



Heather Nash
Industrial
Relations Advisor

Workwatch

Occupational Health and Safety Laws

In recent months significant steps have been taken in the move towards adoption of harmonised occupational health and safety laws (OH&S) across Australian states and territories. This process was begun in late 2007 and resulting draft legislation will be submitted to the Workplace Relations Ministers Council in December for final consideration.

Basic features of proposals to date are:

- Widening of responsibilities for workplace duty of care. Primary duty of care will be imposed on any person conducting a business or undertaking and will include self-employed people and, in some cases, volunteers who will be deemed to have responsibility for their own health and safety while engaged in work. The duty will also extend to coverage of customers and visitors to a business undertaking. The aim of this provision will be to ensure that OHS legislation applies to all hazards and risks arising for conduct of work.
- Primary duty of care will be qualified by a test of 'reasonable practicability'. It is proposed that this test will include giving weight to likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring; degree of harm that might result; what a responsible person knows or ought reasonably know about the hazard or risk and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk; and cost of elimination or minimisation.
- Aside from the objective of increasing safety standards in workplaces, the harmonisation of these will provide greater certainty and consistency for enterprises conducting business in more than one state or territory.
- For employers, contractors, employees, supervisors and other parties information on the move to harmonised OH&S laws is at www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/swa/ModelLegislation
- It is intended that the nationally consistent laws will have been enacted by December 2011.
- In the Australian Capital Territory the new Work Safety Act came into force on 1 October 2009. This legislation incorporates some of the measures proposed for national laws, including widening of the duty of care for the workplace. www.legislation.act.gov.au
- Training for OH&S workplace representatives
- Some jurisdictions now require workplace OH&S representatives to be trained in safety issues and in consultation. The relevant courses are offered by a range of providers and are normally taught over a four-day period. For further information concerning recognised courses, refer to the WorkCover website in your state or territory.

Teacher librarians: salaries

In the ACT, the Enterprise Agreement which includes the agreed 6% payrise over three years has been lodged with Fair Work Australia. At the time of writing this article, the Agreement was awaiting approval. Updated information is at the ACT Department of Education website at www.det.act.gov.au/employment and at the Australian Education Union website at www.aeuact.asn.au. When salary scales are finalised, they will be published on the Employment pages of the ALIA website.

In Queensland, the Industrial Relations Commission has granted teachers an interim 4% pay rise backdated to 1 July 2009. This falls short of the 5.45% sought by the Queensland Teachers Union and the campaign relating to salaries and other issues continues. Salary levels based on the interim pay rise are set out at www.alia.org.au/employment/salary.scales/teacher-librarians.html

The long-running campaign by teachers in South Australia has moved to arbitration, as the most recent Enterprise Agreement expired in March 2008. Updates on the website of the South Australian branch of the Australian Education Union: www.aeus.asn.au

Heather Nash
heather.nash@alia.org.au



Australian
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2010 Election of ALIA Vice-president and three Directors

Call for nominations

Nominations are called for ALIA Vice-President (President-elect) and three positions on the Board of Directors of ALIA as incorporated under Corporations Law.

The Vice-President (President-elect) and three positions: (two positions will be elected by the membership at large and one position will be elected by institutional members) on the Board of Directors.

Nominees must be personal members of the Association and will represent the interests of the organisation as a whole rather than those of a particular constituency.

The Vice-President and directors will assume office at the Board meeting following the Annual General Meeting in May 2010.

The Vice-President (President-elect) will assume the Presidency following the Annual General Meeting of the Association in 2011 until the 2012 Annual General Meeting. The term of office of Directors will be until the Annual General Meeting in 2012.

Nominations must be in writing and must be signed by two financial members of the Association and include the consent in writing of nominee. Nomination forms must be accompanied by a current curriculum vitae which provides full details of academic and professional qualifications and a 100-word statement of professional concerns. The curriculum vitae should be arranged under headings of present position, previous positions, and professional activities. A standard colour portrait photograph must be included.

Nomination forms are available from ALIA National Office or via the ALIA website.

Nominations close at 5:00 pm AEDT on Wednesday 13 January 2010 and should be sent to the ALIA Executive Director, P.O. Box 6335, Kingston ACT 2604; email sue.hutley@alia.org.au, or fax 026282 2249.

Form and information available from <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/elections/2010/>

