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

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education (Honours)
University of Tasmania, 2005
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
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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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>The Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQTF</td>
<td>The Australian Quality Training Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAIS</td>
<td>Department for Administrative and Information Services</td>
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<td>DECS</td>
<td>Department of Education and Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDB</td>
<td>Economic Development Board</td>
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<td>ITABs</td>
<td>Industry Training Advisory Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTIFR</td>
<td>Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate</td>
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<td>MSDS</td>
<td>Material Safety Data Sheets</td>
</tr>
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<td>NCVER</td>
<td>National Centre for Vocational Education Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOHSC</td>
<td>National Occupational Health and Safety Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCPE</td>
<td>Office for the Commissioner for Public Employment</td>
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<td>Public Sector Workforce Relations</td>
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<td>Safety Management Achievement Program</td>
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<td>Safety Performance Measure</td>
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<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
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<td>Site Safety Meter</td>
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<td>Vocation Education and Training</td>
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<td>WHSO</td>
<td>Work-place Health and Safety Officers</td>
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