



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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SAFE WORK AUSTRALIA WEEK THE PERFECT TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, has welcomed Safe Work Australia Week, which runs from 25 to 31 October 2009, as an opportunity for employers and employees to step back and review their approach to ensuring safety within their workplace.

It is essential that at regular intervals time is taken to step back and take a fresh look at the bigger picture of workplace safety. Safe Work Australia Week presents an ideal opportunity to do so.

Company Boards and Senior Executive teams should regularly review their organisation's strategy, culture, systems and commitment to workplace safety and make adjustments where needed. Safe workplaces are driven from the top.

However, managers, supervisors and all employees also need to take individual accountability for workplace safety. Workplaces with the best safety records have a culture of clear and shared accountability for safety from the first year apprentice to the Chief Executive. This is built on the empowerment and obligation of all employees to openly discuss workplace safety, report hazards and incidents, and collaboratively find the most appropriate ways of managing risks.

It is important that in the midst of the current debate about harmonised OHS legislation, the focus on day-to-day workplace safety does not slip. Legislation is not going to drive further improvements in OHS outcomes in Australia – people's actions will. Governments and industry must look for ways to further provide small business in particular with the tools, information, advice and encouragement to effectively manage the challenges and complexities faced in ensuring workplace safety.

When it comes to workplace safety Australia is one of the best performing countries in the world. Through the combined efforts of employers, employees, unions, governments and regulators excellent progress has been made against the ambitious targets of the *National OHS Strategy 2002-2012*, with a 16 percent fall in the rate of fatalities and injuries in the first half of the strategy's lifespan.

ACCI represents employers on the Safe Work Australia Council and is a signatory to the *National OHS Strategy 2002-2012*.

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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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