Foreword and Acknowledgements

Core Body of Knowledge for the Generalist OHS Professional

Second Edition, 2021

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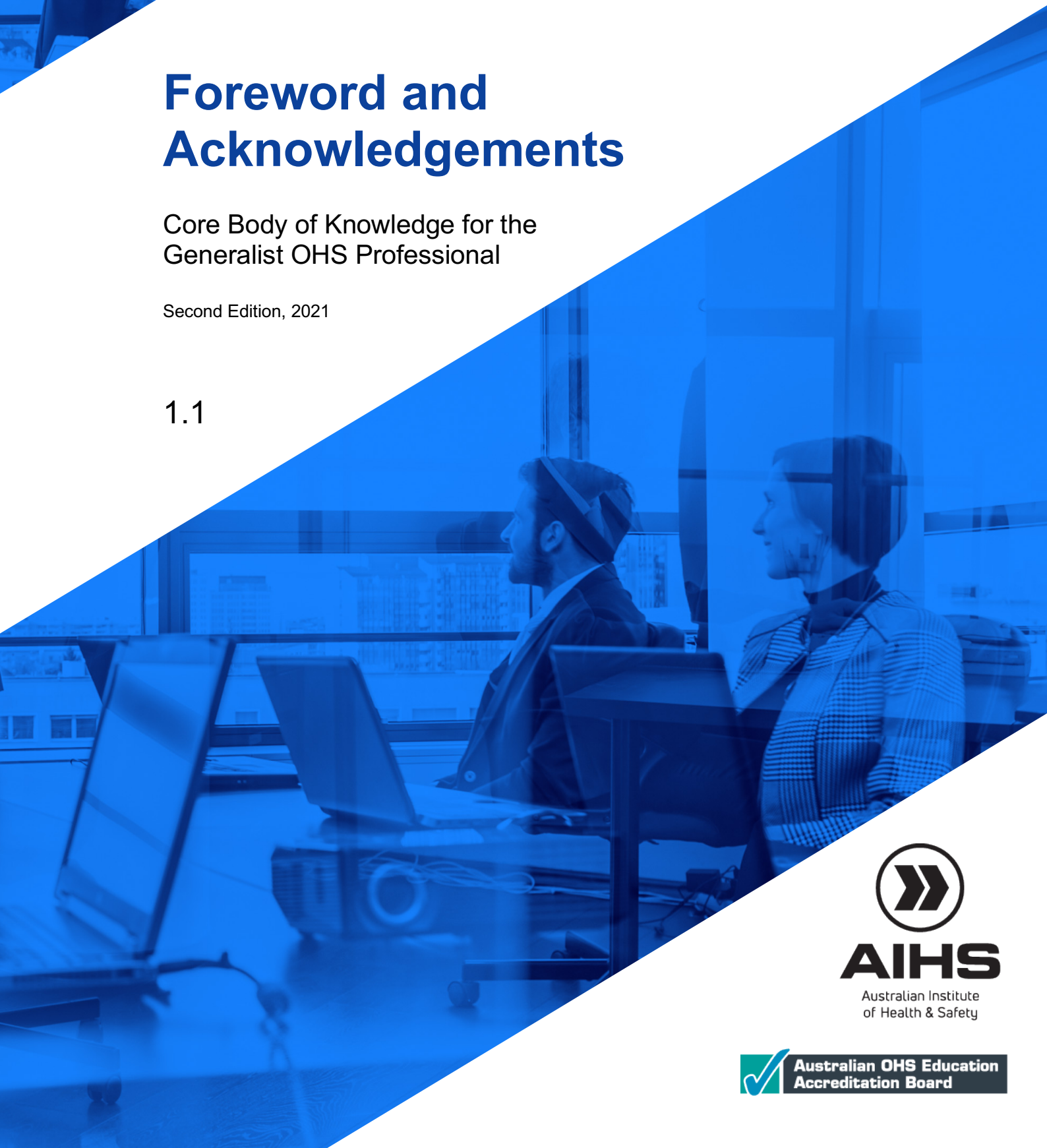

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Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board

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The Australian Institute of Health & Safety (AIHS) financially and materially supports the *OHS Body of Knowledge* as a key requirement of the profession.

The *OHS Body of Knowledge* forms the basis of the AIHS OHS capability agenda and informs the other platforms of the agenda: education assurance through accreditation; role clarity, capability assurance through individual certification and continuing professional development.

