## Guideline to Conducting a Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Committee or forum

#### Health, safety and wellbeing consultation

#### Regular consultation with employees ensures that hazards are identified and appropriate controls are developed and implemented to manage the risk of harm. Establishing a formal Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Committee (Committee) or forum is one way to ensure that HSW consultation and communication mechanisms are in place and promote worker engagement in health, safety and wellbeing.

#### Role of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for facilitating the conversation and making sure that employees are heard on HSW matters that affect the workplace through effective worker engagement.

The Chair must be the person with [management or control of the workplace](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/safety/managing) (i.e. the Regional Director for regions; the Principal for a school; the senior manager for other workplaces). The Chair demonstrates their active leadership by consulting with employees, both formally and informally, on HSW matters.

The Chair is responsible for facilitating the analysis of HSW matters affecting the workplace and ensuring:

* all employees at the workplace are informed about when the Committee or forum is meeting and the process for submitting an agenda item for discussion;
* Committee meetings or forums are held at a time that enables broad participation (for example to include cleaners); and
* that all employees at the location have access to the minutes and operations of the Committee or forum (e.g. on the HSW noticeboard, either physical or virtual, that serves as a key source of information for all employees).

The Chair and Committee members should actively call for WHS matters for consideration by the Committee from all employees at the workplace.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the membership of the current registered Committee is updated in MyHR WHS annually or when there is a change to membership [Workspaces>Committee Meeting Management > Committee]. Note: Do not add a new Committee; [update the details of the current record](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/trainingdevelopment/Documents/update-myhr-whs-committee.pdf).

#### Refer to the Terms of Reference template available on the Department’s [Committees and consultation](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/safety/managing/committees) webpage for further information on committee operations, roles and responsibilities.

Meeting structure

The following guidelines broadly reflect the agenda template. Additional items can be added locally to reflect the needs of the workplace.

