

## Welcome to the second edition of WorkSafe ACT's HSR Network E-Newsletter

Since launching the health and safety (HSR) network in March 2025 we are excited to announce that over 100 people have joined! Thank you to everyone who has helped us achieve this significant milestone. Following on from our successful first edition, the second e-newsletter provides information, on the following topics:

- + National Safe Work Month Campaign kits
- + Work Groups
- + New HSR Training Webpage
- + HSR Resources

### Work Groups

Any worker, or group of workers can ask the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to elect an HSR to represent them. HSRs are elected to represent the work health and safety interests of a specific work group. So, what is a work group?

Simply put, a work group is a group of workers who perform similar roles, share similar circumstances, or are exposed to similar hazards.

The number, size and make up of work groups should be negotiated with the PCBU because these will depend on the size of the business, nature of the work being completed and location of the workers and the work groups.



### Negotiations for work groups:

Work Groups should be organised to best represent the views of workers. The PCBU must begin negotiations on work groups within 14 days from the date of a request for an HSR election. Any other PCBU's who may be involved with the work group should also be included in negotiations. The following should be considered when forming work groups:

- + the number of workers
- + the hazards and risks faced by workers
- + workers who carry out similar types of work
- + the location of workplaces

- + whether workers must move from place to place while at work
- + the diversity of workers
- + how workers are employed, (for example, part-time, full-time or casual).

The PCBU must notify workers of the outcome of negotiations when they are completed.

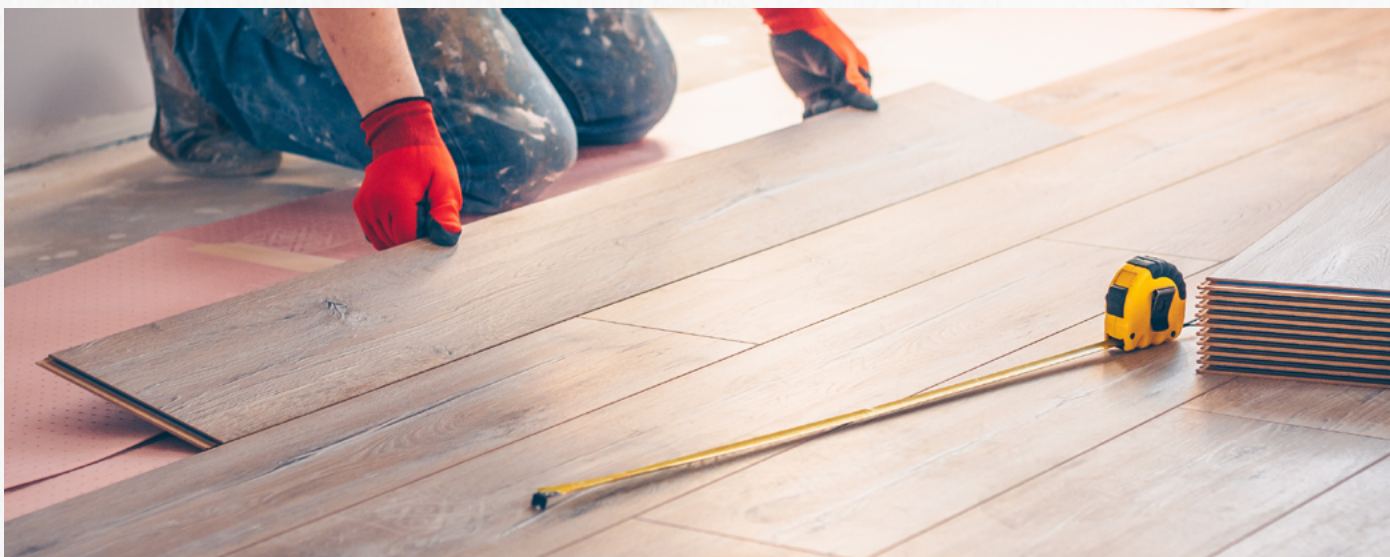
## Example Scenario for Negotiating Work Groups:

*Tuff as Nails Flooring* has stores in Belconnen, Woden, Tuggeranong and an office/warehouse in Fyshwick and are in negotiation for how to organise their work groups.

The PCBU, in consultation with their workers, discuss the options to make sure the workers across all areas of the business could be provided access to an HSR that represents their interests. Together, they identify that they should establish workgroups for:

- + delivery drivers and workers who install the flooring
- + office workers
- + workers in the warehouse.

*Note: There is not a single legislated way of establishing workgroups, this is intended as an example of how one organisation could negotiate their work groups.*



## Work Groups Involving Multiple PCBUs

Work Groups can also be negotiated between more than one PCBU and at one or more workplaces.

For example, if a music festival employs contractors from several businesses for staging, lighting, sound, security, etc. A combined work group could be negotiated to represent the views of workers across all the businesses involved.





# Major Construction Projects

A Major Construction Project is a construction project with a contract price over \$5,000,000. For a major construction project, the principal contractor must consult with each eligible union on the following before work commences:

- + the number of work groups,
- + composition of work groups
- + the number of HSRs and deputy HSRs.