Thus, the *OHS Body of Knowledge* is strategically important to the AIHS and vital for the profession. (www.aihs.org.au)

The *OHS Body of Knowledge* provides a framework for OHS professional education and continuing professional development. As the body managing accreditation of OHS professional education, the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board influences, supports and monitors the *OHS Body of Knowledge*, and has a major role in the development and review of individual chapters to ensure that the quality and evidence base reflects current OHS research and leading-edge thinking, and so provides a suitable standard for OHS education and professional development.

www.ohseducationaccreditation.org.au

The first edition (2012 of the OHS Body of Knowledge was an outcome of the OHS Body of Knowledge project funded by a grant from WorkSafe Victoria and overseen by the Health and Safety Professionals Alliance (HASPA). The Technical Panel responsible for developing the conceptual framework for the OHS Body of Knowledge and for selecting the contributing authors and peer-reviewers comprised representatives from the Safety Institute of Australia, Latrobe University, RMIT University and the then University of Ballarat.

Safe Work Australia subsequently funded the development of a further four chapters.

The ongoing development of new chapters and the updating of existing chapters is funded by the Australian Institute of Health & Safety drawing on a range of income sources.

Dedication

This OHS Body of Knowledge is dedicated to all those who die, are injured or whose health suffers as a result of their work activities, and to their families and others affected by these deaths, injuries and illnesses*. It is dedicated also to those OHS professionals, OHS practitioners and others whose work and life passion is the improvement of safety and health conditions in the workplace and who believe that work should be a positive life influence rather than a source of harm.

*The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that 531,800 people experienced a work-related injury or illness in 2013-14[1] while for the same year Safe Work Australia recorded 106,656 compensation claims for serious work-related injuries or illnesses[2] and 188 deaths resulting from work-related traumatic injury[3]. While estimates of the cost of injury depend on the statistic modeling, Safe Work Australia has estimated the total economic cost of work related injury to the Australian economy for the 2012–13 financial year at $61.8 billion, representing 4.1 per cent of GDP for the same period.[4]

[1] ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics). (June, 2014). 6324.0 – Work-Related Injuries, Australia, JUL2013to June 2014. Canberra, ACT. Retrieved from http://www.abs.gov.au

[2] Safe Work Australia. (2016). Australian Workers Compensation Statistics. (p.10. Retrieved from http://www.swa.gov.au.

[3] Safe Work Australia. (2015). Work-related Traumatic Injury Fatalities. (p.v). Retrieved from http://www.swa.gov.au

[4] Safe Work Australia. (2015). The Cost of Work-related Injury and Illness for Australian Employers, Workers and the Community, 2012-13. (p.3). Retrieved from http://www.swa.gov.au

Edition 1

2012 with further chapters in 2014 and 2015

STATEMENT FROM WORKSAFE VICTORIA

WorkSafe Victoria is dedicated to improving the health and safety of workers. As part of this commitment we strive to ensure workplaces have access to the most up to date strategic, evidence based occupational health and safety advice through suitably qualified OHS professionals.

The Safety Institute of Australia (SIA), in collaboration with industry and health and safety professional bodies, is now able to present this body of knowledge, providing consistent standards to guide OHS educators and professionals.

This work leads the way to consistent education for OHS professionals through accreditation of tertiary courses and is a credit to the extensive knowledge contributed by OHS educators and experts from around Australia. The accreditation process will play a significant role in both raising the standard of professional OHS advice and giving employers great confidence when engaging OHS expertise.

I would particularly like to thank the team from the SIA for their dedication and hard work, the Technical Panel for contributing their knowledge and coveted time to this important project, and the Health and Safety Professionals Alliance (HaSPA) that steered the project. Most importantly I acknowledge the significant contributions of the chapter authors. Without their work the Body of Knowledge could not have been written.

SIA and all parties involved can all be extremely proud of this piece of work and the collaborative spirit in which it was created. In developing these standards for education, SIA has achieved an acknowledged world first and generated much international interest. I have no doubt it will be of huge benefit to the OHS profession and as a result, the safety of workers.

Greg Tweedly
Chief Executive
WorkSafe Victoria, 2012

OHS Body of Knowledge Technical Panel

The Technical Panel established by the Health and Safety Professionals Alliance (HaSPA) was responsible for developing the conceptual framework of the OHS Body of Knowledge and for selecting contributing authors and peer-reviewers. Members of the Technical Panel were not remunerated.

