WHS DOCUMENTS & TEMPLATES

DOC-WCM-TPL · WHS Committee Terms of Reference and Meeting Minutes

Product Overview

For: Australian businesses with, or setting up, a WHS committee: managers, HSRs, committee chairs and secretaries, and WHS advisers

Version 1.0 · 15 November 2026

Everything a WHS committee needs to run well: terms of reference that set its functions, membership and meetings, a standing agenda and minutes form, and the consultation procedure the committee sits within.

The terms of reference set out the committee's purpose and functions, membership (at least half worker members, not nominated by management), the chair and secretary, meetings, quorum and notice, how recommendations are made and answered in writing, minutes and reporting to officers, training, and review.

The Meeting Agenda and Minutes (Word and PDF) has an eleven-item standing agenda, attendance and quorum, recommendations to management and new actions. The Consultation Procedure (Word and PDF) covers when and how the business consults, HSRs, the committee, working with other businesses, resolving issues, and stopping unsafe work.

Written once for Australia, to the model WHS laws, in plain terms that also work in Victoria. The guide's state and territory notes show where the law differs, including the regulator to contact. Made by Orana Skills Centre.

What is included

Item	File
WHS committee terms of reference: purpose, functions, membership, meetings, recommendations, minutes, training and review	02_TEMPLATE/WHS Committee Terms of Reference.docx and .pdf
WHS committee meeting agenda and minutes: attendance, an eleven-item standing agenda, recommendations and actions	02_TEMPLATE/WHS Committee Meeting Agenda and Minutes.docx and .pdf
Consultation procedure: when and how we consult, HSRs, the committee, other businesses, issue resolution and stopping unsafe work	02_TEMPLATE/Consultation Procedure.docx and .pdf
How to Use This Template: how to complete and adapt it, the law in brief, state and territory notes, records and every placeholder	01_START_HERE/How to Use This Template.pdf
Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms and Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Who it is for

- Businesses whose workers or HSRs have asked for a committee

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How to Use This Template

How to complete, adapt and keep the whs committee terms of reference and meeting minutes

1 What this template is for

A WHS committee is a forum where management and workers look at health and safety together: the incidents, the hazards, the controls and the changes coming, and what should be done. It works when its members are chosen fairly, it meets regularly, it has the information it needs, and management answers its recommendations.

The consultation procedure shows where the committee fits: it adds to, and does not replace, consulting workers and HSRs directly.

2 How to use it

Step	What to do
1	Agree with your workers whether to have a committee and how it will work. If an HSR or five or more workers ask for one, set it up within the time the law sets (see the notes).
2	Agree the membership: workers choose the worker members, who make up at least half. Invite each HSR to join.
3	Fill in the placeholders in the terms of reference, and agree them at the first meeting.
4	Hold the first meeting, elect the chair, and use the agenda and minutes form from then on.
5	Send papers ahead, post the minutes within a week, and track every action to close-out.
6	Make sure management answers each recommendation in writing, and report the committee's work to officers.
7	Review the terms of reference, and how well the committee is working, every year.

Make it work, not just exist

- Bring data, not just stories: incident trends, overdue actions and controls found not working.
- If the same item appears at three meetings in a row, escalate it. A committee that only records problems loses workers' trust.

3 Who does what

Who	What they do
Chief executive or owner	Sets the committee up, gives members time and training, and answers its recommendations
Chair	Runs the meetings, keeps them to the agenda, and reports to management
Members and HSRs	Bring workers' concerns, review the information, and make recommendations
Secretary	Sends the papers, takes the minutes and keeps the action list

4 The law, in brief

The WHS laws require a business to consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a health and safety matter, and to involve HSRs where workers are represented. A business must set up a health and safety committee when an HSR, or five or more workers, ask for one, within the time the law sets. At least half of its members must be workers who are not nominated by the business, and it must meet at least

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[Company name]

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WHS Committee Terms of Reference

What the committee is for, who is on it, how it meets and makes recommendations, and how it reports

1 Purpose

The **[Company name]** WHS committee brings management and workers together to improve health and safety. It is one of the ways we consult our workers, alongside health and safety representatives (HSRs), team meetings and toolbox talks. It does not replace them, and it does not take away anyone's duties: the business keeps its duty to manage risks, and managers keep their responsibility for their areas.

2 Functions

- Help management and workers cooperate in planning, developing and carrying out measures to keep workers healthy and safe
- Help develop and review the business's health and safety standards, rules, policies and procedures
- Review incidents, hazards, inspections, risk assessments and WHS measures, look for trends, and recommend action
- Consider changes coming that could affect health and safety: new plant, chemicals, processes, people or premises
- Promote health and safety, and help communicate it to workers
- Any other function the business and the committee agree

The rest of this page, and the rest of this document, are in the full product.

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WHS Committee Terms of Reference and Meeting Minutes

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

This sample shows a few pages, so you can judge the layout and the quality. Everything a WHS committee needs to run well: terms of reference that set its functions, membership and meetings, a standing agenda and minutes form, and the consultation procedure the committee sits within.

What the full product contains

- **WHS committee terms of reference: purpose, functions, membership, meetings, recommendations, minutes, training and review**
  02_TEMPLATE/WHS Committee Terms of Reference.docx and .pdf
- **WHS committee meeting agenda and minutes: attendance, an eleven-item standing agenda, recommendations and actions**
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  01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Formats

- Word (.docx), editable, with your logo and business name in the header
- PDF copies of the Word documents, for printing blank
- Delivered as a single ZIP download

Get the full editable documents

https://training.oranaskillscentre.com/documents/whs-committee-terms-of-reference-and-meeting-minutes

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