

**A Case Study of Policy and Practice in Occupational Health  
and Safety in South Australia**

**Grant Dewar**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education (Honours)  
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## **Declaration**

I, Grant Malcolm Dewar, hereby declare that the material in this dissertation is original and, contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University of Tasmania or any other Institution except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the dissertation and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of this dissertation.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date 5 July 2005

Name Grant Malcolm Dewar

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A CASE STUDY OF POLICY AND PRACTICE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA .....	i
DECLARATION .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	1
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	2
CHAPTER ONE	
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	3
Introduction.....	3
Context of the Study.....	4
The Need for the Study.....	9
Statement of the Problem.....	10
Purpose of the Study.....	10
Research Questions .....	10
Assumptions Underpinning the Study.....	10
Research Design .....	11
The Significance of the Study.....	11
Limitation of the Study.....	12
Researcher Bias .....	12
Definition of Terms .....	13
Summary .....	14
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15
Introduction.....	15
Adult Learning and Training Packages .....	16
Trends in Occupational Health and Safety .....	26
Management and OHS Practice .....	30
OHS Practitioner Training .....	37
Safety Improvement .....	40
Summary .....	44

CHAPTER THREE	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	46
Introduction.....	46
Permission to Conduct the Study .....	47
Research Design .....	47
Defining the Population.....	50
Data Gathering Instruments Selected for the Study.....	53
Design of Data Gathering Instruments .....	53
A. <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	53
B. <i>Semi-Structured Interviews</i> .....	58
C. <i>Document analysis</i> .....	59
Trialling .....	63
Administration of Data Gathering Instruments.....	64
A. <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	64
B. <i>Semi-structured Interviews</i> .....	64
Data Analysis .....	65
A. <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	65
B. <i>Semi- structured interview</i> .....	66
C. <i>Document Analysis</i> .....	66
Validity .....	66
Reliability and Dependability .....	67
Triangulation.....	68
Summary .....	68
CHAPTER FOUR	
RESULTS .....	70
Introduction.....	70
Research Question One: What strategies do OHS practitioners utilise to implement OHS policy? .....	70
Management Support.....	71
OHS Planning .....	75
OHS Prevention Strategies .....	79
Characteristics of Within-group Responses.....	83
Summary for Research Question One .....	92
Research Question Two: How do managers in work-place settings perceive OHS policy and practice? .....	94
Management Support.....	95
OHS Planning .....	97
OHS Prevention Strategies .....	99

Summary of Research Question Two.....	100
Research Question Three: Are the strategies employed by OHS practitioners congruent with OHS policy? .....	102
Management Support.....	104
OHS Planning .....	108
OHS Prevention Strategies .....	108
Summary of Research Question Three.....	109
Summary .....	110
CHAPTER FIVE	
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	111
Introduction.....	111
OHS Policy Implementation .....	111
Perceptions of Managers: OHS Policy and Practice .....	117
OHS Policy and OHS Practice.....	120
Conclusions.....	122
Suggestions for Future Research.....	124
REFERENCES.....	126
APPENDICES .....	132
Appendix A Letter to Commissioner for Public Employment Seeking Permission to Undertake the Study .....	133
Appendix B Information Sheet For Questionnaire Participants Questionnaire of OHS practitioners.....	136
Appendix C Information Sheet for Semi-structured Interviews, Work–place Managers Statement of Informed Consent, Work-place Managers Schedule of Questions: Semi-structured Interview .....	142
Appendix D OHS Practitioner Responses to Open-ended Question.....	146
Appendix E Transcript of Semi-structured Interviews of Work-place Managers .	150

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Importance of OHS Policy characteristic -mean rank order.....	71
Table 2a:	The Chief Executive strongly supports OHS.....	72
Table 2b:	I am able to report directly to my Chief Executive officer on OHS matters of importance .....	72
Table 2c:	Chief Executive support is irrelevant to the success of OHS policy implementation .....	72
Table 2d:	I am unable to involve senior management in the management of OHS .....	72
Table 2e:	OHS is seldom discussed at executive meetings .....	73
Table 2f:	OHS issues are competently dealt with by management .....	73
Table 3a:	I am able to take a leadership role in my agency .....	73
Table 3b:	Union consultation is not relevant to the development of policy .....	73
Table 3c:	OHS has adequate budget support .....	74
Table 3d:	OHS legislation is used by managers in their operational decision-making.....	74
Table 4a:	Meetings (frequency, time and cost) – mean rank order.....	74
Table 4b:	Work with external agencies (frequency, time and cost) – mean rank order .....	74
Table 5:	Importance of OHS characteristic – mean rank order.....	76
Table 6a:	Performance management should be related to OHS preventative approaches .....	76
Table 6b:	My organisation rewards good performance in OHS.....	76
Table 6c:	Non-compliance with OHS is not easily identifiable in my agency .....	77
Table 6d:	Self-insurance guidelines are poorly integrated into my agency’s operations.....	77
Table 6e:	Positive performance indicators are used to facilitate OHS policy implementation .....	77
Table 6f:	My agency has clear means to identify gaps in policy implementation....	77
Table 7a:	Development of OHS policy - mean rank order .....	78
Table 7b:	Policy implementation – mean rank order.....	78
Table 7c:	Audit activities – mean rank order .....	78
Table 8:	Importance of OHS Policy Characteristic– mean rank order .....	79
Table 9a:	There is strong resistance to OHS best-practice .....	80
Table 9b:	My agency consistently adopts OHS best-practice.....	80
Table 9c:	OHS practitioners are involved in policy-making for work-place operations.....	80

