organisations that share a building could potentially share a Designated Work Group, thus requiring those organisations to consult in the management of health and safety in shared space. It was agreed that the Property and Buildings Division would review the list of Designated Work Groups in the University and also identify where non-University organisations are involved. Changes to the list and coverage of Designated Work groups would be implemented from 2006, to coincide with the new terms of HSRs, which would be from 2006 to 2009.

It was agreed that accountability training should be provided for all heads of department. EHS training should also be encouraged and a list of staff who have undertaken training should be compiled.

3.6 Faraday St Premises

Mr Delaney reported on steps taken to eradicate fleas from the University's Faraday St premises and to ensure appropriate building maintenance was undertaken.

3.7 Tram Stop Signage

Mr Delaney reported on discussions held with Yarra Trams on the signage at the new tram stop in Swanston St. It was noted that an independent safety audit of the Swanston St tram stop had been undertaken as a condition of local government approval of the redesign of the stop. It was noted that construction was not yet complete and that a further safety audit would be undertaken, which may lead to improvements. It was agreed that reports on 'near misses' and any other incidents should be collected and referred to Yarra Trams and VicRoads. It was noted that VicRoads is also considering the matter and that the police may also be involved, for example in education programs.

3.8 Manual Handling Procedure

The Committee noted that, at meeting 1/05, it had referred to the HSR meeting the revised procedures statement for manual handling. The 24 March HSR meeting had endorsed the manual handling procedures

statement and the statement would now go forward to Administrative Committee for approval and will then be placed on the University's website by Property and Buildings Division. The HSR meeting had also supported the concept of generic procedures statements being used in appropriate situations.

3.9 Report Back from Administrative Committee

The Committee received a copy of the report submitted on its behalf from meeting 1/05 to the Administrative Committee. The Chair reported that she had briefed Administrative Committee on the new OHS Act. The responsibility statement for staff in management positions will be modified to ensure that it reflects the requirements of the new Act, and training requirements will be highlighted.

4 Reports

4.1 Environmental Health and Safety Representatives

The Committee received as a tabled paper the minutes of the meeting of University HSRs held on 24 March 2005. The convenor of the meeting, Ms Hunt-Sturman, reported that the meeting agreed that it should hold regular meetings separate from the Health and Safety Representatives' Forums. She believed that holding separate meetings would permit HSRs to raise issues more openly. Representatives of Property and Buildings Division could be asked to attend meetings to address particular matters as required, thus ensuring the opportunity for consultation, as required by the OHS Act.

4.2 Reportable Incidents

4.2.1 School of Forest and Ecosystems Science

Mr Carmichael spoke to the circulated paper concerning a chemical incident at the School of Forest and Ecosystems Science, at the Department of Sustainability and Environment site at Heidelberg. No staff injuries had arisen from it. Mr Carmichael noted that WorkSafe representatives had investigated the incident and approved the action taken in response to the incident. The University had been commended for its action.

The Committee noted that the Heidelberg site is shared with another non-University organisation, raising again the general question of the provisions for the joint management of shared sites. The circulated paper contained recommendations to the Property and Buildings Division concerning provisions for joint management of the shared site, and it was noted that the action taken on this occasion could provide a model for shared site management generally. The Committee noted the report.

5 New Business

5.1 Workload Advisory Committee

The Committee received as a tabled paper a report from Mr Nigel Waugh, Manager, Workplace Relations, concerning the Workload Advisory Committee that must be established by the OHSC as a result of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. The Workloads Advisory Committee is to comprise three elected staff representatives, three nominees of the Vice-Chancellor and an independent chair nominated by the OHSC. The University Secretary's Department will be asked to conduct the election of the three elected staff members and convene the committee.

5.2 Restructuring of Risk Management Office

The Chairperson reported on the proposed restructuring of the Risk Management Office and indicated that planning is incomplete and awaits the Vice-Chancellor's approval. It is proposed that the management of OHS in the University will be transferred to the Property and Buildings Division. WorkCover responsibilities will be transferred to the Human Resources Division and Audit and SafetyMAP responsibilities will be transferred to the Internal Auditor's Department. The proposals for restructuring will address the question of an occupational health service and systems for monitoring occupational health.

In response to a concern over the independence of OHS within Property and Buildings Division, the Chair indicated that the Manager, OHS would have a direct reporting relationship to the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair of the OHSC would also be outside Property and Buildings Division, thus enhancing independence. The University has consulted with the NTEU on the reorganisation of the RMO at a Management of Change meeting.

The question of whether the OHSC itself would need to be reconstituted was discussed.

5.3 Refresher Training for HSRs

The Committee noted that the new OHS Act requires annual refresher training for staff involved in EHS. The Committee agreed that it would be desirable for such training to be held on-site. Mr Delaney indicated that he is developing a training plan.

6 Other Business

6.1 Role of the OHSC

The Committee noted that the OHS Act 1985 requires that the University provide for a consultative committee, and the OHSC fulfills that role. The OHSC is also a University committee that advises the Administrative

Committee on policy and has determinative functions. The OHSC thus has a dual role, and is subject to two sets of provisions that are not entirely consistent, for example in specifications for representation and a quorum. It was agreed that provisions for consultation by the OHSC should be reviewed.

6.2 Statistics on Incidents

The Committee received as a tabled paper a summary of reported incidents in the University over the period 2003 – 2005. The Committee agreed to include on the agenda for its next meeting the establishment of objectives and targets, and monitoring progress towards these.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm. The next meeting will be at 3.00 pm on 19 July 2005.

Circulation List

Ms Elizabeth Baré, Vice Principal (Human Resources)
Ms Jenny Nam, Undergraduate Student Representative
Prof. Ivan Caple, Dean, Veterinary Science
Dr Roberto Cappai, Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine
Mr Stefan Delaney, Property & Buildings
Mr Mark Georgesz, Faculty of Economics & Commerce
Mr Bruce Greenwood, Property & Buildings
Ms Alison Hunt-Sturman, Faculty of Medicine
Mr Brendan Kehoe, Veterinary Science
Ms Julia McQuillan, Manager (Client Services), Human Resources
Ms Vicki Mimis, NTEU
Mr Colin Reiter, General Manager Maintenance, Property & Buildings
Mr Gary Thompson, Director, Health and Counselling, Academic Services

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