

Minutes of the meeting of the Occupation Health and Safety Strategic Committee held at 9.30 am on Thursday, 21 June 2007 in the Conference Room, TC Lamble Building, University of New England

PRESENT:

Dr Mary Ditton (Chair)	WG3
Bronwyn Pearson	Acting Director, HRS
Michael Quinlan	Director, FMS
Daphne McCurdy	OHS Officer
Rowan Webb	WG1
Michael Eburn	WG2
Margaret McDonald	WG4
Fran Cuskelly	WG5
Bruce Reeves	WG6
Clayton Gilmour	WG7

IN ATTENDANCE:

Grahame Chaffey, Manager, Animal House
Gail Creagan, Workers' Compensation
Lisa Allen (Secretary)

APOLOGIES:

Professor Margaret Sedgley, PVC – Dean, Faculty of The Sciences, Rosslyn Busby (WG4)

TABLED DOCUMENTS

Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
Harm minimisation during organisational change (OHS) guidelines
Preventing and managing psychological injuries (OHS) guidelines
Photographs from Animal House indicating damage to road surface.
Nomination for OHS Award – Michael Evans

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and thanked the Committee for postponing the meeting to fit her timetable. The Chair also expressed concern that there was no Academic representative from Management.

2 MINUTES

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF THE 12 APRIL 2007 MINUTES

The OHSSC resolved:

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 APRIL 2007 BE CONFIRMED AS A CORRECT RECORD OF THE MEETING.

2.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE 12 APRIL 2007 MINUTES

Attached for the information of members is a letter from the Chair of the OHSSC to the Vice-Chancellor regarding the composition of the OHSSC which addresses the two points below and academic representation on the Committee.

pp 6-7

2.2.1 EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION AND FACULTY MENTORS

Bronwyn Pearson advised that Professor Margaret Sedgley had accepted the role as the Management Representative on the Committee.

General discussion regarding academic and/or management representation on Workgroup committee meetings and Workgroup lines of communication was held. It was generally agreed that if a representative with executive authority attended Workgroup meetings, outcomes were more likely to be achieved.

The Chair requested that Workgroups report back on their lines of communication and who they could relate to if there is an issue locally.

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

2.2.2 OHS OFFICER'S STATUS ON COMMITTEE

Bronwyn Pearson, advised that as a result of the Chair's letter to the Vice-Chancellor he reaffirmed that the OHS Officer is to be a Management Representative on the Committee.

2.2.3 SMOKING NEAR BUILDINGS

The Committee discussed the issue of smoking near buildings. Bruce Reeves reported that WG6 support the extension of the smoking distance from entrances from 3 metres to 10 metres, however they raised the issue of the butt bins being left out in the weather. He also reported that WG6 support a complete ban on UNE campus if this was to be introduced.

The Committee acknowledged that while a complete ban would ultimately be ideal, there were many issues associated with this including providing counselling and support services etc to assist in the implementation of this. At this point the University is not in a position to provide this level of support.

The Chair commented that while this was the case, government institutions were heading in this direction and that the item should be placed on the agenda for action.

3 MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

3.1 OHS OFFICER REPORT

The Committee noted the report attached to the Agenda from the OHS Officer.

3.1.1 DRAFT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Daphne McCurdy tabled the draft Harm minimisation during organisation change (OHS) guidelines, the Preventing and managing psychological injuries (OHS) guidelines and the draft Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy for the information and comment of the Committee. Gail Creagan, advised that she had been working on a similar document which was aimed at minimising stress in an Academic Reorganisation.

Bronwyn Pearson advised that all policies relating to staff need to be considered by staff consultative committees regarding workplace agreement and terms and conditions of employment. This would also include the tabled document Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy and the Harm minimisation during organisational change and Psychological Injury Prevention (OHS) guidelines.

It was agreed the policies on Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods and Working at Heights, be posted to the UNE WEB for comment and feedback by the next meeting. Feedback from the Web would be collated by the OHS Officer and forwarded to the Chair.

