

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-001002

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

SWA - Results in Relation to Priority Areas/Industries

- Can you update the Committee on how results are going in relation to your priority areas/industries?
- Have there been any additional/changes to the priority industries?

Answer

The *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022* (the Australian Strategy) was developed by Safe Work Australia and approved by the Select Council on Workplace Relations on 6 July 2012. It was launched on 31 October 2012.

The Australian Strategy is intended to be a high level, forward looking document capable of being implemented by governments, unions, industry and other organisations across Australia. Accordingly, Strategy 1 of the Safe Work Australia Corporate Plan 2015–2019 is for Safe Work Australia to ‘support the implementation of the Australian Strategy’.

The Australian Strategy identifies seven Action Areas:

- Healthy and safety by design
- Supply chains and networks
- Health and safety capabilities
- Leadership and culture
- Research and evaluation
- Government, and
- Responsive and effective regulatory framework.

Over the first four years of the Australian Strategy, Safe Work Australia, Commonwealth, state and territory work health and safety regulators and key work health and safety stakeholders have implemented a range of activities in relation to these seven Action Areas. Examples of these activities can be found in the following documents:

- First progress report on the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022* covering the period 2012–2013, available at:
www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/first-progress-report-australian-whs-strategy
- Second progress report on the *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022* covering the period 2013–2014, available at:
www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/second-progress-report-australian-whs-strategy
- The Safe Work Australia Annual Report 2015–2016, covering activities undertaken in the period 2014–2016, available at:

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/annual-report-2015-16

- Case studies showcasing progress towards the Australian Strategy, available at: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/australian-strategy/case-studies/pages/case-studies

The Australian Strategy lists seven broad industry groups as national priorities for prevention activities. These are:

- Agriculture
- Road transport
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Accommodation and food services
- Public administration and safety, and
- Health care and social assistance

In the same way as the Action Areas, relevant stakeholders use the priority industries to guide their activities. Examples of activities undertaken over the first four years of the Australian Strategy are included in the documents referenced above.

The Australian Strategy lists two main targets to be achieved by the end of the 10 year strategy in 2022. These are a reduction in the number of worker fatalities due to injury of at least 20 per cent; and a reduction in the incidence rate of claims resulting in one or more weeks off work of at least 30 per cent. An analysis of Safe Work Australia data for 2014–2015 shows that across Australia both targets are ahead of schedule for the 2022 timeframe. When disaggregated by individual priority industry, all industries, except agriculture and construction, are either on track or ahead of schedule in terms of meeting the targets set by the Australian Strategy. Greater improvement is required for the 2022 targets to be met in the agriculture and construction industries.

There have been no changes or additions to the priority industries in the Australian Strategy. The Australian Strategy provides for a review after the first five years to ensure it continues to generate sustained improvements in work health and safety. The Australian Strategy will be reviewed during 2017.