

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No. EW0106_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

Refers to previous DEEWR Question No [EW0719 11](#)

Follow up question: If there has never been a single complaint about a lack of consistency of Comcare's approach with any other approach, what was the relevance of seeking consistency?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response.

The Commonwealth, state, and territory governments have agreed to work cooperatively to harmonise their work health and safety (WHS) laws, including the Regulations and Codes of Practice, with an aim to produce model WHS laws that are uniform in each jurisdiction.

The Commonwealth, states and territories are responsible for making and enforcing their own model WHS laws. Although there are similarities between current laws, some different standards of protection cause confusion. Australian workers should be entitled to the same WHS standards, regardless of where they work.

The Intergovernmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Occupational Health and Safety will address for the first time the current regulatory inconsistencies. State and territory governments and the Commonwealth have formally committed to work together through this agreement to achieve the harmonisation of WHS laws. The harmonised laws will address the compliance and regulatory burdens placed on employers who operate in multiple jurisdictions.