

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2011-2012

Agency - Safe Work Australia

DEEWR Question No. EW0048_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

Occupational Health And Safety Harmonisation

As a result of Occupational Health and Safety harmonisation, will there be a measurable decrease in: a. Providing management and staff time to fill in forms and assist with administrative requirements such as audits? b. Recruiting and training additional staff to meet compliance burdens? c. Purchasing and maintaining reporting and information technology systems? d. Obtaining advice from external sources to assist with compliance? e. Obtaining licenses and/or attending courses to meet regulatory requirements?

Answer

Safe Work Australia has provided the following response:

As part of developing the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws, Safe Work Australia is required to assess the impact of the laws through a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS). The result of this analysis for the model WHS Bill is included in the Decision RIS which is available on the Safe Work Australia website at www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/AboutSafeWorkAustralia/WhatWeDo/Publications/Pages/PC200912DecisionRegulationImpactstatementForMOHSAct.aspx.

The analysis indicated that the costs to multi-jurisdiction business of introducing the model WHS Bill were unlikely to be greater than the costs of ongoing changes under disparate jurisdictional regimes were the model WHS Bill not to be introduced. The analysis indicated that in terms of reducing compliance costs for business, the model Act could have benefits of around \$179 million per annum.

For single-state businesses, most jurisdiction specific changes were considered cost neutral or cost saving and those that may have an increase in costs was considered to be a small increase only. For small business it was considered that having the same set of harmonised laws would provide less complexity and confusion for all businesses.

No specific information on the costs of administrative requirements including recruitment, training, reporting or obtaining advice from external sources was provided during the model WHS Bill public consultation process. As these issues are dealt with in detail in the model WHS Regulations, however, it is anticipated that these impacts will be discussed in the Decision RIS for the model WHS Regulations.

For the draft model WHS Regulations, a Consultation RIS was released with the public comment versions of the draft model regulations and codes of practice and is available on the Safe Work Australia website at www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/Legislation/AdministrativeRegulations/Pages/Model%20work%20health%20and%20safety%20Regulations.aspx.

The final analysis for the model Work Health and Safety Regulations and model Codes of Practice, taking account of public comment, is currently being developed and will be published in the Decision RIS for the model WHS Regulations and Codes of Practice on completion.