Table 9d: As an OHS practitioner, I am utilised appropriately for prevention of injury .....	81
Table 9e: As an OHS practitioner I am involved in early intervention in injury management .....	81
Table 9f: As an OHS practitioner, I am able to undertake wide spread consultation on OHS policy implementation .....	81
Table 9g: As an OHS practitioner, I am routinely involved in purchasing decisions .....	81
Table 10a: Physical incidents (hazards/ injuries) – mean rank order .....	82
Table 10b: Psychosocial incidents (hazards/injuries) – mean rank order .....	82
Table 10c: Injury management – mean rank order.....	82
Table 10d: Administration – mean rank order .....	82
Table 10e: Training and development – mean rank order .....	83
Table 11a: Years of Experience as OHS Practitioner.....	84
Table 11b: Qualifications.....	84
Table 11c: Level of satisfaction .....	84
Table 11d: No of years experience before this year .....	84
Table 11e: Delivery of service-number of people.....	84
Table 12: Would recommend others to become an OHS practitioner by - Years working as a practitioner .....	85
Table 13: Chi-square Test .....	86
Table 14: Most costly issue you work with - Training and Development by “OHS legislation is used by managers in their operational decision-making” <sup>86</sup>	
Table 15: Chi-Square Tests.....	87
Table 16: Frequency of occurrence of Development of OHS Policy by “My agency consistently adopts OHS best-practice” .....	88
Table 17: Chi-Square Tests .....	88
Table 18: Frequency of occurrence of OHS practice by “My agency consistently adopts OHS best-practice” .....	89
Table 19: Chi-Square Tests.....	89
Table 20: Time spent as an OHS practitioner by “My agency consistently adopts OHS best-practice” .....	90
Table 21: Chi-Square Tests .....	90
Table 22: Policy implementation strengths and weaknesses .....	91
Table 23: Public OHS Documents for Analysis.....	103

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## **ABSTRACT**

Work-place focused responsibility for both Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management and the development of employee skills arising from new legislative and regulatory frameworks have imposed new responsibilities on managers and OHS practitioners in the work-place. The purpose of this research study was to identify and describe designated OHS practitioners' and work-place managers' perceptions of the implementation of OHS policy in the work-place within agencies of the public sector of South Australia and whether these perceptions are congruent with policy and work-place practice. A case study method was selected as the research design and the data gathering instruments were a questionnaire of OHS practitioners, semi-structured interviews of work-place managers and a document analysis.

This study revealed that respondent OHS practitioners perceived that they received support from Chief Executives and management for the implementation of OHS. Results also indicated that work-place managers and OHS practitioners held differing perceptions of their respective roles in the area of OHS policy implementation. Policy documentation, intended to support work-place managers, was found to be comprehensive but was perceived by managers as overwhelming and may need to be designed to meet their needs. OHS practitioners' perception of organisational achievement of best-practice in OHS appeared to be linked to policy development and audit activity.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANTA</b>	Australian National Training Authority
<b>AQF</b>	The Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>AQTF</b>	The Australian Quality Training Framework
<b>AS/NZS 4804:1997</b>	Australian and New Zealand Standards on OHS 4804:1997
<b>DAIS</b>	Department for Administrative and Information Services
<b>DECS</b>	Department of Education and Children's Services
<b>EDB</b>	Economic Development Board
<b>ITABs</b>	Industry Training Advisory Boards
<b>LTIFR</b>	Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate
<b>MSDS</b>	Material Safety Data Sheets
<b>NCVER</b>	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
<b>NOHSC</b>	National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
<b>OCPE</b>	Office for the Commissioner for Public Employment
<b>OHS</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
<b>OHSMS</b>	Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems
<b>OHSW Act 1986</b>	Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act, 1986
<b>PSM Act 1995</b>	Public Sector Management Act, 1995.
<b>PSWR</b>	Public Sector Workforce Relations
<b>RTO</b>	Registered Training Organisations
<b>SafetyMap</b>	Safety Management Achievement Program
<b>SIFR</b>	Serious Injury Frequency Rate
<b>SPM</b>	Safety Performance Measure
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>SSM</b>	Site Safety Meter
<b>VET</b>	Vocation Education and Training
<b>WHSO</b>	Work-place Health and Safety Officers