Appendix E: Work Health and Safety

This section is presented in accordance with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act).

Work Health and Safety – Executive commitment

In 2018–19, the Board and Executive reinvigorated their focus on the minimisation of risk exposure and improving assurance over related controls. In line with this commitment, key work health and safety (WHS) initiatives across 2018–19 primarily focused on proactive risk identification, early intervention strategies, and supporting staff health & wellbeing.

Our Work Health and Safety Strategy

In 2018–19, our WHS risk baseline was redeveloped to provide a more consistent and appropriate representation of risk exposure across the organisation. This redevelopment outlines clear accountability for WHS risk, transitioning our WHS Risk Baseline from a business group focus to an activity focus whereby risk ownership is aligned to the Business Group with the greatest exposure to risk.

Work Health and Safety initiatives

Proactive Risk Identification: The proactive identification and reporting of WHS hazards has been a key area of focus throughout the year, as a mechanism to proactively manage risks before injuries are realised. As reflected in Table 14 a series of dedicated activities promoting positive WHS reporting practices has led to a significant increase in the number of reported WHS hazards in comparison to 2017–18.

Early Intervention: Multiple WHS early intervention strategies were implemented during 2018–19 in efforts to control and mitigate risks, including:

- *Contractor Risk Management*: An external review of contractor management WHS arrangements was undertaken. This review informed the revision of contractor management processes and procedures (including induction) and ensured alignment with industry best practice and compliance with legislative requirements.

- *Fixed Ladder Use*: An assessment of risks associated with the climbing of fixed ladders and access systems on communications towers, masts and buildings was completed during the year. This has provided clarity to our technical workforce on specific risk controls to be used when climbing these structures.

Supporting staff health and wellbeing: a series of initiatives targeting employee health and wellbeing were developed and delivered throughout the year—seeking to improve employee engagement with safety (MyWhy) as well as physical health (Stepathlon, participation in the Corporate Games) and mental health (Safety Talk/Safety Walk).

In June 2019, a reinvigorated Peer Support Programme was launched to focus on supporting the mental health of our people and engendering a workplace that promotes mental health and empowers people to seek help. The programme consists of a network of trained peer support volunteers who are able to recognise and respond to those with mental health conditions appropriately. The volunteers provide a confidential peer-based support option, with referral to a range of services. The programme's guiding principles are to Recognise, Respond and Refer.

Early Medical Assessment: in order to optimise return to work outcomes for workers, we continue our commitment to early intervention—including the introduction of the mandatory assessment by a medical practitioner for all work-related injuries.

Work Health and Safety reporting

Consultation and health and safety committees

Local WHS committee meetings were held in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, in order to consult on and work to resolve local WHS issues at those sites.

Four WHS forums were held to discuss issues and to promote information sharing specific to the technical nature of work performed by our technical staff.

Workers compensation premium

The Comcare premium for 2018–19 was 0.81 per cent of payroll as compared to 0.92 per cent in 2017–18. This continues to decline from one per cent in 2016–17.

Improvement notices and Comcare investigations

Nil for the reporting period.

Table 14: Work health and safety occurrences and hazards 2014–15 to 2018–19

Incident category	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Reported work-related WHS occurrences	236	267	221	250	**251**
Reported work-related WHS hazards	157	155	197	335	**1368**
Workplace fatality	0	0	1[1]	0	**0**
Serious Injury or Illness requiring Comcare notification	3	3	2[2]	3[3]	**3**
Dangerous Incidents requiring Comcare notification	17	11	11[4]	18[5]	**11**

1   Reported to Comcare based on historical claim for cancer related death. Subsequently Comcare rejected claim, recoded as non-work related
2   One reported serious injury or illness was recoded as non-work related based on further information
3   One reported serious injury or illness was recoded as non-work related based on a pre-existing health condition
4   Four reports recoded to non-dangerous incidents based on further information received
5   Five reports recoded to non-dangerous incidents based on further information received