

The Need for Unions and Employers to Cooperate on Harmonised Safety Laws

There has been considerable publicity on the need for uniform OHS laws, but any new laws must be fair to employers and employees alike. It is wrong for some unions to insist on placing the responsibility for safety solely on the employer.

A spirit of cooperation between all the parties including employers, employees, trade unions and governments will achieve the best outcome for everyone.

Unfortunately, there are some unions who favour the strict NSW safety laws as the model for future harmonised safety laws in Australia. MGA does not support the ability of trade unions to initiate prosecutions for breaches on workplace safety which exists in NSW. If we are going to achieve fair and uniform legislation in Australia we need to have a true spirit of cooperation between all the States and territories, without the draconian measures that exist in NSW.



Workplace Bullying: a Problem for Everyone

We all know that bullying in the workplace is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Bullying can take many forms. Physical bullying is one type of harassment, which is often grounds for instant dismissal. In some cases, physical bullying can also constitute assault.

However, not all bullying is so clearly identifiable. There are many subtle ways in which employees can be harassed and marginalised at work. Behaviour such as spreading malicious gossip, attempts at social exclusion, constant criticism or insults, or constantly giving an employee unpleasant tasks can all be instances of bullying.

To properly protect your staff and your business, it is a good idea to have an anti-bullying policy, which is signed by all staff. This ensures that all employees are aware that certain behaviour will not be tolerated, and that bullying is taken seriously.

If you suspect bullying among your staff, no matter how minor it seems, or if you receive a complaint from an employee, it is important not to ignore it. The issue must be dealt with in a confidential and impartial manner. MGA's Workplace Relations team are able to advise you on how to handle specific instances of bullying in your workplace.

For advice, or for an anti-bullying policy for your store, call the Workplace Relations team at MGA on (03) 9824 4111.

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