This must be in the form of a written notice to each eligible union. Once work on the project starts, the principal contractor must conduct an election for an HSR to represent each work group.



## Can an HSR Represent the Interests of a Work Group They Don't Belong To?

Generally, the answer is no. The powers of an HSR are generally limited to the work group they work in. However, if the HSR for a work group is unavailable and there is a serious risk to the health and safety of the work group, an HSR for another work group can exercise their powers.

## Legislation that relates to work groups:

Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

- + sections 51-54 Determination of work groups
- + sections 55-59 Multiple business work groups
- + section 69 Powers and functions generally limited to the particular work group

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011:

- + regulation 16 Negotiations for and determination of work groups
- + regulation 17 Matters to be taken into account in negotiations

For further information on setting up workgroups, look at the following guide for workers:

- + [Setting up work groups and HSR elections](#)

### **WORKER CHECKLIST**

#### **Setting up work groups and HSR elections**



This checklist has been developed by WorkSafe ACT to help you understand how working groups are set up, the election process for becoming an HSR and information on establishing a health and safety committee.

This checklist is for guidance only, you must ensure that you understand and meet your duties in the work health and safety (WHS) legislation, including the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (the Act) and the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (the Regulation).

# WorkSafe ACT Releases a New HSR Training Page

The WorkSafe ACT webpage has recently been updated with the addition of a [Health and Safety Representative Training page](#). This page provides general guidance to both PCBUs and HSRs regarding their entitlement to training, along with a list of all the HSR training providers approved by WorkSafe ACT.

The page also contains guidance for training providers who would like to become approved by WorkSafe ACT to deliver the HSR training course. This includes an updated [Guide on How to Become an Approved Provider of HSR Training](#), which sets out the requirements that must be met to deliver HSR training and an updated [HSR Training Application Form](#).

On this new page you can find the [Underpinning Principles and Learning Outcomes for HSR Training](#). This is a great resource to check out if you want to know more about what the HSR training course covers.

If you have any questions about regarding becoming a provider of HSR training, please reach out to the WorkSafe ACT Capability Team - [training@worksafe.act.gov.au](mailto:training@worksafe.act.gov.au)

## Share a Safety Outcome

Have you recently had a positive outcome for your work group as an HSR? WorkSafe ACT is looking for HSRs to share a positive safety outcome they are proud of. Examples could be:

- + Updating an internal policy
- + Eliminating a psychosocial hazard.
- + Purchasing new PPE
- + Changing systems of work to improve ergonomics.

Share your safety outcome through the HSR Inbox and we will publish examples in the next HSR Newsletter. Your submissions will be de-identified when published, which may involve changing details.

**Please note:** WorkSafe ACT will not follow up on any health and safety issues you might identify in your outcome example above.

The provision of the safety outcome above is not an alternative to notifying WorkSafe ACT of a health and safety issue in your workplace. If you have a work health and safety concern, you can

- + [Contact WorkSafe ACT](#)
- + [Report a Workplace Concern or Issue](#)
- + [Notify WorkSafe ACT](#).



# National Safe Work Month

October is National Safe Work Month, a time to promote and prioritise safety in workplaces.

This year's theme is - Safety: every job, every day

WorkSafe ACT are organising a range of activities throughout the month including events, media releases, videos and sausage sizzles.

The themes for each week are:

- + Week 1: Psychosocially Safe,
- + Week 2: Talk, Listen, Share, Act,
- + Week 3: Built Safe,
- + Week 4: Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion
- + Week 5: Safety Innovations.



HSRs can assist by connecting with workers, planning activities, raising awareness and distributing resources.

You could also organise a SafeTea morning or afternoon tea at your workplace to talk about safety over a cup of tea (or coffee).

WorkSafe ACT has also released a Campaign Kit to assist workplaces with promoting National Safe Work Month, you can find the [Campaign Kit](#) and more information about our National Safe Work Month activities and resources [here](#).

## HSR Resources

Here are some handy resources WorkSafe ACT has developed to assist HSRs, PCBUs and workers understand the role and functions of HSRs in the workplace.

- + [Getting started with Health and Safety Representatives and Health and Safety Committees](#)
- + [Health and Safety Committees](#)
- + [Health and Safety Representative duties](#)
- + [Carrying out the role of an HSR](#)
- + [Setting up work groups and HSR elections](#)

Our [website](#) also outlines key information on HSRs and health and safety committees. Our HSR website is in the process of being updated – The HSR Network will be notified once the updates are published, so watch this space!

## The Safety Spotlight podcast

WorkSafe ACT has released five episodes of 'The Safety Spotlight' podcast series, hosted by Lish Fejer. The podcast covers topics as diverse as, Fatigue, Small Business and the Financial Benefits of safety. You can find all episodes [here](#).

Thank you for joining WorkSafe ACT's HSR network! If you have any topics you'd like covered please reach out to us at: [HSRnetwork@worksafe.act.gov.au](mailto:HSRnetwork@worksafe.act.gov.au).

If you would like to subscribe to WorkSafe ACT Safety Alerts and news items, please email us at [media@worksafe.act.gov.au](mailto:media@worksafe.act.gov.au), or connect with us on social media [here](#).