

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 12 April 2007 Lamble Conference Room

Present:

Mary Ditton Chair)	- WG3
John Kellet	- WG 2 (for Michael Eburn)
Marg McDonald	- WG 4 (for Ros Busby)
Fran Cuskelly	- WG 5
Bruce Reeves	- WG 6
Clayton Gilmour	- WG 7
Carl Peterson	- WG 8 (for Ross Bennetts)
Graham Johnson	- FMS (for Director, FMS)
Debbie Wilkinson	- HRS (for Director HRS)
Daphne McCurdy	- OHS Officer

In Attendance:

Jim Ellis	- Internal Auditor (observer with discussion rights)
Sarah Collister	- Secretary to committee

Apologies:

Michael Eburn	- WG 2
Ros Busby	- WG 4
Ross Bennetts	- WG 8
Michael Quinlan	- FMS
Bronwyn Pearson	- HRS
Gail Creagan	- Workers Compensation

2. Approval of Minutes

A comment was made that any reference to previous minutes should specify the date of the previous meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting (8 February 2007) were accepted as a true reflection the meeting.

The Chair of the OHSSC commenced by expressing concern about the attendance of the members to this meeting and suggested rescheduling the meeting. The Chair expressed concern about the lack of Management Representatives. It was pointed out that all management representatives were represented. The two management representatives who were on leave (Bronwyn Pearson and Mike Quinlan) had sent suitably qualified substitutes (Debbie Wilkinson and Graham Johnson) and the internal auditor Jim Ellis was acting as observer so that he could brief the VC new nominee Alistair Squires (replacing Rolley Piggott) who commences employment at UNE on 16 April. Alistair Squires is scheduled to replace Rolley Piggott as management representative. The fourth management nominee Daphne McCurdy was in attendance. The Chair then expressed the concern that it was the decision making ability of the personnel that was more the issue.

Seven of the eight Working groups had representatives at the meeting although WG2 , WG4 and WG8 had sent substitutes.

The Chair then expressed concern that there are only three persons at this meeting who were in attendance at the previous meeting (8 February 2006).

Action Point - The Chair will write to the VC to discuss the affect of the composition of the committee and their ability to effect meaningful decisions. (See point 6)

3. Business Arising

Since the last meeting a new Chair was appointed. There was only one nomination received so no ballot was required.

There has been no feedback on the Working at Heights policy or other documents (Safety Leaders Guide, Manual Task Hazard Identification Checklist or Comcare Leadership and Accountability Documents) so they will now be circulated for wider consultation.

- OHS specific checklist feedback will be adopted as a working document.
- There has been a 100% return of First aid quarterly reports
- Eye Wash saline solution is available from chemist on Rockvale Road.

4. Working Groups' summary

WG1 - no one in attendance - no feedback, The OHS officer expressed concern about the functionality of the group as they have not yet elected their office bearers. The Chair suggested the Dean concerned with WG1's area be approached to discuss the situation to obtain a solution by the next meeting.

WG 2 – 2 major issues are being addressed ; Fire warden training and telephone availability for first aid assistance.

WG 3 – the ongoing problem of smoking outside buildings has been raised. See agenda point 12.

WG 4 – nothing to report. As the group representing some of the Sciences buildings/personnel, Chem watch/gold was mentioned. The OHS Officer has suggested that the use of on line databases be incorporated into the BSc course.

WG 5 – No issues to report

WG 6 –There is some disquiet about the noise levels from the equipment being installed at the back of the Finances offices on the ground floor of Lamble. The Chair to inspect the area at the end of this meeting.

WG 7- No immediate problems. As this group covers outlying farm premises, reporting procedures are different from the normal processes. A system is being developed to accommodate the situation.

WG 8 – as the main areas being covered by WG8, Dixson and ITD have being undergoing work place change the practices of both areas need to be refined and discussed at their next meeting to use the best practice from each area.

5 Employee academic representation.- Chair

This issue was discussed at the beginning of the meeting. A suggestion was made by OHS officer to include Faculty Mentors as associate members of the Committee. The OHS Officer said a consideration had been that the mentors were academics and they were also able to highlight student safety concerns. The Chair stated that they should be full members of the committee.

