



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 25 September 2009

WELCOME NEXT STEPS TAKEN ON HARMONISING OHS LAWS

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, welcomes today's decision by the Australian, State and Territory governments to release for public comment draft OHS laws for industry and broader public comment.

"Having been modeled on recommendations of an independent review, the draft laws can now be tested across a wider range of industry, even though the time frames for doing so are tight."

"While there are important efficiencies from harmonising Australia's OHS legislation, especially for companies operating across State borders, benefits will only be delivered if the model Act and regulations help improve OHS practices and cultures. This requires rights and obligations to be reasonable, practical and balanced."

"Industry will not use this six-week public comment period to re-open major matters already decided by the independent review. Instead, our focus will be on maintaining high quality OHS systems, addressing industry concerns with some operational issues, and testing the workability of the proposals in different workplace contexts, including small business."

"Getting the content of OHS laws right is just as important as achieving national harmonisation. Most Australian employers are still smaller businesses operating in only one state or territory only."

ACCI is a member of Safe Work Australia, which is the national tripartite national body overseeing OHS and workers compensation in Australia.

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ACCI represents over 350,000 businesses in every State and Territory and all industries. Our network employs around 4 million employees, ranging from the top 100 companies to tens of thousands of small and medium businesses.

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