**Why is this review important to my business?**

Every business that uses or produces substances or mixtures that emit airborne contaminants will be affected by this review.

Almost 700 substances are being considered and the outcome of the review may mean your business needs to improve current control measures in order to help protect your workers, and you, from short-term and long-term harm and remain compliant with the law.

**What are Workplace Exposure Standards?**

Workplace Exposure Standards (WES) establish the maximum level of an airborne contaminant which can be present in the breathing zone of a worker.

The requirement to maintain exposure below the WES is in addition to the general obligation to eliminate or minimise risk so far as is reasonably practicable. This means you should always be looking for ways to avoid using such substances, or keeping them completely isolated from workers, not just keeping exposure levels low.

It may be necessary to engage a competent person to undertake air monitoring to identify the level of airborne contaminants in the air to determine if the WES is being exceeded.

**How is the review progressing?**

Safe Work Australia has engaged experts to review the WES of every substance or mixture used or produced in Australia.

Most of these substances or mixtures already have a WES. A decision needs to be made about whether it is still set at an appropriate level based on the most recent knowledge of health effects. There may be a recommendation to increase the WES, but we expect that for most substances the recommendation will be to either maintain the current WES or decrease it.

Other substances or mixtures do not currently have a WES set in Australia and the review will consider whether a WES should be established. The review will consider fifty-five new substances for a WES.

Every two weeks Safe Work Australia is releasing evaluation reports and asking experts to comment on the technical accuracy of the report and whether it is technically feasible to undertake testing at the recommended WES level.

**What can businesses do?**

Ai Group will be involved in detailed discussions with Safe Work Australia throughout this process. As the review progresses and information is released about how proposed changes may impact members, Ai Group will keep members informed and seek feedback; member feedback is a crucial factor in our ability to influence the decisions made.

We know most employers do not have the technical expertise to consider the accuracy of the evaluation reports. However, there is important information you can contribute to this process and we need your input.

When each batch of reports is released, there is also a table summarising the current and proposed WES. Businesses need to look at those tables and identify if a proposed change is going to make a significant difference to how you operate to stay compliant with the law. If there is significant difficulty, or cost, associated with changes Ai Group needs to know about these so we can factor this into discussions about the final WES level and how it will be implemented.

**How do I find out more about the review, assess the impact and/or provide my feedback?**

Ai Group has tried to make it easy for members to access data about the review, assess the impact on your operations, and to provide us with feedback.

On the Ai Group website, you will find:

* A recommended process to review your compliance with current WES and to consider whether it will be difficult to meet the proposed WES.
* A full list of WES under review, and the schedule for release of the draft evaluation reports.
* A separate list of the fifty-five substances and mixtures where a new WES is being proposed.
* As each batch of document is released:
  + a “use and source” list which highlights where the substances are expected to be found (this will be updated from extracted from the individual evaluation reports);
  + The summary table developed by Safe Work Australia to highlight proposed changes to individual WES.
* Background information about the Review.
* Links to relevant pages of the Safe Work Australia website for those who want to dig deeper.
* A simple feedback form will automatically be delivered the Ai Group team managing the issue on behalf of members.

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| Access the Ai Group website at:  [go.aigroup.com.au/wesreview](http://go.aigroup.com.au/wesreview) | Contact: Tracey Browne [tracey.browne@aigroup.com.au](mailto:tracey.browne@aigroup.com.au) 0438 207 799 |