Government
of South Australia

SafeWork SA

COVID-19 Education Campaign Report

2020

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Executive summary

From 1 June 2020 to 31 July 2020, SafeWork SA (SWSA) undertook a proactive education campaign (the campaign) to assist workplaces understand how to manage the Work Health and Safety (WHS) risks associated with COVID-19.

The SWSA COVID-19 campaign focused on providing educational assistance to PCBUs and consisted of:

➢ WHS Inspectors contacting PCBU representatives by telephone to discuss their current workplace practices in regards to managing work, health and safety risks associated with COVID-19, and

➢ the provision of targeted education, information, and materials through emails with links to raise awareness of control measures.

During the campaign period, Inspectors provided assistance to 987 PCBU's in South Australia in addition to other compliance activities that were undertaken in their usual course of business.

SWSA did not issue any statutory notices as the campaign focused on education, advice and assistance rather than enforcement action during a challenging period.

Background

On the 15 March 2020, the Premier of South Australia, the Hon Steven Marshall MP declared a public health emergency due to deepening concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

On 22 March 2020, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP announced restrictions to protect the Australian community from the spread of COVID-19.

On the 24 April 2020, the National Cabinet agreed to the National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles available on the Safe Work Australia website to assist businesses and workers across the country in relation to managing their Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations in respect of COVID-19.

COVID-19 campaign

Scope

The campaign focused on providing information and education to PCBU's through initial telephone calls and subsequent emails to assist them in meeting their obligations to provide safe systems of work, and to ensure compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (*SA).

In consultation with ReturnToWorkSA (RTWSA), SWSA identified workplaces for Inspectors to contact between 1 June 2020 and 31 July 2020.

SWSA proactively worked with RTWSA and Wellbeing SA to provide educational material and information to businesses to assist them in keeping themselves and their workers safe.

SWSA acknowledged the adverse impact of COVID-19 on PCBUs and therefore undertook the campaign with an educational focus rather than an enforcement approach.

The scope of the 2020 COVID-19 Educational Campaign focused on:

➢ continuous updating of the educational information and materials to be provided to PCBU's

➢ educating PCBU's on the risks associated with COVID-19

➢ sharing information on control measures that can be implemented in the workplace

➢ sharing potential solutions to assist with managing workers wellbeing

➢ providing information and materials though emails with links

➢ raising awareness of the control measures available to PCBUs

➢ assisting PCBUs with any questions.

Industry education and materials

SWSA provided PCBUs with education, information and materials though email to raise awareness of available information and materials for PCBUs to utilise.

The information provided consisted of referring them to the following information:

The Government of South Australia COVID-Safe Plan

PCBU's that were required to close as part of the Government of South Australia COVID-19 restrictions were required to create a COVID-Safe Plan prior to reopening their business. The COVID-Safe Plan was to assist PCBU in ensuring it is compliant for their staff and patrons.

COVID-19 WHS educational materials

PCBU's were provided with a range of educational resources to manage the risks relating to COVID-19, including help to manage the health and wellbeing of their workers through SWSA's website. This included state-based work health and safety (WHS) positions, working from home information and links to industry information.

COVID-19 sa.gov.au

PCBU's were provided with the link to the COVID-19.sa.gov.au website to keep them connected and informed with current, local and reliable information.

Safe Work Australia

PCBU's were provided with Safe Work Australia WHS information and guidance material that was general for all workplaces and specific to their industries.

For example:

General information for workplaces

➢ Preparing workplaces for COVID-19

➢ Working from home

➢ Mental health and COVID-19

➢ What to do if a worker has COVID-19.

