

Manufacturing Industry Sector Standing Committee

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The Manufacturing Industry Standing Committee (the Committee) convened on 11 July 2024. Ms Amy Sproule, the Meeting Chair, welcomed members and guests to the Committee's second meeting.

The Chair informed that the Work Health and Safety Board (WHS Board) had endorsed the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Chair facilitated discussion on the heat stress information scan, a matter referred by the WHS Board. The committee discussed the various worker demographics and environmental factors crucial for developing a comprehensive heat stress code and recommended WHS Board prioritise the development of a heat stress code. The Committee emphasised the use of proactive measures such as alerts, campaigns, and advertising to promote available heat stress tools to engage industry stakeholders whilst a code is being developed.

Mr. Sebastian Bielen, Director of Data and Evaluation Services, joined the meeting to demonstrate the Power BI dashboard developed for Board and Committee data reports. Developed as an alternative to paper-based reports, the dashboard offers enhanced functionality with drill-down options and cross-industry data for easy comparison and reference. Efforts are underway to grant access to Committee members. The Committee members advised the value in having reactive and proactive visit data on the dashboard, similar to that in Safe Work Australia data reports and also sought clarification on access scope, conditions, and further distribution of dashboard data.

Whilst discussing agenda items for noting, the Committee expressed interest in staying informed about any new products which replace engineered stone, and their associated risks. The Committee discussed some inadequacies of the updated Australian standards for welding work. Concerns were raised by the Committee on paid access for Australian Standards, in general and particularly for slips, trips and falls, and it being a deterrent for the industries' compliance to legislative standards.

The Committee noted, to the WHS Board, disappointment towards 18 months delay in appointment of industry sector standing Committees and missed consultation opportunities from the industry stakeholders. The Committee advised the WHS Board need to monitor the quantity and quality of information provided to the Committee, considering the mandatory requirement to pre-read all papers.

The Committee reviewed its draft forward plan and further development to focus on critical issues in the industry.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 10 October 2024.