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| **Meeting opening** | |
| Welcome and apologies | The Chair:   * opens the meeting; * notes apologies; * notes proxies; * welcomes new members and makes introductions; and * confirms a quorum is present in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR).   A quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct the business of the Committee.  The ToR states the Chair (or Acting Chair) and 50% of members are to be present to form a quorum. |
| Acknowledgement of Country | The Chair facilitates the Acknowledgement of Country (or Welcome to Country).  For further information refer to: <https://indigenousportal.education.qld.gov.au/resources/protocols> |
| Declaration of conflict of interests | Conflicts of interest are mandatory for all committees to note and complete at each meeting.  The Chair must determine whether or not any members (including proxies) have a conflict of interest.  A conflict of interest is where a private interest can affect, or appear to affect, a person’s duty to serve the public interest. The term ‘private interest’ includes not only personal, professional or business interests that a member may have, but also the personal professional or business interests of the individuals or groups that a member associates with and may include relatives, friends or even rivals or enemies. For example, if a committee member stands to benefit from a decision made at the meeting to purchase a product or engage a tradesperson to undertake work.  For further information refer to: [conflict of interest](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/Procurement_Purchasing/Purchasingandprocurementinstructions/conflictofinterest). |
| Safety and wellbeing share | The Chair can invite members to ‘share’ a safety or wellbeing matter. While a ‘safety or wellbeing share’ can be informal and serve as an ice-breaker, the format for a safety share should follow the risk management process:   * identify the hazard; * outline and assess the risk posed by the hazard; * and outline the action (or controls) that were implemented to eliminate or minimise the risk of injury/illness.   A wellbeing share can follow the same structure as a safety share or be framed as a positive ‘good news’ story. |
| **Previous meeting** | |
| Endorse minutes | The Chair is responsible for ensuring that minutes are taken each meeting.  The Chair can delegate this task to another member.  Endorsement of the minutes may occur out-of-session but must be officially recorded as ‘endorsed’ during the next meeting.  Details of a meeting (including the endorsed minutes) must be [recorded within MyHR WHS](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/trainingdevelopment/Documents/myhr-whs-meetings.pdf) management system. Ensure “minutes” is included in the title of the uploaded document. [Workspaces>Committee Meeting Management > Meeting].  The endorsed minutes must be made available to all employees at the workplace. How this occurs may be determined locally. For Regional HSW Committees, a virtual noticeboard is one option. At a minimum, it is recommended that the minutes:   * are distributed to members; and * posted on the HSW noticeboard (either physical or electronic); and * provided to any person who holds a responsibility for actioning items external to the Committee; and * provided to the Secretariat of the Regional HSW Committee if there is a HSW item raised at a workplace/school Committee requiring escalation; and/or * provided to the Secretariat of the DoE Executive HSW Committee if there is a HSW item raised at a Regional HSW Committee requiring escalation. |
| Review Outcome Register (decisions/actions) | The Outcome Register (refer to Appendix A - Minutes template) acts as a central point in which to collate and track key decisions and actions arising from the Committee.  Use the Outcome Register as a central point to record:   * key decisions made by the Committee; * actions required to support the decision; * who is responsible for any required action; and * timeframes or due date.   The minutes from the previous meeting will contain the most up-to-date Outcome Register (minutes template - Appendix A). |
| Out-of-session items | Usually out-of-session items will be dealt with via email or other electronic means outside the formal meeting and will generally involve a single topic for decision or action.  The Chair provides an update on all out-of-session items and updates the Outcome Register with the decision or action (minutes template - Appendix A). |
| **Information from the HSW Executive Committee cascade** | |
| Refer to Committee packs and speaking notes. | Incoming information from the HSW Executive Committee (referred to as the Committee Pack) is to be tabled at the meeting and noted within minutes. The Committee packs include strategic themes, just-in-time information and critical incident learnings. Speaking notes are provided to assist discussion by the Chair. |
| Update on escalated issues (if applicable) | This item applies if the Committee has escalated an HSW issue for decision/action/advice.  *Workplace (including School) HSW Committee*  The Chair is responsible for checking the minutes of the Regional HSW Committee to determine the outcome agreed and update the members accordingly.  *Regional HSW Committee*  The Chair is responsible for checking the minutes of the DoE HSW Executive Committee to determine the outcome agreed and update the members accordingly. |
| **Performance review** | |
| Committees must maintain focus on completing all outstanding items from the Actions Register through clear allocation of responsibilities, through members.  Update the Outcome Register (minutes template - Appendix A) to note decisions / actions as required. | |
| Health, Safety and Wellbeing Scorecard *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | Review data and trends. |
| School HSW Committees  *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | Review registrations, meeting completion and frequency rates. |
| Annual Safety Assessment (ASA) | *Workplace (including School) HSW Committee*  Review the outcome/findings of the ASA and check in on the status of action items identified in the ASA Action Plan.  Ensure clear allocation of responsibilities for actions and support required.  Track all outstanding action items at each meeting with the aim of all actions being completed during the annual cycle.  Review emergent risks and document required actions.  *Regional HSW Committee*  Review completion rates.  Identify where support is needed.  Ensure clear allocation of responsibilities through members – especially where follow up with, or support of, a workplace/school is required. |
| Chemical management plan progress *(School HSW Committees only)* | Discuss progress to-date. Ensure clear allocation of responsibilities and related support required to achieve the elements of the plan and ongoing compliance activities. |
| Review and update MyHR WHS Location page  *\*excluding Health and Safety Representative/s* | Ensure the [Location page in MyHR WHS](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/Documents/set-up-your-location-screen.pdf) is checked and updates made to ensure information is current. All roles\* require current employee names to ensure automatic emails are correctly directed. |
| Injury management  *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | The Committee reviews injury management data in terms of trends e.g. physical injuries.  Confidentiality of workers must be maintained in all circumstances with the conversation focussed on the actual incident and associated trends. |
| WorkCover  *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | The Committee reviews WorkCover data and trends.  The Chair must ensure that data is de-identified to ensure confidentiality of workers who have sustained an injury/illness. |
| **Incident review** | |
