The Department recognises that the health and safety of our staff underpins our ability to achieve our strategic goals. This policy statement outlines the Department’s commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our staff in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Act). In accordance with the Act, our senior executives, middle managers and workers (which include staff, contractors and volunteers) are responsible for supporting a safety culture.

The Department is committed to:

- achieving the highest standards of work health and safety
- fostering supportive and accountable leadership
- safe work practices to ensure that all workers, as far as is reasonably practicable, are safe from injury and risk to their health while at work
- continuous improvement in injury prevention and injury management.

The responsibility for identifying hazards, assessing risks and taking action to ensure a safe and healthy workplace is shared by all. The Department has in place a range of procedures which are intended to eliminate, reduce or control risks. In addition, managers, supervisors and workers are supported via a range of safety information aimed at increasing awareness so that everyone understands that ‘Safety starts with me’.

Our SES managers, middle managers and supervisors all have a very important role in supporting a safety culture through regular communication with staff about work health and safety matters. Our SES managers are likely to be ‘Officers’ under the Act as they usually make, or participate in making decisions which affect the whole or a substantial part of the Department’s business. These decisions, in turn, may impact safety outcomes. Officers therefore have a duty to be proactive in ensuring compliance with the Act and are supported by a range of documentation and tools to help them identify and understand the hazards and risks of the workplaces that they are responsible for.

The role of managers is to be a role model and a leader who consults and communicates with workers about health and safety matters, thereby promoting a safety culture. Managers play an important role in influencing workers to value health and safety by changing unsafe work practices and behaviours and clearly outlining the accepted safety standards in the workplace.

Workers also have obligations under the Act to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to take reasonable care to ensure that their actions or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others. Even when we do all that we can to prevent injuries, some injuries will still occur. When that happens, the Department is committed to supporting its employees’ to remain at work or if incapacitated, achieve a safe and sustainable return to pre-injury hours and duties or other meaningful work.

The Department’s Rehabilitation and Injury Management Guidelines provide a framework for minimising both the incidence and impact of injury and illness for both the Department and the injured employee.

This is achieved through:

- The provision of early intervention strategies to support injured or unwell employees to remain at work, and
- Where injured or unwell employees are incapacitated from work, provision of support and rehabilitation to assist with their timely, safe, durable and cost effective return to work.

We recognise that effective safety and rehabilitation strategies benefit us all - they ensure valuable work skills are not lost and the human and financial costs of injuries and illnesses are minimised.

**Drew Clarke**  
Secretary  
October 2013