The Technical Panel comprised representatives of:

Members of the Technical Panel were:

Pam Pryor (SIA) (Chair)

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Susan Leggett (University of Ballarat) (part)

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WorkSafe Victoria

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Health and Safety Professionals Alliance (HaSPA)

HaSPA as the official 'owner' of the project provided high level direction and gave regular feedback on progress reports.

Safety Institute of Australia

The ***Safety Institute of Australia*** was not only the contract holder and responsible for financial governance but provided resources such as meeting and teleconference facilities. The SIA also coordinated arrangements for engagements session and consultative processes.

Chair of the Technical Panel

Pam Pryor as chair of the Technical Panel liaised with authors and peer reviewers during writing of the Body of Knowledge also undertaking an editorial function directed to chapter layout and support for contributing authors.

Project Administration

Sally Bennett of Enhance Solutions undertook project management and administration together with workshop facilitation. Her expert professional advice was invaluable.

Editorial

Dr Anne Statham PhD, BBus, MBus(Comm) was the academic editor. Anne's editorial support went beyond the normal scope of the editorial role and the Technical Panel wishes to acknowledge their appreciation for her commitment to the task. As the respective authors for each chapter and the Chair of the Technical Panel had final chapter approval, any errors or inconsistencies are theirs.

Leo Ruschena provided considerable editorial and technical support in developing early drafts of some chapters and in the final production

Graphics

Graphics were developed or re-drawn by ***Laura Kelly*** of Rewire Group Pty Ltd.

Consultative Processes

Workshops and focus groups conducted as part of the OHS Body of Knowledge development process included:

- A two-day workshop attended by 40 OHS educators from throughout Australia
- SIA College of Fellows Professional Reference Group convened for the project
- Eight workshops conducted in all states and the ACT attended by 137 OHS professionals
- Focus groups conducted as part of developing the Model of OHS practice, involving approximately 30 OHS professionals.

While participants in these events are too numerous to name individually, the Technical Panel is appreciative of their time and interest and values their input.

Contributing Authors

The Technical Panel selected authors on the basis of their demonstrated, specialist expertise. Contributing authors were not remunerated; they wrote the chapters in their own time as part of their contributions to the OHS profession and to workplace health and safety. Contributing authors for the first edition of the of the OHS Body of Knowledge and their position at the time are listed below.

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The peer-review process is vital to the quality and rigour of the content of the OHS Body of Knowledge. The OHS Body of Knowledge Technical Panel acknowledge those who committed their time and expertise to provide thoughtful and constructive feedback as part of the drafting of the chapters. The Technical Panel is appreciative of the input provided by the peer reviewers listed below along with those few who preferred to remain anonymous.

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From the Chair of the Technical Panel

As Patrick Hudson clearly demonstrated in his 2010 Dr Eric Wigglesworth Memorial Lecture on *Rethinking Safety*, “OHS is not rocket science, it's much harder”. While recognising that everybody has a stake, and therefore a role, in workplace health and safety one of the objectives of the OHS Body of Knowledge is to support and encourage evidence-based practice by OHS professionals.

The development of the OHS Body of Knowledge has been a bit like giving birth. There has been a long gestation period with some challenges along the way; the delivery took longer than expected; and, while the outcome has been very gratifying, this is just the beginning. There will a maturation process requiring nurturing by many people and caring custodianship.

The OHS Body of Knowledge, 2012, is not intended to be a definitive statement, fixed in time. Rather it should be subject to continual reinterpretation and evolution as people engage with it, apply it, and extend it by research. Therefore this is the beginning of the discussion; a discussion that should occur on a national and international basis. It is proposed that this discussion will be facilitated by:

- An interactive web site facilitating evidence-based comment and input
- Workshops conducted in Australia with specialists and practicing OHS professionals to test and interpret the content of specific chapters and to clarify the scope of content in terms of the role of the generalist OHS professional
- Extension of these workshops to include international specialists; also with some workshops being held in other countries as part of the SIA’s involvement with the International Network of Safety and Health Professional Organizations (INSHPO).

As with any work of such vast scope and compiled from the input of so many there will be those who think we have not got it quite right. I call on those people to be part of the discussion.

The OHS Body of Knowledge is just one part of the OHS Body of Knowledge project that has informed the establishment of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board to accredit OHS professional education programs and the creation of a certification process for generalist OHS professionals.

