

Adelaide Quality Care

Policy 1

Work Health & Safety (WH & S) Policy and Procedure

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1.1 Work Health & Safety Policy

This WH&S Policy was endorsed and implemented in January 2016. It demonstrates AQC's commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace.

Work Health and Safety

Position Statement

The work health and safety of all persons employed by, serviced by and visiting AQC is considered to be of the utmost importance. Resources in line with the importance attached to workplace health and safety will be made available to comply with all relevant Acts, Regulations, Codes of Practice, Standards and Guidelines and to ensure that the workplace is safe and without risk to health.

To implement the general provisions of this policy, a program of activities and procedures will be set up, continually updated, and effectively carried out. The program will relate to all aspects of work health and safety including.

- WH&S training and education including staff induction
- Provision of information to employees, contractors, and sub-contractors
- Development of safe work procedures
- Emergency procedures and drills
- Provision of WH&S equipment, services and facilities
- Regular workplace inspections and evaluations
- Reporting and recording of incidents, accidents, injuries and illnesses.

1.2 Work Health and Safety Improvement Plan

AQC aims to improve its WH&S performance by providing a safer working environment.

This will be achieved through implementation of our WH&S Improvement Plan, which has the following key objectives –

- Commitment to a WH&S system that ensures all employees, fulfil their WH&S responsibilities; • Ongoing consultation with employees to identify WH&S issues and to develop, implement and evaluate risk control strategies.
- Ongoing training and development of staff to enable them to carry out their WH&S responsibilities.
- Identification of hazards and development of control procedures to reduce the risk of workplace injury and illness.
- Active management of injured employees with the emphasis on their early return to work.
- Regular review of WH&S strategies to ensure continuing improvement of workplace systems and procedures.

A WH&S Improvement Plan will be developed each year by the Management Team and consultation will occur with the WH&S Committee and Health and Safety Representatives.

The plan will be reviewed regularly by the WH&S Committee and the Management Team.

1.3 Work Health and Safety Vision for AQC Employees

AQC believes that successful risk management is an integral part of excellent care and service.

AQC has always taken pride in its ability to deliver high quality care and service. However, 'quality care and services can only be provided if, in turn, the staff providing the services can do so safely'.

AQC has adopted a Vision Statement to help focus all employees on working safely as they perform their daily tasks.

It states that: "Through the commitment and involvement of all staff and the adoption of Best Practices, AQC will provide quality care and service safely to AQC consumers".

1.4 Work Health and Safety Responsibilities

Legislative Responsibilities

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

- (1) The main object of this Act is to provide for a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces by—
- (a) protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimization of risks arising from work or from specified types of substances or plant; and
 - (b) providing for fair and effective workplace representation, consultation, co-operation and issue resolution in relation to work health and safety; and
 - (c) encouraging unions and employer organizations to take a constructive role in promoting improvements in work health and safety practices, and assisting persons conducting businesses or undertakings and workers to achieve a healthier and safer working environment; and
 - (d) promoting the provision of advice, information, education and training in relation to work health and safety; and
 - (e) securing compliance with this Act through effective and appropriate compliance and enforcement measures; and
 - (f) ensuring appropriate scrutiny and review of actions taken by persons exercising powers and performing functions under this Act; and
 - (g) providing a framework for continuous improvement and progressively higher standards of work health and safety; and
 - (h) maintaining and strengthening the national harmonisation of laws relating to work health and safety and to facilitate a consistent national approach to work health and safety in this jurisdiction.

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(2) In furthering subsection

- (1) (a), regard must be had to the principle that workers and other persons should be given the highest level of protection against harm to their health, safety and welfare from hazards and risks arising from work, or from specified types of substances or plant, as is reasonably practicable.

Return to Work Act 2014 (SA)

(1) The object of this Act is to establish a scheme that supports workers who suffer injuries at work and that has as its primary objective to provide early intervention in respect of claims to ensure that action is taken to support workers—

- (a) in realizing the health benefits of work; and
- (b) in recovering from injury; and
- (c) in returning to work (including, if required, after retraining); and
- (d) in being restored to the community when return to work is not possible.

