

Position Description

Position Title	WHS Policy Officer		
Reports To	Senior Policy Officer, Work Health & Safety		
Division	Centre for Work Health & Safety	Work Centre	Industrial & Policy
Location	Level 4, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne		
Classification	Level 5	Mode	Full-time
Direct Reports	Nil	Date	September 2026

Position Purpose

The WHS Policy Officer – is responsible for developing and delivering the ACTU policy, advocacy, training materials, workplace resources and campaign work with respect to work health and safety.. The role will provide general WHS policy support with a specific focus on workplace mental health. This includes providing policy advice on WHS matters broadly and mental health specifically along with responsibility for delivering *the Mind Your Head* campaign to raise awarenessof, and support unions to organise to reduce the incidence of workplace stressors across Australian workplaces

As a member of Safe Work Australia the ACTU leads the movements policy advocacy for safe and healthy work. In August 2026 Safe Work Australia finalised the Best Practice Review of Work Health and Safety recommending to WHS Ministers a significant (5 year) program of work to improve the WHS framework in Australia. Once endorsed by Ministers this review will drive significant policy reform at Safe Work Australia that the ACTU will support.

In addition to policy advocacy the ACTU has identified workplace mental health capacity building as a key priority for the movement. Two thirds of workers will be exposed to psychosocial hazards at work. Whilst workers compensation statistics mask the true incidence of mental stress, these injuries and illnesses are the fastest growing serious injury claim type in the workers compensation system. The ACTU is committed to campaigning for better workplace laws to protect workers and to work with affiliates and subject matter experts to help workers and employers identify mental health hazards at work and provide them with the tools to eliminate them.

The ACTU, along with its affiliates, developed the *Mind Your Head* Campaign. This campaign aims to raise awareness of mental health hazards at work and provide workers and unions with practical tools to address negative mental health impacts.

Working with unions and key stakeholders, this role has responsibility for planning, delivery, coordination, and evaluation of the program model that will combat the negative mental health impacts of work.

Responsibilities

Key responsibilities include:

WHS policy development and reform

- Research, analyse and provide authoritative policy advice on work health and safety legislation, regulation, codes of practice, national policy proposals and emerging WHS issues.
- Develop ACTU policy positions and recommendations across the full range of WHS matters, including physical and psychosocial hazards, occupational health, injury prevention, regulatory effectiveness, enforcement and workers' compensation intersections.
- Monitor and assess developments in WHS law, regulation, research and practice, and identify their implications for workers, unions and the ACTU's policy and advocacy priorities.
- Prepare high-quality policy papers, briefings, submissions, consultation responses, reports and correspondence for ACTU leadership, affiliates, government, regulators and other relevant bodies.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the union movement's policy and

advocacy strategy for the program of national WHS reform arising from the Best Practice Review of Work Health and Safety.

National representation and advocacy

- Support the ACTU's participation in Safe Work Australia and other national, state and territory WHS forums, including preparing meeting briefs, policy positions, speaking notes, recommendations and follow-up actions.
- Represent the ACTU, as required, in consultations, working groups, stakeholder forums and discussions with governments, regulators, unions, researchers and other WHS bodies.
- Build agreement across affiliates on priority WHS policy matters and translate the practical experiences of workers and unions into national policy and regulatory advocacy.
- Develop and maintain productive relationships with ACTU affiliates, health and safety representatives, government agencies, regulators, subject matter experts and other relevant stakeholders.

Affiliate policy support and movement capability

- Provide timely, practical and evidence-based WHS policy advice and support to ACTU affiliates and internal ACTU stakeholders.
- Consult with affiliates to identify emerging workplace hazards, regulatory gaps and movement priorities, and use this information to inform ACTU policy development and advocacy.
- Coordinate affiliate input into ACTU submissions, consultations and national WHS reform processes.
- Develop policy guidance, training materials, workplace resources and other practical tools that assist affiliates, health and safety representatives and workers to understand and apply WHS rights and protections.
- Plan and facilitate policy briefings, workshops, webinars and forums that build union capability to participate in WHS policy, regulatory and workplace change.

Psychosocial hazards and *Mind Your Head*

- Lead the policy and program development of the *Mind Your Head* campaign as a key component of the ACTU's broader WHS strategy.
- Ensure that the campaign reflects contemporary WHS law, evidence and best practice concerning psychosocial hazards and the employer duty to eliminate or minimise risks arising from the design and management of work.
- Work with affiliates and subject matter experts to develop practical resources that support unions, health and safety representatives and workers to identify, assess and address psychosocial hazards.
- Coordinate the planning, delivery and evaluation of *Mind Your Head* activities, ensuring alignment with broader ACTU WHS policy, organising and advocacy priorities.
- Provide strategic advice on campaign direction, opportunities, risks, stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of campaign activities.

Strategic projects and organisational contribution

- Plan and deliver WHS policy projects, including establishing workplans, managing competing priorities, monitoring milestones and reporting on progress, risks and outcomes.
- Work collaboratively with policy, legal, research, organising, campaigns, communications and education staff to ensure WHS considerations are integrated across ACTU work.
- Commission or coordinate research and expert advice where required to support evidence-based ACTU policy development.
- Prepare governance and funding reports and maintain appropriate records of project decisions, expenditure, risks, deliverables and outcomes.
- Contribute to strategic planning and priority setting within the Centre for Work Health & Safety and the Legal, Research & Policy Work Centre.
- Perform other duties consistent with the purpose and classification of the position.

Educational and Work Experience Qualifications

- Tertiary qualified in a relevant field (desirable) or at least 4 years relevant work experience.
- Experience of working with unions or other community organisations, would be an advantage

but is not essential.

Other requirements

- The position may occasionally require duties performed outside of office hours, especially around key campaign moments and for management of qualitative research projects

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

- Commitment to the union movement and to the interests of working people.
- A talented team player, who proactively looks to troubleshoot any potential problems and puts in place contingencies to ensure successful outcomes.
- Experience in leading and managing small teams
- Being able to apply a hands-on approach and influence wider stakeholder support.
- Coordinate a number of key program outcomes simultaneously
- Previous experience in WHS and/or campaigning, with good understanding of stakeholder management.
- Strong organisational skills
- Excellent judgement, strong interpersonal and relationship building skills
- Capacity to work with limited supervision and to tight deadlines
- Ability to apply budget & project management skills
- Ability to evaluate and report on the impact of potential courses of action and campaigns in relevant area.

Key Contacts

Key Internal Contacts

Legal, Research & Policy Work Centre
All ACTU Work Centre's and Staff
ACTU Leadership

External Contacts

ACTU affiliates & workplaces
Other stakeholders' and relevant external parties.