

CONFIRMED
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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY STRATEGIC COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of the Occupational Health & Safety Strategic Committee held at 9.30am on Thursday, 12 June 2008 in the Conference Room, TC Lamble Building, The University of New England.

Sarah Mika
Secretary to Occupational Health & Safety Strategic Committee

PRESENT

Michael Quinlan	Director FMS
Jim Maher	Academic Representative
Rowan Webb	WG1
John Kellett	WG2
Leanne Lisle	WG4
Bruce Reeves (Chair)	WG6
Clayton Gilmour	WG7

Mr Jim Maher, Academic Representative was welcomed to the committee.

IN ATTENDANCE

Bronwyn Pearson	for Vicki Anderson, Daphne McCurdy
Sarah Mika	Secretary

MEETING STARTED AT 9.37 A.M.

1.* APOLOGIES

Vicki Anderson
Daphne McCurdy

2.* ADOPTION OF UNSTARRED ITEMS

Leanne Lisle asked that 4.4.4 Work Group 4 Report be starred.

3. MINUTES

3.1* CONFIRMATION OF THE 10 APRIL 2008 MINUTES

Several representatives said that they had not received the agenda and attachments previous to this meeting. These were emailed to representatives work group email addresses 30 May and 10 June. The secretary will use

representatives' UNE email addresses until this issue is resolved. The Chair suggested that representatives be proactive and contact the secretary if they do not receive the agenda 10 days prior to the next OHSSC meeting.

Rowan Webb mentioned that while the content of 4.4.1 paragraph 3 was an accurate record of what was said at the last meeting, the reason the staff member referred to did not become involved, was not because of a lack of meetings, but because they could not afford the time for the 4-day training course which is a prerequisite for a work group member. He also asked that the following amendments to the draft minutes of the meeting on 10 April 2008 be effected:

4.4.1 paragraph 1: delete 'Arts (building E11)' and insert "SHES (buildings E1-E5)".

4.4.1 paragraph 2: delete '.' after "ages ago" and insert ", due to academic renewal."

6. Ongoing business, paragraph 2: after 'Honorary Fellows', insert ", Adjuncts and Associates".

The Chair asked that the minutes of the meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee held on 10 April 2008 be confirmed subject to the above amendments. This motion was moved by Rowan Webb and seconded by Clayton Gilmour.

3.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE 10 APRIL 2008 MINUTES

Nil.

4. MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

4.1* OHS OFFICER REPORT

The OHS Officer lodged a written report before going on leave. The secretary could not access this report so it will be circulated to the committee on the return of the OHS Officer.

4.2 DIRECTOR – HRS REPORT

No report was tabled as Vicki Anderson was away. Bronwyn suggested she update the Committee during 7.1 Other business.

4.3 DIRECTOR – FMS REPORT

Mike reported that four projects have been completed or are almost complete:

- Move of Geoscience. Staff from E1-E5 are moving into the refurbished Geology building. SHES building will be demolished once the move is complete in 2 weeks and the site will be grassed.

- New pathways are being constructed behind the medical school. These are graded disabled and will eventually be lit. Workers are pouring the last slabs today if the rain holds off.
- Australian standard grade lighting is being installed in the Northern Carpark, funded by parking permits.
- More strategically, the asbestos audit has been upgraded to include the colleges. Contractors will take 300 samples over a month, beginning 25 June. The audit is due to be finished by August.

Rowan congratulated Mike on the fitout of the Geology building, as there is now a lot more natural light in the building. Rowan asked Mike whether a staff member could remove field equipment (freeze-core pipe) from under the southern end of E1-E5. Mike replied that it was a restricted area and that FMS would remove the field equipment using the appropriate PPE.

4.4 WORK GROUP REPORTS

4.4.1 WORK GROUP 1

Nothing to escalate but Rowan will discuss an issue that has arisen during 7.1 Other business.

4.4.2 WORK GROUP 2

Nothing to escalate.

4.4.3 WORK GROUP 3

No report was submitted and no representative was present at this meeting.

4.4.4* WORK GROUP 4

Leanne Lisle asked that FMS do a site-specific risk assessment prior to starting projects that included local knowledge and a history of the building from staff working in the building. In the case of the refurbishment of the McClymont labs, FMS did not provide the risk assessment to the Work Group and it did not include a history of the chemical use in the labs.

The Chair asked whether her concern was related to a specific issue supported by an incident report, to which Leanne replied that there had been a lot of correspondence among FMS, the OHS Officer and Work Group 4 and it was handled at a work group level. However, she recommended and requested that that FMS consult with Work Groups during the risk assessment of projects so that staff can impart local knowledge and identify site-specific risks.

Mike Quinlan said that risk assessments were carried out on a project basis and focused on project risks such as construction and budgets. The project user group disbanded after the design phase; usually they liaise back into the project design. Currently, they don't liaise with the OHS work groups and it would be worthwhile to include a work group representative in the project user group. FMS ask that areas be stripped clean of chemical before projects begin.

Leanne said that in this case, the Chair of the project user group retired so there was no continuity when the project began. There were several OHS breaches including dust, noise and chemical sludge. Staff wanted to see the project risk assessment and the work group wanted to be involved and contribute to the site-specific risk assessment for the project.

4.4.4.1

Rowan Webb (WG 1) endorsed the need for communication between FMS and the user group by providing an example of what he viewed as a lack of communication during and after the relocation of his Work Group to C002. He said that no documentation of building plans, or gas isolation points were handed over to new occupants; he had developed the building plan for archaeology at the end of the Milton building and the plans for E1-E5 were inaccurate and needed ongoing corrections. Now, with staff moving into C002, some staff knew the location of power points and water taps but the project user group were not given the building plans. Rowan said that there was no evacuation plan which stated the location of 1 portable fire extinguishers,

Mike responded that the space allocation audit was a separate issue. A fire protection plan was in place for C002 and evacuation plans are currently being drawn up.