(2) In connection with subsection

(1), the other objectives that apply with respect to this Act are—

- (a) to ensure that workers who suffer injuries at work receive high-quality service, are treated with dignity, and are supported financially; and
- (b) to ensure that employers' costs are contained within reasonable limits so that the impact of work injuries on South Australian businesses is minimised; and
- (c) to provide a reasonable balance between the interests of workers and the interests of employers; and
- (d) to reduce the overall social and economic cost of work injuries to the State and to the community; and
- (e) to support activities that are aimed at reducing the incidence of work injuries; and
- (f) to reduce disputation when workers are injured at work by improving the quality of decision-making and by reducing adversarial contests to the greatest possible extent.

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(3) A person exercising judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative powers must interpret this Act in the light of its objects and these objectives without bias towards the interests of employers on the one hand, or workers on the other.

(4) The Corporation, the worker and the employer from whose employment a work injury arises must seek to achieve an injured worker's return to work (taking into account the objects and requirements of this Act).

AQC clearly defines the individual roles and responsibilities of all AQC employees as follows.

The WHS Act places primary duty of care and various other duties and obligations on a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU).

The organisation is deemed to be a PCBU. PCBU's have a 'primary duty of care' to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of

- workers engaged directly or indirectly by the PCBU;
- workers whose work activities are influenced or directed by the PCBU; and
- other persons present where work activities are being conducted.

Duties of PCBU's to meet this primary duty of care include provision of –

- safe work environments.
- safe systems of work;
- safe plant and structures
- safe substances;
- facilities;
- information, instruction, training and supervision;
- monitoring of workers health and workplace conditions.

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Managing Director is responsible for –

- ensuring that systems are in place and resourced to identify, assess, eliminate or control all WH&S risks to workers, consumers and visitors;
- planning, developing, implementing and evaluating WH&S plans in consultation with staff and workplace WH&S Committees/Representatives;
- promoting and encouraging participation, communication and awareness raising in regard to workplace health and safety by all staff;
- ensuring manager and coordinators responsible for the workplace understand the requirements of this policy and implement it;
- ensuring that managers monitor the operation of this policy;
- due diligence in respect of the direction and management of the organisation's Work Health and Safety policies and practice.

Due diligence means taking care in the workplace - it means taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health, safety and welfare of all people. Under the Act the 'duty' of the PCBU to maintain a safe and healthy workplace is absolute.

Evidence of due diligence is one of the two defenses available to a director or person concerned with the management of an organisation charged with an offence under the Act.

The reasonable steps officers must take to ensure they are exercising due diligence includes, but is not limited to –

- acquiring and keeping up to date with knowledge of work health and safety matters;
- gaining an understanding of the operations of the business and the hazards and risks involved;
- ensuring appropriate resources and processes are provided to enable hazards to be identified and risks to be eliminated or minimised;
- ensuring information regarding incidents, hazards and risks is received and the information is responded to in a timely way;

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- ensuring the PCBU has, and implements, processes for complying with any legal duty or obligation;
- ensuring processes are verified, monitored, and reviewed. Though not exhaustive, these elements form part of a unified system for ensuring organisational compliance.

To fulfill their obligations in relation to “due diligence” the Managing Director will require the Office Manager to verify the following.

- regular consultation with employees regarding all health and safety issues has occurred prior to any changes being implemented;
- that Policy statements are signed, dated and visibly displayed;
- that all employees are aware of, and trained in, the organisation’s safety rules;
- that there is on-the-job training for employees;
- that everyone in all of the organisation’s workplaces, knows what to do in an emergency;
- that throughout each workplace in the organisation, there are visible safety signs and reminders;
- that there is safety labelling on all products and services;
- that the organisation has regular maintenance systems in place for plant, tools and equipment;
- the WHS program gives emphasis on eliminating hazards through redesign;
- that employee morale is good and there are few or no customer complaints.

