



Notice of Decision — acceptance

A work health and safety (WHS) undertaking is a legally binding agreement between Comcare and a person who has allegedly contravened the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth). An undertaking is proposed by the person as an alternative to other enforcement action and becomes enforceable once accepted by Comcare. A WHS undertaking obliges the person to carry out the specific activities that have been proposed.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

On 6 June 2017, a CSIRO worker was injured when an explosion occurred at CSIRO's Clayton facility, when hydrogen gas, which had leaked from a 50-litre autoclave, ignited. The autoclave was being used to conduct an experiment at the time.

Alleged breach

Comcare commenced criminal proceedings against CSIRO for four alleged breaches of s 19(1) of the WHS Act.

On 2 March 2021, Comcare accepted an undertaking proposed by CSIRO in relation to the alleged contraventions.

Summary of the undertaking

CSIRO will deliver the following undertakings:

1. **Virtual and Augmented Reality Risk Management Training package** – development of a publicly available risk management training package to equip participants with best practice knowledge tools to identify and control risks in laboratories. This training package will use augmented and virtual reality techniques;
2. **Risk Management within Opportunity to Delivery (O2D) System** – upgrade of the CSIRO's digital project management system to include a health, safety and environment (HSE) risk management module; and
3. **Health and Safety Technical Guidance Material for Infrastructure in High Risk Environments** – establishment of guidance material to support the standardisation of infrastructure in environments that are potentially hazardous due to the materials or equipment present.

The undertaking involves a total expenditure of \$1 412 000.

Reasons for accepting the undertaking

The reasons for accepting the WHS undertaking were:

- the undertaking addresses the criteria set out on Comcare's *Guide to WHS Undertakings*;
- the deliverables proposed in the undertaking have been assessed as likely to deliver long-term sustainable safety improvements in the workplace and across the scientific research industry; and
- the undertaking represents an appropriate enforcement outcome.