



Work Health and Safety

Director General Statement of Commitment

My commitment to a safe and healthy workplace

The Department of Communities (Communities) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment and maintaining the safety and health of all our staff, contractors and visitors. Workplace safety and health are beyond just a legal obligation – they are about making sure our staff, contractors and community feel safe and supported when at work and when visiting us.

Our vision

The department's vision is to create a safe workplace and to ensure that our ethos of 'People, Place, Home' is the basis of our decision-making and actions that relate directly to the safety, health and wellbeing of our staff.

Our values

Courage – employees are encouraged to be confident in making the right (and sometimes not easy) decision in relation to workplace safety and health and think creatively and positively in relation to problem solving through the process of consultation.

Respect – employees have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, fairness and equity in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Empathy – employees feel safe and valued as other people's perspectives are recognised and their individual professional and personal circumstances are appreciated.

Accountability – every employee is responsible for contributing to a safe workplace. Employees are accountable for their actions and understand that what they do (or do not do) has an impact on their own safety and that of others.

Trust – employees are entrusted to act professionally in the workplace and to adhere to their individual responsibility for maintaining a safe workplace.

Empowerment – employees are encouraged to be fit and healthy and empowered to be the best they can be.

Our strategy

Safety and health are everybody's responsibility, and practices can only be improved when we all work together. Everyone should feel confident to report matters and take steps to proactively minimise risks in our workplace.

In return myself and the leadership team commit to the following:

- creating and maintaining a positive safety culture that encourages and supports us all to apply relevant procedures and processes to protect ourselves and others from harm
- operating in accordance with occupational safety and health legislation the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984, Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996, Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981, Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 1982 and associated legislative instruments
- using the resources available to the sector, and others, to undertake an organisation-wide risk assessment and apply organisation specific procedures
- continuously improving our safety management system through monitoring, auditing and reviewing measurable targets, objectives and initiatives so we perform above minimum legislative requirements
- championing healthy and safe workplaces at the senior leadership level
- participating in inter-agency 'community of practice' relationships, where larger public sector agencies with dedicated safety, health and injury management staff help smaller agencies improve practices
- setting up a community of practice for safety, health and injury management in the agency, including holding an annual workplace safety and health forum within the agency
- providing health and safety support to our portfolio agencies
- providing and promoting resources, support and manager training so we can carry out our functions safely and achieve our safety and health outcomes
- adopting a best practice approach to injury management and return-to-work programs, with a focus on staff retention
- communicating with the workforce about the benefits of mentally healthy and safe workplaces, and encouraging a culture of hazard reporting with appropriate education and training
- promoting National Safety Month in October each year
- encouraging open, honest and effective consultation and communication between managers, staff and Safety and Health Representatives to achieve a common understanding of and resolution for all safety and health matters
- encouraging safety discussions at branch meetings (as a standing item)
- building an enduring reporting culture where risks, hazards and incidents are consistently identified, assessed, reported and investigated to identify root causes and appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrences

- fostering the development of and providing high level support to the Safety and Health Committee and elected safety and health representatives such that support and time is given to complete safety and health related tasks and action is taken to resolve reported safety and health matters in a timely and practicable manner
- promoting innovation and learning in developing the most effective and efficient ways to meet our safety, health and wellbeing responsibilities.

Our Responsibilities

I recognise that myself and my leadership team are **individually accountable** and **collectively responsible** for occupational safety and health in the workplace. Every employee has an important role in hazard identification and injury prevention, and all employees are encouraged to participate in improving standards of workplace safety, health and wellbeing. This commitment reinforces Communities' values, empowering our staff to collaborate and create pathways that enable the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.



Michelle Andrews

Director General

Department of Communities

Date: 3 September 2019