The Managing Director is responsible for (can be delegated to Executive Support Team) –

- leading the development, implementation and evaluation of WH&S strategies;
- providing staff with a safe work place;
- ensuring that systems are in place and resourced to identify, assess, eliminate or control all WH&S risks to staff, consumers and visitors;
- planning, developing, implementing and evaluating service WH&S plans in consultation with staff and workplace WHS Committees/Representatives;

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- promoting and encouraging participation, communication and awareness raising in regard to workplace health and safety by all staff;
- drafting appropriate policies and procedures;
- identifying unsafe practices and eliminating them;
- updating WH&S policies and procedures in a changing environment and ensuring they are in accordance with relevant legislation;
- monitoring the development, implementation and evaluation of WH&S plans and programs;
- supervising and supporting other Coordinators and staff; and holding them accountable for their specific responsibilities;
- communicating effectively with all staff in regard to WH&S issues and their management;
- providing ongoing education;
- appraising WH&S performance;
- targeting resources effectively to achieve WH&S performance improvement;
- promoting and maintaining best practice in workplace health and safety;
- developing, implementing and evaluating appropriate WH&S strategies;
- cost allocation strategies that support the WH&S plan;
- actively participating in, and ensuring the effectiveness of the WH&S Committee;
- ensuring Coordinators responsible for a workplace understand the requirements of this policy, implement it and monitor its operation.

If the Office Manager does not have the necessary authority to fix a problem, they will be held accountable for reporting the matter promptly - together with any recommendations for remedial action – to the Managing Director who does have the necessary authority.

Office Manager / Coordinators have the responsibility to communicate effectively with all staff members and/or consumers and their carers, to effectively control risks as far as is reasonable in consumer home conditions.

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Care Coordinators are responsible for –

- monitoring the development, implementation and evaluation of WH&S plans;
- supervising and supporting staff to conduct effective risk assessments of consumer homes and other work environments and to develop appropriate and responsive risk management plans for these environments;
- undertaking effective workplace risk assessment and development of risk management plans as indicated through assessment;
- leading the development and implementation of safe work practices as part of the process of managing accident/injury prevention;
- ensuring incident investigations are conducted within 7 days of notification;
- ensuring that where new or updated equipment is required to assist the client with transfers, manual handling etc that an effective assessment is undertaken by an OT to ascertain the safety requirements and/or training needs for staff;
- appraising WH&S performance;
- regularly checking during quarterly client reviews with Support Plans / Care Plans that current risk management plans are in place;
- targeting resources effectively to achieve WH&S performance improvement;
- promoting Best Practice;
- developing, implementing and evaluating appropriate WH&S strategies;
- cost allocation strategies that support the WH&S plan;
- actively supporting staff representatives participating in and ensuring the effectiveness of the WH&S committee;
- detecting any unsafe or unhealthy conditions or behaviour;
- ensuring all staff are trained and competent to carry out their work;

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Human Resource Coordinator is responsible for

- ensuring active injury management;
- participating in WH&S forums;
- supervising and supporting administrative staff with safe work practices;
- appraising the WH&S performance of administrative staff;
- targeting WH&S resources effectively.
- contributing to the development, implementation and evaluation of WH&S strategies;
- supervising and supporting support workers;
- appraising the WH&S performance of support workers;
- risk alerts are current so that Support Workers are alerted to potential risks before accessing a client's home;
- supporting and resourcing Support Workers to understand workplace risks and to effectively implement risk management strategies;
- ensuring that each Support Worker is provided with any relevant risk information from Roster Alerts or OH&S Alerts prior to attending a client service – through memo and/or verbally if insufficient time for collection of memo.
- ensuring that all support workers are trained and competent and that they are given ongoing training, information and supervision to enable them to manage their own health and safety and that of their consumers;
- providing support workers (before assigning them to consumers) with a copy of documented safe work practices taking care to include whether personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or particular safe work systems are necessary;
- ensuring that all support workers are trained and competent prior to assigning them to certain consumers and that they are given ongoing training, information and supervision to enable them to manage their own health and safety and that of their consumers;
- targeting WH&S resources effectively.