| The Committee reviews incident information to identify trends and determine if hazards are appropriately addressed or if further actions need to be taken. Information (including incident [reports and graphs](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/trainingdevelopment/Documents/myhr-whs-reports-and-graphs.pdf)) can be drawn from MyHR WHS. This information can illustrate current trends and enable discussion and analysis.  Determine whether any HSW issues are to be escalated. An item may be escalated due to:   * its nature, extent or severity (even if the immediate issue can be resolved locally) of the hazard or risk. * a hazard that may exist in a number of workplaces/schools or regions and would be best managed at a regional or state level. * positive strategies/learnings may have an impact on other workplaces and contribute to shared best practice.   Complete minutes template - Appendix B. The template provides guidance as to the information to be provided to support the escalation. | |
| MyHR WHS incident information (e.g. incident entries since last meeting) | A summary report of incident records since the previous meeting will provide a basis for discussion.  The report can be downloaded from MyHR WHS; data must be de-identified.  The Committee discussion should involve:   * hazards identified as a result of the incident; * the potential for similar incidents to occur; * the controls that have been implemented; * the effectiveness of the controls; and * an outline of further controls that are required.   The Committee should discuss one incident in detail as a collaborative discussion.  The Committee should focus on identifying trends; especially where high frequency incidents are occurring involving a similar mechanism. For example, high frequency class 4 incidents (first aid) resulting from a trip hazard.  Determine whether any incidents are to be escalated through the HSW Committee structure because of their nature, extent, severity or relevance to a number of workplaces. |
| Significant incidents and actions taken | Specific focus should be given to classes 1, 2 and 3 incidents.  Review investigation report findings, recommendations and learnings.  The Committee discussion should involve:   * hazards identified as a result of the incident; * the potential for similar incidents to occur; * the controls that have been implemented; * the effectiveness of the controls; and * an outline of further controls that are required.   Determine whether any incidents should be escalated through the HSW Committee structure because of their nature, extent or severity even if the immediate issue can be resolved locally as this incident could occur across other workplaces. |
| Injury management data (new illness/injuries trends)  *(Workplace (including School) HSW Committee only)* | The Committee is to review trends in injury management data.  The Chair and RRTWC must ensure that data is de-identified to ensure confidentiality of employees who have sustained an injury/illness.  Confidentiality of employees must be maintained in all circumstances with the conversation focussed on the actual incident mechanism and associated trends. |
| **Hazard and risk review** | |
| A ***hazard*** is anything that has the ***potential to cause harm***.  ***Risk*** is the ***likelihood of the hazard occurring or the hazard causing harm***.  *For example, a broken door is a hazard. The risk of the hazard (broken door) causing harm is dependent on how many people come in contact with door (exposure) and other factors including the weight of the door and overall state of disrepair (likelihood).*  ***Everyone*** (including employees, parents/caregivers, community members) should be encouraged to identify and report hazards so the risks can be assessed and controls implemented to prevent incidents and injuries.  Items below identify activities and information that may have HSW considerations or implications. S  Significant risks specific to the workplace/school must be discussed. This includes risks associated with fixed workplace machinery (FWM) and other plant types; the operation of industrial and technologies design (ITD) workshops and/or other higher risk practical areas. The annual inspection of FWM (through the [Service Maintenance Program](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/facilities/asset-management/education-management/school-maintenance/Pages/service-maintenance.aspx)) and required actions are also to be discussed. | |
| Inspection and maintenance outcomes | Review and discuss any inspections that have occurred. For example, playground equipment, chemical storage, emergency eye wash facilities etc. |
| Escalated risks from Workplace (including School) HSW Committees  *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | Review and discuss any risks that have been formally escalated from a workplace/school HSW committee. |
| Audit reports | Review and discuss any HSW matters arising from internal audit reports and how matters will be addressed. |
| Infrastructure projects | Discuss planning and design for new facilities, plant and equipment, large and small scale projects, construction, refurbishment projects with a view to ensuring HSW risks are addressed before commencement and during the project. |
| Procurement | Discuss upcoming purchases that have potential health, safety or wellbeing implications.  Ensure that a thorough pre-purchase risk assessment is completed to ensure that an item does not pose a short-or-long-term risk to health or safety.  Discussion can support a holistic and comprehensive review of potential risks and benefits.  Ensure that items comply with established departmental SOAs or Australian Standards (AS/NZS). |
| Risk register | Review and update hazards, including psychosocial risks, based on discussions. Risk registers may be kept in local systems or MyHR WHS. |
| **Regulatory / Legal issues** | |
| Discuss hazards identified as a result of any enforcement actions (improvement notices, prohibition notices, or any other legal matters) to determine if there is potential for similar interventions to occur again or in other workplaces. | |
| Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) interaction including enforcement notices issued | The Chair must ensure that the Committee has details of any enforcement notices issued to the workplace.  The Chair is responsible for ensuring that improvement notices are reviewed and progressed to completion. [Is Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) satisfied that the hazard has been addressed?]  Notices are to be escalated through the HSW Committee structure (complete minutes template - Appendix B) and depending upon the nature of the notice, the Committee might seek further direction (advice, investigation, a decision). |
| Common law claims  *(Regional HSW Committee only)* | The Committee reviews common law claim trends.  The Chair must ensure that the confidentiality of workers is maintained. |
| **HSW programs and initiatives update** | |
| Review and discuss HSW project work being undertaken as well as other proactive programs.  Drive and demonstrate continuous HSW improvement across the workplace and/or region. | |
| Wellbeing Program | Review progress to-date on all actions outlined in the Staff / Regional Wellbeing Program. |
| Other HSW initiatives | Discuss HSW initiatives that fall outside the formal Wellbeing Program.  Discuss upcoming events to be held at the workplace/school or in the region and ensure that health, safety and wellbeing will be proactively managed.  Discuss employee training, induction processes etc. |
| **New business (with notice)** | |
| Committee members should be encouraged to provide an update in relation any HSW matter aligned with their specialist role and which has not been tabled already during the meeting.  Provide agenda items for discussion to the Secretariat prior to the meeting. | |
| Health and safety representative/s (HSR) *– must be elected and trained* | New business with notice – that has not already been tabled. |
| Health and safety advisor/s (HSA) or Senior Health and Safety Consultant (SHSC) | New business with notice – that has not already been tabled. |
| Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator (RRTWC) or Senior Injury Management Consultant (SIMC) | New business with notice – that has not already been tabled. |
| Other Committee members | New business with notice – that has not already been tabled. |
| **Other business** | |
| Discuss HSW matters raised by employees, students, parents/caregivers, members of the public, work experience students and/or any other person that has not already been tabled.  Items that do not fall under any of previous agenda can be raised as general business (e.g. updates, sharing of positive strategies or questions). | |

