



ACT
Government

Chief Minister and Cabinet

Government Response
to the
Review of OHS Liaison Officer Funding

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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

TO THE

REVIEW OF OHS LIAISON OFFICER FUNDING

**Presented by
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Minister for Industrial Relations**

Government Response

to the

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Introduction

Since 1 October 2003, ongoing funding has been provided under an appropriation to assist Unions ACT to meet the cost of an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Liaison Officer position to provide advice and training in respect of safety at work. Funding has been appropriated through the Budget and monies acquitted as part of normal financial management procedures.

In hearings before the Public Accounts Committee into the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate 2009-10 Annual Report, the Committee asked a number of questions relating to a OHS Liaison Officer position that is attached to Unions ACT and is funded by the ACT Government. The Committee asked that the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate, in conjunction with the ACT Work Safety Council, undertake a review of this position, including reviewing 'the effectiveness of the service provided by Unions ACT'. The Government agreed to undertake the review.

In September 2011, the ACT Work Safety Council asked the Chair of the Council to conduct a review of the OHS Liaison Position. This involved canvassing a range of stakeholders and seeking submissions from interested parties. The Government welcomes the findings of the review report and wish to thank the Chair for carrying out the review.

Recommendation 1

It be noted that the Review found that the activities and performance of OHS Liaison Officer are meeting the objectives and outcomes expected by the ACT Government.

Response

Noted.

Recommendation 2

In future, the holder of the position of OHS Liaison Officer with UnionsACT keep quantitative records and qualitative information which specifically relate to the activities and performance of that role and are separate from the records and information collected on the activities and performance of WorkWatch.

Response

Agree – The Government is currently amending guidance material to assist the holder of the OHS Liaison Officer position and Unions ACT to report on the activities of the OHS Liaison Officer in order to enhance and formalise current reporting requirements in line with this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

A formal funding agreement be put in place as soon as is feasible between the ACT Government and UnionsACT setting out the expectations of the ACT Government regarding:

- a. the roles and responsibilities of the OHS Liaison Officer;*
- b. the objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the OHS Liaison Officer; and*
- c. the form and frequency of reporting by the OHS Liaison Officer to the ACT Government;*

Response

Agree – The Government is currently enhancing the existing funding arrangement between the ACT Government and Unions ACT for the OHS Liaison Officer position to ensure continuous improvement in terms of accountability, in line with this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

Annual meetings take place between officials of the ACT Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate and senior officers of UnionsACT to ensure that both sides have a shared understanding of:

- a. the role and responsibilities of the OHS Liaison Officer position; and*
- b. the activities and outcomes achieved by the OHS Liaison Officer.*

Response

Agree – The Government, through the Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate regularly meets with Unions ACT but agrees to hold an additional meeting with senior officials of Unions ACT at the start of each financial year to ensure both sides have a shared understanding of the role and achievements of the OHS Liaison Officer position.

Recommendation 5

The next review of the performance and effectiveness of the OHS Liaison Officer position will take place in the final quarter of 2014, and, subject to the results of that review, the position will be renewed for three years from the beginning of 2015.

Response

Agree – The Government is keen to continuously improve transparency and accountability in this regard and agrees to undertake another review in 2014 and, subject to the results of that review, may renew the OHS Liaison Officer position for a further three years commencing from the beginning of 2015.