

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally
Harmonized System of Classification
and Labelling of Chemicals
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GHS

Reports from Governments or organizations

Implementation update

Transmitted by the expert from Australia

Work on implementation of the GHS is proceeding across various chemical regulatory sectors in Australia. Policy development in each of the key sectors is generally undertaken by an Australian Government agency, with implementation of the policy undertaken by Australian, State and Territory government agencies (9 governments). The key sectors in Australia, which have historically evolved, are workplace chemicals, poisons, agricultural and veterinary chemicals, environmental chemicals, dangerous goods transport and therapeutic goods. Most chemicals are captured by the scope of more than one sector.

For the workplace chemicals sector, Australia is currently developing a new National Standard and Code of Practice. The National Standard will be the basis for the regulations for workplace chemicals in each of the Australian, State and Territory governments. The new Standard will align existing requirements for hazardous substances and dangerous goods, using the classification and labeling principles of the GHS. Workshops to discuss the first complete draft of the new National Standard and an associated Code of Practice were held in November 2005 with key industry, employee and government stakeholders. It is intended to release the draft documents for public comment early in 2006, with finalisation expected in mid to late 2006.

As part of the review of the workplace chemicals framework, a new code of practice for labeling of workplace hazardous chemicals is also being developed. This code of practice will provide guidance on labeling workplace chemicals consistent with the principles set out in the GHS.

A significant issue still to be overcome is the development of transition requirements to move from the current workplace chemicals regime, including the existing classification and labelling requirements, and ensuring that the transition is implemented consistently across the workplace chemical regulatory agencies in each state and territory jurisdiction.

Progress towards implementation of the GHS across other chemical sectors in Australia is ongoing, with regular consultation occurring between policy developers and regulators of the different sectors. A key issue in achieving consistent adoption of the GHS in Australia is resolving issues that arise from the use of a risk-based approach to labeling of chemicals in the agricultural and veterinary chemicals sector and the poisons regulatory area.

Australia is also currently reviewing its dangerous goods transport requirements. A revised Australian Dangerous Goods Code for transport based on the 14th revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations, is currently being finalised. A unique aspect of the Australian code is the requirement for inner package labelling with dangerous goods information. The new code will recognize the GHS as an appropriate labeling system for the labeling of inner packaging.

The environmental policy area is developing a new Environmental Risk Management Framework as a basis for improved consistency between State and Territory environmental regulators.

Australia is working towards being in a position to implement the GHS in 2008.