Targeted industry information

➢ Aged care

➢ Agriculture

➢ Beauty salons & day spas

➢ Building and construction

- Cinemas
- Cultural institutions
- Delivery drivers
- Early childhood education
- Education and training
- Energy & utilities
- FIFO & DIDO (fly-in fly-out and drive-in and drive-out)
- Food processing and manufacturing
- Gyms & fitness centres
- Hairdressing and barbers
- Health care
- Hospitality
- In-home services
- Marine and airline
- Mining
- Mobile consultants and client engagement services
- NDIS
- Office
- Public Transport
- Real estate
- Retail
- Road freight
- Stevedores and ports
- Taxi and ride share
- Trades and home maintenance
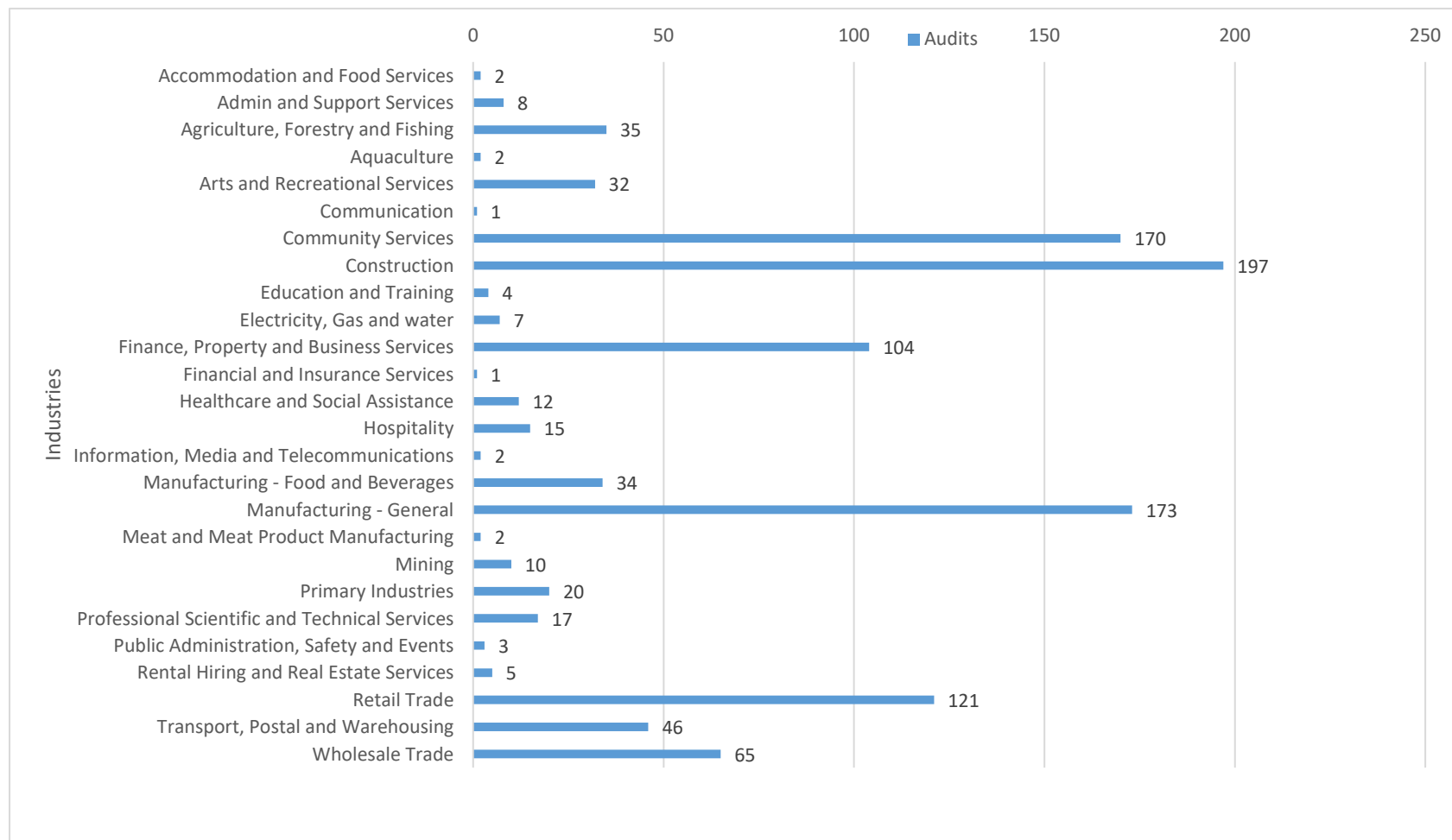- Warehousing and logistics
- General industry information.

SA Health

PCBU'S were provided with links to SA Health information for businesses and industries including general and cleaning advice, what to do if there's a suspected or positive case in their workplace, and personal protective equipment that may be required.

For example:

- stop the spread resources – Let's not undo all the good
- COVID-19 Cleaning and disinfection in the workplace
- 5 ways to support people working from home (Wellbeing SA)
- 5 tips for working from home (Wellbeing SA).

Breakdown of PCBU's contacted by industry

SafeWork SA contacted 987 various industries within South Australia

COVID-19 campaign findings and outcomes

➢ From 1 June 2020 to 31 July 2020, SWSA proactively contacted and provided assistance to 987 PCBU's in South Australia in addition to compliance activities that were undertaken in the course of usual business.

➢ During the COVID-19 restrictions SWSA continued to respond to incidents in our usual way.

➢ No statutory notices during this educational campaign as it focused on the provision of advice and assistance.

➢ There were PCBU's that were aware of their obligations and had systems in place for their workers and patrons.

➢ The majority of PCBU's were aware of where to locate information and assistance for their businesses.

Recommendation

It is recommended that SWSA:

➢ Incorporate COVID-19 guidance and information during workplace visits and PCBU interactions as part of our usual course of business.

Further information

Our COVID-19 information for workplaces remains on SWSA website and will continue to be updated as required.

For businesses requiring further information and advice, call SafeWork SA on 1300 365 255 or visit our website to speak to one of our friendly Workplace Advisors. Workplaces can request a visit from our advisory service who can provide practical advice based on your workplace's industry, size, risk and complexity. Our Advisors can visit your workplace to help you understand your work health and safety responsibilities as well as provide practical support to improve your systems, practices and general approach to safety.