Action Point - An email to be sent to the Chair specifying the names of Faculty Mentors, to review the designation of these personnel.

6. OHS Officer's status on Committee.

The Chair asked the Committee to review the status of the OHS Officer. Currently the OHS Officer's status is that of a Management representative. The OHS Officer informed the committee that she had written to the VC on 8 January 2007 to request clarification of the role of the OHS officer on the Committee and that it had been confirmed that the OHS Officer should continue to be management appointee. The OHS Officer stated that best practice requires that OHS is part of an integrated management system. She stated that professionalism and integrity are necessary when providing advice and negotiating difficult situations.

The Chair lead a discussion which ensued with the general consensus the OHS Officer should be a member of the committee but not a management representative due to the possible perceived conflict of interest.

Action Point -The Chair will write to the VC to advise him of the feelings of the Committee

7. Implications of major developments – Mike Quinlan

The Chair expressed the view that the OHSSC should be involved at the beginning of projects to review possible implications for OHS. The plans for the new medical centre were presented to the Committee by Graham Johnson, the FMS Construction Manager, answering questions as they arose. Much of the design has been dictated to by legislation and the governing body, Hunter New England Health. The discussion of the new project was welcomed by the Committee and viewed as a positive step in the understanding and application of OHS at the University.

8. Implication of Organisational change

The Chair presented copies of a paper from the National Research Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. The Chair felt that the article on page 14 is of particular note as it discusses restructuring, downsizing and OHS. With the recent changes that have occurred, Dixon Library and ITD and future changes likely to happen with the Academic renewal project, this article may provide some relevant points for consideration. The Chair asked the members to take this information to their members. The member from the Dixon Library felt that the change process recently undertaken in his area was planned and communicated well, thereby alleviating many of the issues that can surround change in the workplace. The Academic change process is being managed at a senior level. A specifically employed project officer is actively identifying risks associated with changes. The Chair requested the Acting Director HRS and OHS Officer work on a draft harm minimization policy document.

(Action point- This subject to be an agenda item for the next meeting (14 June 2007).

9 Incident Register

The OHS Officer clarified that the Workplace Injury Management Act (s63) requires that a register is kept of all injuries. There is no specific requirement NSW OHS Legislation. At UNE the OHS Officer maintains the register which is

accessed by Return to Work Co ordinator as required. In response to a question from WG8 representative the OHS Officer explained the procedure for registering incidents and clarified that dangerous occurrences and near hits/misses are registered as incidents. The Chair commented that maybe the terminology should change.

10. Management academic representation

This was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

11. Reports – OHS Officer Report, Workers compensation report

The OHS Officer's report was circulated prior to the meeting. The Worker Compensation report is attached to these minutes. One outstanding issue is the OHS plan which was delayed to await the presentation of the UNE Strategic Plan. Now this is published the members should ask their groups to feed back to the OHS Officer their views on opportunities available to progress OHS at UNE.

Action Point -Agenda item for Working Groups

12. Smoke near buildings

The current policy specifies smoking is allowed 3m from a building. This issue has been raised a number times. One proposal has been made to increase the limit to 10m.

Action Point- The Chair requested that the members discuss this with their work groups.

13. Training

OHS training undertaken has included First aid, Emergency Services, UNE OHS training on line and Snake bite workshop
Tentative dates have been provided for OHS Consultation Training during May. ., The first session for Chemgold will be held prior to 30.5.07.
The OHS officer is concerned about Manager and Supervisor training.

14. Awards

Three nominations were made;
John Kellet – for Organising warden training and emergency management system
Michael Eburn – for instigating an EBL telephone diversion system to ensure prompt, communication with nearest available first aid officer.
Tanya Henley – for organising quality assurance system to ensure compliance with electrical tagging and testing legislative requirements

15. Policy & Procedures

Deferred to time constraints - meeting being excess of 21/2 hrs

Meeting closed 12.05 pm