
Work Health and Safety policy (revised)

Responsible Officer: Group Manager People & Performance (Helen McNeil)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Revoke the Work Health and Safety policy dated 20 February 2019 and any policies revoked as a result of that revocation; and
2. Adopt the revised Work Health and Safety policy attached to this report.

Background

The Work Health and Safety ('WHS') Policy forms part of Council's WHS Management System ('WHSMS') and sets out the basic responsibilities and steps required to maintain a safe workplace under the current *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)* ('WHS Legislation').

• Revised policy

In 2019 the Australian Standard AS/NZS 4801 for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems was superseded by the ISO 45001 standard (new standard). A transition period to 12 September 2021 for the implementation of the new standard was nominated by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).

The introduction of this new standard necessitated a review of Council's WHSMS. That review was undertaken in June 2021 and included the review of the WHS Policy.

The core of the revised WHS policy remains the same with a greater emphasis on the following commitments in order to align with the new standard:

- providing a framework for setting objectives,
- providing a safe and healthy workplace for the prevention of physical and mental work-related injury and / or ill health,
- eliminating hazards and reducing risks,
- continual improvement,
- consultation, and
- healthy workplaces.

The WHSMS currently utilised by Council complements the revised WHS Policy by providing further detail on the steps to maintaining a safe workplace and detail of the responsibilities of Council staff.

ISO 45001

A summary of the main changes between AS/NZS 4801 and ISO 45001 are outlined below:

• Changes in responsibilities

Responsibilities previously ascribed to management are now the responsibility of senior managers i.e. promoting continual improvement and developing, leading and promoting a culture in the organisation that supports the intended outcome of the management system.

- **Additional policy commitments**

Health and Safety policies are to include commitments such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a commitment to providing safe and healthy working conditions for the prevention of work-related injury and ill health,
- a commitment to eliminating hazards and reducing work, health and safety risks, and
- a commitment to consultation and participation of workers.

- **Approach to risk**

The new standard has a more risk-based focus, for example:

- Requirement to look at
 - The risks that change can bring and assess how such risks are controlled, and
 - The risk of the system not performing effectively in achieving the organisation's health and safety objectives.
- The methodology for controlling hazards ('Hierarchy of Controls') is now a requirement rather than mere guidance.
- Psychosocial hazards
 - Requirements for the identification of hazards and associated considerations has been expanded. Of note, the requirement to take into account "how work is organised, social factors (including workload, work hours, victimisation, harassment and bullying), leadership and the culture of the organisation" when identifying hazards.
- Ensure that there are documented procedures for topics such as hazard management and training.

Governance

In 2020 Council's Internal Audit Partner (Grant Thornton) recommended that Council ensure the requirements of ISO 45001 be integrated into business processes given the alignment of the new standard with the existing WHS Legislation. The review of Council's WHSMS and WHS policy are expected to contribute to the completion of this internal audit recommendation.

- **Finance**

Each year, WHS is allocated a recurring budget, that is utilised for existing proactive strategies. Any potential new or arising issues requiring funding, will be identified through the annual budgeting process.

- **Environment**

This revision has occurred prior to the completion of the Council restructure. At the next policy review, an environmental component will be incorporated into the policy in line with the new health safety and environment stream currently being adopted by Council.

Comment

The adoption of the revised Work Health and Safety policy will result in greater alignment of Council's policy position with the Standards.

The WHS policy is important because it establishes the arrangements for protecting the health and safety of workers. The WHS policy demonstrates to management, supervisors and workers that there is a commitment to ensuring high standards of health and safety. On approval, the policy will be replaced at all displays within Council and staff educated in the changes accordingly at their various team meetings.

Consultation

The revised WHS Policy was developed in consultation with the Health and Safety Committee and its representative's respective teams.

Conclusion

It is recommended that Council adopt the revised Work Health and Safety policy as attached to this report.

Attachments

1. Work Health and Safety policy (for adoption)
2. Work Health and Safety policy (for revocation)

Policy

Work Health and Safety

Approved by Council:

To establish Council's expectations and commitment to worker and workplace health and safety.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

Background

The primary duty of Council under WHS Legislation is the protection of the health and safety of its workers and to avoid putting the health and safety of other people at risk through Council's actions or omissions.

Council staff, Councillors and visitors to Council's workplaces similarly have duties under the WHS Legislation to protect their own and others health and safety.

Policy statement

Council is committed to the prevention of both mental and physical work-related injuries through the provision of safe and healthy work environments, facilities, equipment and systems aligned with relevant Australian and international standards and legislative requirements.