Rowan replied that the evacuation/safety plans should be in place before people move into a building.

Mike said that C02 was not unsafe and he would discuss this further with Rowan later.

Dr Jim Maher moved the following motion: (1) a member of the OHS work group be included in the project user group; and (2) the OHS work group be included in the risk assessment for projects in their area.

Rowan Webb seconded this motion.

4.4.5 WORK GROUP 5

No report was submitted and no representative was present at this meeting.

4.4.6 WORK GROUP 6

Nothing to escalate.

4.4.7 WORK GROUP 7

Nothing to escalate.

4.4.8 WORK GROUP 8

No report was submitted and no representative was present at this meeting.

4.5* WORKERS' COMPENSATION OFFICER REPORT

The Chair noted the report attached in the Agenda.

4.6 TRAINING AND AWARDS REPORTS

4.6.1 TRAINING REPORT

Nil.

4.6.2 AWARDS REPORT

Nil.

5. ESCALATED ISSUES

Nil.

6. ONGOING ISSUES

Nil.

7.* OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Workplace bullying

Rowan Webb spoke to this Item. He noted that some members of the OHSSC knew the background of this issue but he couldn't elaborate. An incidence arose where a building was searched for a procedural issue. A staff member's office was searched and the staff member was treated badly during the course of the search. The staff member took sick leave as a result of the treatment. Rowan highlighted that this has OHS implications but that UNE does not deal with bullying as an OHS issue. He hadn't seen medical certificates or supporting documents so couldn't file an incidence report. It is currently being handled as a mediation issue, but not to the satisfaction of all parties. If workplace bullying was handled as an OHS issue then it comes under legislation and not just UNE policy.

Rowan suggested that UNE needs to be proactive in dealing with workplace bullying by doing background checks that specifically investigate whether there is a history of this type of behaviour before employing staff at senior management positions.

The Chair asked whether this issue was already covered by HR policy.

Rowan replied that the HR policy was good policy, but that the issue was difficult to address effectively and that a culture of bullying exists at UNE.

Bronwyn said that HR provided advice and assistance in training for HoS to deal with specific issues or cases of bullying and to address any systemic or culture of bullying. HR cannot “muscle in” on issues and supersede roles and responsibilities of senior management: HR must work with those individuals and their supervisors. HR is obviously aware of the matters that Rowan raised, but is not at liberty to discuss them, except to state that HR and UNE are taking it very seriously and are taking steps to exercise their duty of care to the staff involved.

The Chair asked Rowan what he thought the OHSSC could do about this issue.

Rowan said that he couldn't determine what the OHSSC could do, but that UNE needs to be seen to be managing this issue properly. His opinion was that it was an OHS issue. HR can only deal proactively with the issue in the appointment process by background checks so that UNE does not knowingly introduce a person with a history of bullying into the institution.

The Chair wished the minutes to note that the OHSSC is concerned about the issue and supports HR to manage issues and cases effectively.

Bronwyn said that she would take on board the recommendations to address rigor in the “selecting the best” process, but that HR has to be balanced in how they check into the work history of candidates. HR does address some of these issues through checking referees' reports but their decisions are only as good as the information received. HR is considering other incorporating other methods of selection for senior appointments such as physiological testing. HR is currently evaluating whether other methods of assessment can improve the recruitment process. HR is also assessing their reportable requirement to Workcover.

Rowan said that the OHS Officer had suggested that Rowan report the incidence as a dangerous occurrence but as Rowan did not have the necessary documentation, he couldn't report it. He would like his position to be clarified as to whether he should/should not report incidences such as this.

Bronwyn said that there were 2 issues here. One was the internal reporting and Daphne preferred more reporting so that UNE is aware of situations. The second issue was the external reporting and HR was assessing what is needed here.

The Chair said that the OHSSC should leave it to the OHS Officer to assess where to make official reports to Workcover.

Bronwyn said that the difficulty arose because there was not a demonstrable injury but that actions such as this may give rise to injury. Workcover suggests that all incidences are reported, so UNE needs to exercise judgement in some issues.

7.2 Chemical spill

Rowan asked as Chair of the Hazardous Safety Committee to be informed of chemical spills.

Bronwyn said she and FMS were notified, as were fire and emergency services and that the incident referred to here was handled well. An incident report was submitted. The incident occurred at 8:30 a.m. and was resolved by 10:30 a.m.

Mike said that this wasn't FMS' area. A stores delivery truck lost 2 containers of detergent concentrate when a rope broke. Stores are investigating their ropes and tie-down procedures.

Bronwyn said that as discussed previously with Rowan, she is standing in while the OHS Officer is on leave and didn't realise she had to notify Rowan.

7.3 Time for functions

Rowan said that as per his comments to the minutes of the previous meeting, staff don't have time for the 4-day training that is a prerequisite to joining an OHS work group. This gets back to the time for functions issue discussed in previous meetings. He would like the HoS to attend OHS work group meetings but as HoS are very busy, they need to have time made available for these meetings. This is something he'd like addressed.

8.* NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted the next meeting of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee is August 14 2008 at 9.30 a.m. in the Lamble Conference Room. The Chair also noted the dates of future meetings for 2008 are listed below.

[August 14 2008](#)

[October 9 2008](#)

[December 11 2008](#)

MEETING CLOSED AT 10:38 A.M.