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All Employee are responsible for –

- contributing to the development, implementation and evaluation of WH&S strategies;
- targeting WH&S resources effectively;
- ensuring active injury management on a day to day basis as required;
- managing the control of workplace risk through implementing and supervising workplace safety review, hazard reporting and safe work practices;
- ensuring equipment and work systems do not pose a risk to the health and safety of employees and others;
- participating in WH&S forums such as the WH&S committee.
- advising Management if they become aware of any workplace risks or unsafe issues through either client or Support Worker contact/communication;
- Support Workers are required to cooperate with AQC management by conducting workplace safety reviews and reporting hazards and incidents;
- adopting safe work practices consistent with WH&S guidelines, and adhering to any documented procedures provided by their supervisor, Office Manager;
- participating in WH&S forums such as the WH&S committee;
- attending WH&S training and development as rostered via Teams – AQC Online Training Channel;
- refusing to undertake unsafe tasks. Worker's have the right to cease or refuse to carry out work if –
 - they have a reasonable concern that the work would expose them to a serious risk to health and safety from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.
 - A worker may also be directed to cease unsafe work by their Health and Safety Representative (HSR).
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety in the performance of their duties and in their interactions with other staff, with clients and with others;
- take reasonable care to ensure acts/omissions do not adversely affect others health and safety;

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- comply with reasonable instructions from the PCBU;
- ensure that health and safety is promoted;
- cooperate with the PCBU's WH&S policy and programs to ensure their own health and safety and the safety of others in the workplace; and
- take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety;
- take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- comply, so far as is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU to allow the PCBU to comply with their duties.
- ensure that management are made aware of unsafe conditions by:
 - verbally communicating unsafe conditions to their direct supervisor; and
 - submitting a written report using the WH&S hazard or incident reporting form.

Health and Safety Representatives are responsible for –

- representing workers in relation to work health and safety;
- monitoring the measures taken by the PCBU to meet their duties;
- investigating complaints from members of the work group;
- inquiring into risk to the health and safety of relevant workers;
- directing unsafe work to cease when necessary (if trained);
- issuing of provisional improvement notices when necessary (if trained).
- inspecting all or part of the workplace – at any time after giving notice;
- at any time without notice after an incident or where there is a serious and immediate or imminent risk to health and safety of a person;
- accompanying an inspector during an inspection;
- being present at an interview between a worker or a group of workers (with their consent) and an inspector or the PCBU;

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- requesting the establishment of a Health and Safety Committee;
- receiving information on the health and safety of workers – except personal or medical information (without the consent of the worker) unless the information cannot be used to identify the worker;
- requesting the assistance of another person where necessary eg union rep.

WH&S Committee Members are responsible for –

- facilitation of cooperation between the PCBU and workers in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure workers' health and safety;
- assisting in the development of health and safety standards, rules and procedures to be used and complied with in the workplace;
- providing input and advice in the development and maintenance of incident investigation/hazard reporting systems;
- reviewing all reports (hazard/incident/claims), collating statistical information and making recommendations to Management;
- contributing to the development of a safe working environment and safe systems of work;
- investigating WH&S risk exposures and attempting to resolve them;
- reviewing WH&S policies and procedures and making recommendations for improvements and/or further information;
- providing information sharing of Best Practice between staff.

1.5 Employee Assistance Program

Under the WH&S Act (2014) AQC accepts that it has a Duty of Care to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its employees while at work. The organisation seeks to achieve this by establishing and maintaining a work environment that promotes physical and psychological health.

AQC recognises that at times during an employee's career, circumstances may arise, either within or outside the work environment, which may affect work performance, adversely. In such situations, AQC accepts that it has a responsibility to assist employees to resolve their issues. This may include accessing appropriate guidance and counselling from qualified professionals.

Such support is intended to assist employees to resolve personal or work related problems and is not to be confused with grievance procedures and disciplinary measures. To access information relating to the Employee Assistance Program staff should ask to Human Resource Coordinator.