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| **Escalation of issues through the HSW Committee structure** | |
| The Chair should review the items discussed by the Committee in order to determine if any items need to be escalated.  Reviewing the Outcome Register (see minutes template - Appendix A) will assist with this process.  *Workplace (including School) HSW Committee*  Where a workplace/school has a HSW issue that cannot be managed at their local level and through normal management channels, the workplace is encouraged to raise the issue with the region, formally through the minutes.  This is a formal process. Once the escalation is approved by the Chair, the information for escalation is provided to the Secretariat of the Regional HSW Committee.  The escalation template (see minutes template - Appendix B) facilitates this process.  *Regional HSW Committee*  Where a region has an HSW issues that cannot be managed by the region or through normal management channels, the region is encouraged to raise the issue with the Department of Education’s HSW Executive Committee (HSWEC) formally through the minutes.  This is a formal process. Once the escalation is approved by the Chair, the information for escalation is provided to the Secretariat of the HSWEC; the Chair approves the item for inclusion on the agenda.  The escalation template (see minutes template - Appendix B) facilitates this process. | |
| **Meeting finalisation** | |
| Review actions to be taken | The Chair should summarise the meeting and clarify with the Secretariat (or minute-taker) any item that requires further information.  Ensure that all members are aware of any tasks that have been given; review the Outcome Register (minutes template - Appendix A). |
| Next meeting | Meetings are to be held once per school term. It is recommended that the Committee Chair schedule meetings one year in advance to encourage the prioritisation of the HSW Committee’s importance for worker engagement.  *Workplace (including School) HSW Committee*  Workplaces/schools are to hold their meeting by the end of week 5 each term.  This will allow sufficient time for the escalation of unresolved issues to the Regional HSW Committee for consideration.  *Regional HSW Committee*  Regions are to hold their meeting weeks 6 - 8 inclusively each term.  This will allow sufficient time for the escalation of unresolved issues to the DoE HSW Executive Committee for consideration.  The DoE HSW Executive Committee meets in week 10 each term. |
| Meeting close | The Chair closes the meeting and records the closing time. |