The OHS Body of Knowledge Technical Panel has been on quite a journey over the last three years, one that has forced us to think about our approach to and understanding of OHS in general and some aspects of OHS in particular. I encourage all OHS professionals to embark on a similar journey, to engage with the Body of Knowledge and in constructive discussion about the content. I also implore all OHS professionals to explore the scope of their work and the links with professionals in other OHS disciplines and work together to optimise workplace health and safety for all Australians.

While many people are recognised in the Acknowledgements I would personally like to thank all those who have contributed to the project and assisted me personally: the Technical Panel who tolerated my sometimes pedantic approach; the many authors and peer reviewers who I chased and sometimes nagged, Anne Statham the editor, the SIA, and of course Clarke Martin and his colleagues at WorkSafe Victoria. There has been a great commitment by many people and I think we have a really worthwhile result. Now let the discussion begin.

Pam Pryor BSc.BEd.GDipOHS.FSIA
Chair OHS Body of Knowledge Technical Panel, 2012

Edition 2

As at April 2021

Including new chapters and chapter revisions

Acknowledgements

Management and Development

Pam Pryor as Manager OHS BoK Development, Pam is instrumental in the conception of individual chapters, she project-manages the development of the chapters including liaison with technical panels, authors, peer reviewers and the editor; also undertaking a drafting and editorial function as required.

Editorial

Dr Anne Statham PhD, BBus, MBus(Comm) provides ongoing academic editing for each chapter to ensure consistency of approach, readability and rigour in referencing. Anne's editorial support goes beyond the normal scope of the editorial role and all involved in the OHS BoK express their appreciation for her commitment to the task. As the respective authors for each chapter and the Manager OHS BoK Development have final chapter approval, any errors or inconsistencies are theirs.

Graphics

Penny Toth of the Australia Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS) has taken on the role of developing the graphics for the chapters and we appreciate having the in-house service.

Collaboration partners

Australian Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS)

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International Network of Safety and Health Professional Organizations (INSHPO)

INSHPO is the global voice for the occupational safety and health profession and acts as a forum for international collaboration among professional organisations to improve safety and health at work. INSHPO started from an appreciation that occupational safety and health issues and concerns are not limited by national borders. With the increasing worldwide distribution of products and provision of services, the widespread migration of workers, and the conduct of international corporate activities, almost every issue that occupational safety and health professionals face is global in scope.

Project partners

Australian New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM)

The Australian New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM) is the professional society for those who practice or have an interest in the fields of occupational medicine, occupational nursing and workplace health more generally. The society seeks to advance the knowledge, practice and standing of occupational health by providing opportunities for professional development, networking and partnerships.

Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP)

The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP) sets certification standards for the occupational health and safety profession. The BCRSP administers the CRSP® and CRST certification schemes, and certificants are dedicated to the principles of health and safety, and are required to adhere to the *Rules of Professional Practice (Code of Ethics)*

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA)

The HFESA vision is "People-centred environments, products and systems for all". HFESA works to achieve this vision by: delivering quality and accessible professional development and networking programmes; continually improving professional standards; representing and lobbying government and industry on issues relevant to ergonomics and human factors in Australia; promoting the value of professional ergonomics and human factors to industry, business, government, and the community: and partnering with relevant key professional bodies, educational facilities and industry to promote both research and the quality of application of ergonomics and human factors in Australia.

Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) Safety Centre (ISC)

The IChemE Safety Centre (ISC) is a not-for-profit industry-led organisation with a vision to be a global go-to organisation for process safety benchmarking, sharing of best practice and education, and be a forum for developing solutions to common problems. The collaboration with the OHS Body of Knowledge fits with ISC strategic direction to maintain close connections with other like-minded organisations and set the benchmark for process safety across industry and academia.

Risk Engineering Society

The Risk Engineering Society actively contributes to the effective management of risks in the workplace and in the community by collecting and disseminating information on all aspects of risk engineering, organising technical meetings and conferences, and liaising with interested organisations. They place special focus on risk issues associated with construction, design, safe plant operation and management.

Consultative Processes

Development of recent chapters has included the input of topic specific technical panels. Members of the technical panels are not remunerated and give of their time and expertise as part of their contribution to OHS and to the profession.

Depending on the chapter, other consultative processes may include scoping workshops of focus groups to test chapter drafts.

Contributing Authors

Many of the authors who contributed to Edition 1 also contributed to Edition 2 by reviewing and updating their original chapter and/or authoring new chapters.

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