It was also agreed that the Harm minimisation during organisational change and Psychological Injury Prevention (OHS) guidelines be circulated to the relevant consultative committees.

3.2 DIRECTOR – FMS REPORT

Michael Quinlan reported to the meeting on activities around the Campus including the Rural Medical School, removal of the SHES building etc.

3.2.1 ASBESTOS

Mr Quinlan advised that external consultants will be dealing with asbestos from now on and that UNE staff will not be renewing their asbestos removal licences.

The Committee was concerned that staff working in the Health building were not receiving results of asbestos monitoring tests during its removal. Michael Quinlan advised that the results were given to the Head of School on a daily basis.

The Chair noted that the Heads of Schools had not been passing this information on.

3.2.2 REFURBISHMENT

Rowan Webb advised the Committee that he had discussed the refurbishment with DPI staff and assured them that they would be looked after. Michael Quinlan confirmed that he had met with DPI staff and management to keep them informed and address any concerns they may have.

The Chair commented on the need for emergency exits while renovations were taking place. Daphne McCurdy reported that following an incident in the stairwell of the School of Health building, lights were replaced promptly by FMS and that a new light had been added to the bottom of the stairs on request of the OHS Officer.

3.2.3 GENERAL WORKING CONDITIONS

The Committee raised the issues of smell, noise, language and coughing/spitting by contract staff. Mr Quinlan advised that contract staff on the Rural Medical School were given an induction on site and advised of the particular site issues and equal opportunity etc, however he would raise this again and if necessary renew the induction process. Mr Quinlan advised that wherever possible, work was carried out on weekends to avoid unpleasantness. He applauded the University's staff on their tolerance and patience at this time of building and renovation and assures the Committee that he is keeping abreast of issues as they arise and endeavouring to minimise the effect on staff.

4 WORK GROUP REPORTS

Daphne McCurdy provided a summary of working group activity for the meeting. It was decided that for future meetings, each Work Group would provide a brief report to be attached to the Agenda for the information of the Committee.

Ms McCurdy also raised the need for OHS to have a list of priorities which can be addressed in some order. The Chair responded that FMS have a list of priorities and that OHS might recognise other issues to present to FMS to be added to their list of priorities. She suggested this be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

4.1 WORK GROUP 1

No Report. *It was agreed that Work Group 1 be directed to have a meeting to officially elect Rowan Webb or alternative representative to the committee.*

4.2 WORK GROUP 2

No Report

4.3 WORK GROUP 3

No Report

4.4 WORK GROUP 4

4.4.4 ANIMAL HOUSE CAR PARK

Mr Graeme Chaffey, Manager – Animal House, made a presentation to the Committee highlighting degradation of the Animal House car park. Photos used in presentation are marked Attachment 3.

Mr Chaffey outlined that the car park was used as:

- A disabled car park
- 15 minute car park
- Guest car park
- Unloading zone for animal feed and products
- Waste bin drop-off and pick-up area

Mr Chaffey illustrated the damage that has been caused to the tarmac by the twin axle truck which is used to drop off and pick up the waste skip located at the end of the loading bay. This resulted in presenting a danger to the forklift drivers unloading animal feed and products onto the loading dock.

The Committee discussed various options.

It was agreed that a sub-committee be set up consisting of Michael Quinlan, Director FMS; Associate Professor Geoff Hinch, Head of School of Rural Science and Agriculture; Graeme Chaffey, Manager, Animal House; and Daphne McCurdy, OHS Officer. The sub-committee is to assess the site and formulate strategies to solve the problem and report back to the next meeting.

(Secretary's note: as A/Prof Geoff Hinch has been replaced by Professor John Gibson as Head of School, Professor Gibson will be on the sub-committee as HoS).

