

Sydney, 23 November 2011 - Australian managers strongly judge the harmonisation of Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation will be a positive impact to their organisations overall operational sustainability in 2012.

That's according to a survey conducted at last month's Safety Show Sydney 2011 by workforce management software company, ComOps which found that 87 percent of managers believe that the new work health and safety regime coming into force in January 2012 will be of benefit to their organisation. At the same time, 68 percent of respondents believe that the harmonisation model will achieve a true harmonisation of WHS laws in Australia for the first time while 60 percent of organisations believe that the laws personal liability provisions will be positive to their business.

The harmonisation of Australia's WHS legislation is intended to minimise areas of risk, and implement greater accountability and visibility into workplace safety practices within organisations. A key focus of the legislation is to improve communication and implement more comprehensive reporting. Accountability is a major focus of WHS harmonisation with the new laws demanding greater visibility into WHS practices, better communication and more comprehensive reporting. Business owners, directors and other management will find their duty of care far more tightly defined.

In light of the upcoming harmonisation laws, when asked about the three most critical factors for driving a successful WHS program today, 74 percent said that creating the right culture in the company was the most important factor while 52% indicated that having management support and participation was the second most important factor. Almost half of all respondents (48 percent) said that deploying tools throughout the entire organisation to report on hazards and incidents was the third most important factor in their current planning.

Indeed, Australian organisations have also been proactive in preparing for the new harmonisation laws. The survey found that 68 percent of participants have already prepared their processes and systems in time for the new legislation, while 18 percent believe it will take their organisation at least another six to 12 months to achieve the task.

In order to prepare for the harmonised laws, the survey found that 31 percent of organisations are developing clear WHS policies and procedures while other key actions include auditing existing WHS systems and conducting comprehensive training of directors, officers and employees to reduce the risk of prosecution and injuries.

Daniel Sheahan, General Manager, ComOps, said, During the remaining months, businesses would be well advised to audit their risk management strategy as well as revisit their existing WHS plans, and confirm that they are still appropriate and will meet the requirements of the new legislation. Harmonisation provides an excellent opportunity for organisations to strengthen their management and employees awareness of risk.

The survey also pinpointed the diversity of issues confronting occupational health and safety managers today as they prepare their organisations for harmonisation in January. While respondents believe the focus of their organisations right now is on implementing health and safety solutions, also high on their agenda for action in 2012 is identifying and eliminating hazards.

On a positive note, the survey found that 74 percent of participants also feel that their organisations workplace safety policies and programs are being driven and supported by their top executives.

Finally, the survey also sheds light on how safety incidents are being reported in Australian business today with 43 percent of organisations monitoring and analysing safety performance with a dedicated OHS and risk management system. Additional methods of monitoring safety included in-house developed software, Microsoft Access/Excel spreadsheets and HR/payroll systems.

The number of organisations supplementing these systems with manual or paper-based processes declined from 32 percent in 2010 to 15 percent in 2011 potentially highlighting the fact that businesses are now deploying comprehensive safety, risk and claims management solutions that proactively protect and drive their organisation by efficiently managing safety processes, mitigating risk, reducing costs, and complying with legislation.

The ComOps survey was completed by 218 professionals, 27 percent of which represented organisations with more than 1,000 employees.

#### About ComOps Limited

ComOps Limited has a 39-year history in the IT industry in Australasia and listed on the ASX in 1999. The company develops, sells, implements, hosts and supports software solutions in the ERP, Business Intelligence, Mobile Sales Force Automation, eCommerce, Retail, Risk Management & Safety Compliance, Workforce Management and Human Capital Management markets. These solutions are used by a range of blue chip clients such as Toll Transport, Sensis, RACQ, Steinhoff Asia Pacific (Freedom Furniture), Heinz, Australia Post, Toshiba, Dulux, Canon, Queensland Government, NSW Lotteries, DP World, Virgin Blue and Commonwealth Bank to name just a few.

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