

# ACT Public Sector Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

## PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the *ACTPS Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy* is to demonstrate the ACT Government's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce and ensure that directorates/agencies develop, implement and monitor integrated policies and programs relevant to their risk profile.

## APPLICATION

2. This policy contains a set of instructions issued by the Head of Service under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* which binds all employees and officers engaged under that Act.

## BACKGROUND

3. World Health Organization (WHO) have recognised the workplace as a priority setting for promoting health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>.
4. WHO define a healthy workplace as being "one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs:
  - health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;
  - health, safety and wellbeing concerns in the psychosocial work environment, including organisation of work and workplace culture;
  - personal health resources in the workplace;
  - ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community"<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Division of Health Promotion, Education and Communication and Office of Occupational Health (1997). WHO's Global Healthy Work Approach. WHO: Geneva

<sup>2</sup> *Healthy workplaces: a model for action. For employers, workers, policy-makers and practitioners*, Accessed 29 April 2019 [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599313\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599313_eng.pdf?ua=1)

5. The health benefits of good work are well established. Good work is a key determinant of the health and wellbeing of employees and a means to support and improve health and wellbeing.
6. Work health, safety and wellbeing programs that address the health risks of workers within the organisation lead to reduced absence, reduced risk and impact of chronic illness and disease, reduced frequency of workplace accidents, increased staff engagement, reduced staff turnover and improved productivity.
7. The ACT Government, as a signatory to the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) *Consensus Statement on the Health Benefits of Work*, has committed to:
  - promoting an understanding of good work and an awareness of the health benefits of good work;
  - supporting and encouraging those attempting to access the health benefits of good work;
  - encouraging all participants to support workplace health; and
  - advocating for continuous improvement in public policy around work and health<sup>3</sup>.
8. Best-practice defines an integrated approach to workplace health, safety and wellbeing by providing policies, programs, and practices that integrate prevention of harm, the promotion of health and wellbeing, and proactive evidence-based injury and illness-management initiatives with organisational productivity.

## PRINCIPLES

9. The ACT Government will lead by example through good work design and promoting a culture and environment that values, supports and promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of ACTPS employees and, in turn, the ACT community.
10. Work and work practices must be designed to consider the health, safety and wellbeing of employees.
11. A risk-based approach will be used to develop policies and programs to target workforce risks and complement and enhance mandatory work health and safety approaches.
12. Evidence-based, best-practice initiatives will be integrated into business processes and support our obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and associated Regulation 2011 to:
  - provide safe and healthy workplaces for all employees;
  - prevent harm in the workplace;

---

<sup>3</sup> *Health Benefits of Good Work* Accessed 29 October 2018 at: <https://www.racp.edu.au/advocacy/division-faculty-and-chapter-priorities/faculty-of-occupational-environmental-medicine/health-benefits-of-good-work>

- reduce the number and severity of incidents;
  - reduce costs associated with absenteeism, presenteeism, injury, disability and workers' compensation; and
  - improve work performance and productivity.
13. Work health, safety and wellbeing initiatives must be aligned with the government's direction to create workplaces that promote equity, create diversity and are respectful.
14. The design and delivery of work health, safety and wellbeing initiatives must be consistent with the WHS Act and Regulation 2011 requirements and, in particular:
- ensure a risk management process is undertaken to understand the nature and scale of work health, safety and wellbeing risks;
  - comply with associated work, health and safety legislation particular to the operation of the business;
  - measure and monitor targets for work health, safety and wellbeing to ensure continuous improvement for injury prevention and health promotion;
  - provide appropriate work health, safety and wellbeing training to employees;
  - ensure workers are included in the consultation process to support decision-making where there is an impact on work health, safety and wellbeing; and
  - ensure workers have access to information about work health, safety and wellbeing.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

15. Directors General / Agency Executives must, in addition to meeting their due diligence obligations under the WHS Act, demonstrate their commitment to the principles of an integrated work health, safety and wellbeing approach.
16. All Executives and managers must develop, implement and evaluate policies, programs and initiatives to prevent or minimise harm and promote and enhance employee work health, safety and wellbeing.
17. All staff must:
- follow risk management strategies and procedures to prevent or minimise health and safety risks or promote improved health and safety;
  - familiarise themselves and act in accordance with ACT Government and directorate/agency guidelines and procedures relating to work, health and safety; and
  - seek to contribute to and participate in workplace work health and safety initiatives.
18. The CMTEDD Work Safety and Industrial Relations Division will develop, implement and be accountable for whole of government policies, procedures and initiatives to continuously improve work health, safety and wellbeing outcomes.

## RELATED LEGISLATION

This policy is to be delivered with in accordance with:

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)
- [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2004](#)
- [Human Rights Commission Act 2005](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2014](#)

## RELATED SOURCES

This policy is to be delivered with consideration of:

- [ACT Public Sector – WHS Policies](#)
- [Protecting and Managing our Information Policy](#)
- [Standards for Records, Information and Data](#)
- [Workplace Privacy Policy 2011](#)