

Heads of Agreement

Streamlining the information sharing and complaints handling process for Victorian apprentices and trainees

Parties

This Agreement is made between Victoria's regulatory agencies and authorities with a responsibility in reducing the risk of harm for Victorian apprentices and trainees:

| Organisation | ABN |
|--|------------------|
| Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority | 52705101522 |
| WorkSafe Victoria | 90 296 467 627 |
| EnergySafe Victoria | 27 462 247 657 |
| Wage Inspectorate Victoria | 46 121 301 781 5 |
| Labour Hire Authority | 89 900 498 344 |
| Victorian Building Authority | 78 790 711 883 |

Background

- Recent consultations with apprentices, trainees and other key stakeholders including industry, employers and unions have indicated there is a real need to significantly strengthen our systems of protection for apprentices and trainees in Victoria.
- Victoria's regulatory agencies must work together to ensure apprentices and trainees, many of whom are among the youngest and most vulnerable of workers, work in an environment that provides for their physical and psychosocial safety.
- This Heads of Agreement (Agreement) represents commitment from Victoria's key regulators of employers with apprentices and trainees, to share information and work together in an appropriate and timely manner to reduce risk and improve safety of current and future apprentices and trainees.

Purpose and scope

- This Agreement supports effective complaints resolution by providing an overarching framework to streamline and accelerate information sharing, while ensuring the right safeguards and controls are in place.

Limitations

- This Agreement does not create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement between the Parties. No Party to this Agreement has the power to obligate or bind any other Party.
- The Parties acknowledge and agree that this Agreement does not constitute and may not be construed as constituting an agency, joint venture or partnership between them. Nothing in this Agreement will be deemed to authorise or empower any Party to act as agent for or with any other Party
- This Agreement does not replace Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between individual entities, MOU between individual entities document the specific sharing arrangements between the parties.

Apprenticeships Taskforce

- The Victorian Government has established an Apprenticeship Taskforce ('the Taskforce') to improve fairness, treatment and safety for Victorian apprentices and trainees.
- The Taskforce's Terms of Reference include 'simplifying complaint reporting for apprentices encountering mistreatment at work.'
- The agencies and authorities that are signatories to this Agreement all work with Victorian apprentices, trainees and their employers. We are each required by law to establish and maintain our own complaints procedures.
- For Victorian apprentices and trainees, the separate complaints receipt, tracking and resolution systems are complex to navigate across multiple regulators.
- By working together, we can:
 - reduce the risk of harm to Victorian apprentices and trainees through timely sharing of complaints information
 - make it easier for Victorian apprentices and trainees to make complaints, by building a new and more streamlined complaints resolution approach across the regulatory system for apprentices and trainees
- This Agreement will form the basis for the Parties to work together, sharing relevant information to improve the safety, process and outcomes for Victorian apprentices and trainees.

Streamlined information sharing and complaints handling

Collective vision

- Apprentice and trainee complaints receipt, tracking and resolution systems are seamless, accessible and easy to navigate. Regulators have collective knowledge and work collaboratively to identify, assess and resolve risk of apprentice and trainee harms through sharing complaints information and coregulatory activity.

Collective commitment

- This Heads of Agreements represents collective commitment from the Parties to:
 - work together collaboratively to coordinate action on multi-agency related complaints
 - support the development of a multi-agency information and complaints portal for apprentices and trainees, where information is submitted through a central portal and shared with relevant agencies.

Principles to guide improved ways of working

- To ensure continuously improved ways of working, all Parties agree to adhere to the following principles, we agree to:
 1. **Privacy:** *Adhere to privacy requirements of individual entities and co-regulators.*
 2. **Responsiveness:** *Communicate well and often.*
 3. **Trust:** *Cultivate trust, appreciate diverse perspectives and work together to reduce risk and harm.*
 4. **Accountability:** *Take responsibility for progressing individual actions as part of cross-regulator complaints resolution.*
 5. **Effectiveness:** *Ensure that engagement with co-parties facilitates the achievement of proactive harm reduction and complaints resolution.*
 6. **Relevance:** *Bring relevant complaints, issues and information to the group, ensuring the parties focus on addressing the key challenges facing Victorian apprentices and trainees.*
 7. **Impact:** *Improve the capability of all parties to effectively discharge their duty.*
 8. **Collaboration:** *Share information and intelligence in support of the agreement, subject to law.*
 9. **Coordination:** *Enable co-regulatory action by adhering to agreed processes in a timely manner and ensuring unity in action.*

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this Agreement as follows:

Signed for and on behalf of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority by



Jonathan Kaplan
Chief Executive Officer
22 December 2023

Signed for and on behalf of EnergySafe Victoria



Leanne Hughson
Chief Executive Officer
1 December 2023

Signed for and on behalf of Labour Hire Authority by



Steve Dargavel
Commissioner
28 November 2023

Signed for and on behalf of Victorian Building Authority by



Anna Cronin
Chief Executive Officer
1 December 2023

Signed for and on behalf of the Wage Inspectorate Victoria by



Lily Dekic
Acting Commissioner
20 December 2023

Signed for and on behalf of the WorkSafe Victoria by



Joe Calafiore
CEO
30 November 2023