4.5 WORK GROUP 5

No Report

4.6 WORK GROUP 6

Bruce Reeves advised the Committee that the stairs outside the Credit Union were an issue. *It was agreed that Mr Reeves would report on this to the next meeting.*

4.7 WORK GROUP 7

No Report

4.8 WORK GROUP 8

No Report

5 WORKERS' COMPENSATION OFFICER REPORT

Gail Creagan reported that she had received one report in April and one in May.

The Chair requested that a full report on the incident at the rear of the School of Health Building be provided to the Committee for information.

6 AWARDS

The Committee noted the nomination of Michael Evans of Work Group 6.

It was agreed that Michael Evans be presented with an award for commitment to Occupational Health and Safety on-line course development.

The Committee discussed the values of Graeme Chaffey's presentation to the meeting.

It was agreed that Graeme Chaffey, Manager, Animal House, be presented with an award for his commitment to Occupational Health and Safety in his workplace.

7 OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 SITE SPECIFIC INDUCTION

Rowan Webb put to the committee that site specific induction including emergency exits and evacuation procedures needs to be performed for students and suggested that it be addressed at the Head of School meeting for Transitional Heads of Schools.

Michael Eburn advised the Committee that EBL had also discussed this issue and was in the process of creating a CD to present at the beginning of lectures for the first lecture of the semester.

The committee discussed the issue at length and various forms of notification to staff and students regarding safety were put forward. It was also debated whether it was a School or Faculty-wide responsibility. The Chair also commented that if the University is in charge of gatherings of people, there needed to be guidelines.

It was agreed that Michael Eburn look into this and report back to the next meeting.

8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be held on Thursday 9 August 2007 at 9.30am in the Lamble Conference Room.

The Chair of the committee advised that she would not be available for the next meeting. It was agreed that rather than postponing the meeting a substitute Chair would be appointed. The Committee agreed Rowan Webb could act as substitute Chair provided he was re-elected as Work Group 1 representative.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am.

VC Office

16 APR 2007

Dr Mary Ditton

Lecturer in Health Management
School of Health
University of New England
Chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee 2007
Ext: 3668
Email: mary.ditton@une.edu.au
13/4/07

Professor Alan Pettigrew
Vice-Chancellor and CEO
University of New England

Dear Professor Pettigrew

I am writing to you as Chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee (OHSSC) because I am concerned about two issues. The Committee discussed these and made recommendations at the meeting held on Thursday 12th April 2007.

1. The composition of the OHSSC at UNE does not reflect employee groups at UNE. Presently only two of the eight OHS Working Groups have academic representatives on the OHSSC. This does not truly reflect the current ratio of academic to general staff. It is a requirement of the OHS legislation that all employee groups are appropriately represented. The Committee recommends that the terms of reference of the Committee be changed to address this problem, so that academics are appropriately represented. It was also recommended that the Faculty Academic Mentors be encouraged to take on roles as additional representatives of academic staff. Again, according to the legislation employees can not be coerced into the representative position but must be democratically elected.
2. The Committee discussed the role of the OHS officer as both a professional OHS expert and a management representative. Assuming both these roles is a perceived conflict of interest, and in the future, could be a real conflict of interest. It was agreed that a perceived conflict of interest for the OHS officer should be avoided. It was recommended that the OHS officer be a member of the Committee but not a Management representative on the Committee. This discussion and recommendation does not reflect negatively on the present incumbent of the position.

I will take this opportunity to give you a copy of Professor Michael Quinlan's working paper on *Organisational Restructuring, Downsizing and OHS*. The OHS officer is going to use this paper to inform a draft policy on 'Managing Change to avoid Negative Health and Safety Outcomes' for the next OHSSC meeting on 14 June 2007. As change

processes are so common in industry nowadays it is important that they are conducted in such a way as to prevent and manage psychology injury in the workplace.

I would appreciate your response to these OHSSC recommendations by the next meeting of the Committee. If you would like to speak to me about any of these matters I am at your service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Ditton', written in a cursive style.

Mary Ditton