Council will achieve this by implementing proactive strategies aimed at:

- A. Culture** - promoting and maintaining a safety-first workplace culture where we take care of each other and provide a work environment where safety is prioritised.
- B. Resources and processes** - ensuring appropriate resources are allocated and processes are followed, including the hierarchy of control methodology, to eliminate or minimise risks to safety, especially for higher risk activities.
- C. Targets** - establishing measurable health and safety objectives and targets and regularly reviewing and reporting on our performance.
- D. Standards** - fulfilling all legal requirements and meeting the AS/NZS ISO 45001 standard for safety.
- E. Continuous Improvement** - continuously improving our WHS Management System, including a formal review of the management system and this policy every two years.
- F. Information and activities** - providing information, wellbeing programs and regular training for our workers and consulting with them and other stakeholders regarding health, safety, and wellbeing activities at work.
- G. Early intervention** - encouraging effective early intervention practices (hazard reporting, PErforM (manual handling program), and employee assistance programs, for example) to better identify risk and minimise the impact on the physical and mental health of our workers.
- H. Remedial action** - ensuring there are effective processes in place to record, investigate and carry out remedial actions to prevent a recurrence should an incident occur.
- I. Induction** - ensuring workers understand their general responsibilities for work health and safety and the specific responsibilities for safety relating to their job descriptions.
- J. Return to Work programs** - actively promoting return to work programs for injured workers

Responsibilities

- *Leadership Team*
 - Promote a safety culture that is inclusive, supportive, and free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.
- *Workers and Councillors*
 - Take reasonable care of their own safety and others.
 - Contribute to building and maintaining a physically and mentally healthy work environment by caring for one another and always putting safety first.
 - Engage in meaningful, respectful, and open consultation about health and safety matters to achieve Council's strategic outcomes.
 - Consult on and cooperate with health and safety investigations, activities and objectives.

Definitions

- **Council** means Rous County Council.
- **WHS Legislation** means the *Work Health Safety Act 2011 (NSW)* and the *Work Health Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)* as amended from time to time.
- **WHS Management System** means the set of plans, policies, procedures and programs utilised by Council to systematically manage health and safety.
- **Worker(s)** has the meaning prescribed under the WHS Legislation and includes Council staff, contractors, volunteers and trainees.

Contact officer

General Manager.

Related documents

Policies

N/A

Procedures

Work Health and Safety procedures
Health and Wellbeing procedure

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Cth)

Other

WHS Management System
Safe Work Method Statements
AS/NZS ISO 45001 - Occupational health and safety management systems

<i>Office use only</i>	File no.:	Next review date: [2 years]	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0	To establish Council's expectations and commitment to worker and workplace health and safety.	20/02/2019	7/19
2.0	DRAFT	DRAFT	DRAFT

Policy

Work health and safety

Approved by Council: 20/02/2019

To establish Council's expectations and commitment to worker and workplace health and safety.

Safety

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Background

The Councillors and General Manager recognise and take seriously the need to ensure that the workplace is a healthy and safe environment for all workers and other persons. Workers have the right to expect that Council will keep them safe at work so that they can return home safe each day.

Policy statement

Council, as a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking¹ commits to its workers and other persons that all decisions made will place the highest priority on achieving worker and workplace health and safety.

Council will do this by ensuring:

1. Compliance with relevant legislation, including the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and supporting regulations.
2. The implementation of the Work Health and Safety Management System (WHS Management System), and the plans, policies, procedures and programs necessary to support and implement this policy.

Council accepts responsibility for implementing and maintaining this policy and the WHS Management System. Therefore, so far as is reasonably practicable Council will make every effort to ensure:

1. There are established measurable safety performance objectives and targets and that they are reviewed to continually improve work health and safety performance, including regular workplace inspections and the prompt control of identified hazards.
2. Workers are trained on all health and safety matters relevant to their work.
3. Other workers (e.g. contractors) are fully aware of the hazards associated with their work, and implement appropriate hazard control measures.

¹ In the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, it states:

"5) **Meaning of person conducting a business or undertaking**

...

(5) *An elected member of a local authority does not in that capacity conduct a business or undertaking.*"

In addition, it has been established that Council is the 'person conducting a business or undertaking' with respect to Rous County Council.

4. All managers, supervisors, workers, contractors and other persons are inducted about the requirements of the WHS Management System and are accountable for carrying out their roles and responsibilities as defined in that system.
5. Adequate resources are provided to enable full implementation of this policy and the WHS Management System.
6. Effective worker and contractor consultation on work health and safety matters include the two-way communication of relevant information, toolbox meetings, reporting and feedback.
7. Effective systems are in place for monitoring the health of workers and workplace conditions i.e. health monitoring, drug and alcohol testing and workplace surveillance.
8. Support mechanisms are in place to assist workers to maintain or improve their psychological and physical health.
9. Return to work programs for injured workers are actively promoted.
10. This policy and the WHS Management System is reviewed every two years to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate.

All workers are required to comply with this policy and the WHS Management System.

Workers must cooperate with Council regarding actions taken to maintain work health and safety. In addition, workers shall take reasonable care of their own safety and not adversely affect the safety of others in the workplace.

This policy is to be posted throughout work sites.

Contact officer
General Manager.

Related documents

Policies N/A

Procedures

Work Health and Safety procedures
Health and Wellbeing procedure

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Other

Work Health and Safety Management System
Safe Work Method Statements
Contractor Insurance Management System

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1.0	To establish Council's expectations and commitment to worker and workplace health and safety.	20/02/2019	7/19