

---

## Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

25 June 2018

### Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

#### Thirty-fifth session

Geneva, 4-6 July 2018

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

#### Implementation of the GHS: reports on the status of implementation

### Status of GHS implementation in Australia and internationally

#### Transmitted by the expert from Australia

#### Introduction

1. The report of the thirty-second session of the Sub-Committee (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/64) notes the expert from Australia will inform the Sub-Committee on the progress of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) implementation in Australia.
2. This paper provides the update and seeks information from the Sub-Committee on intended implementation timeframes for recent editions of the GHS in other economies.

#### Implementation of the GHS in Australia

3. In Australia, the GHS is implemented through model work health and safety (WHS) and other equivalent laws.
4. The model WHS laws include obligations to classify chemicals in accordance with the third revised edition of the GHS. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and labelling requirements are set out in the model laws and are consistent with the GHS.
5. Implementation of the GHS through the model WHS laws is limited to physical and health hazards for chemicals used in the workplace. The following building blocks have not been adopted: Aquatic toxicity (chronic and acute), hazardous to the ozone layer, acute toxicity category 5, skin corrosion/irritation category 3, serious eye damage category 2B, aspiration hazard category 2, and flammable gases category 2.
6. To date, seven of the nine Australian jurisdictions in the Commonwealth, states and territories have adopted the model laws. The remaining two states (Victoria and Western Australia) have equivalent laws which implement the GHS with a similar scope to the model WHS laws, and accept chemicals classified and labelled under the model WHS laws as compliant. The state of Victoria requires classification for health hazards to be undertaken according to the third, fourth and fifth editions of the GHS, with duty holders able to classify and label physical hazards in accordance with either the GHS or the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, which is based on the UN model regulations for the Transport of Dangerous Goods, 19<sup>th</sup> edition.
7. In practice, manufacturers, importers and others conducting business in multiple Australian jurisdictions use the third revised edition of the GHS to discharge their duties

under the model WHS laws in relation to classifying and labelling workplace chemicals for use in Australia.

8. Exemptions from classification and hazard communication requirements apply to some substances, mixtures and articles depending on use and coverage under other regulatory regimes. For example, food and beverages, tobacco, and tobacco products are completely exempt from GHS classification, SDS and labelling requirements. Hazardous chemicals and explosives in transit are exempted when regulated under another safety law. Consumer products, and human therapeutic goods are exempt from labelling where labelled under other regulatory regimes<sup>1</sup>. Exemptions from some labelling requirements have been put in place for agricultural and veterinary chemicals in recognition of hazard information already required to be provided on labels, and regulatory controls on certain veterinary medicines<sup>2</sup>.

9. A five year transitional period, which ended on 31 December 2016, was provided to allow time for manufacturers and importers to comply with the new classification, SDS and labelling obligations.

10. Model Codes of Practice for the labelling and preparation of SDS were published to support the amended model WHS laws. Guidance material was also published on GHS classifications, with a focus on the translation from existing classifications where possible.

11. To further support implementation, a number of education and awareness raising campaigns were run by Safe Work Australia, and Commonwealth, state and territory WHS regulators. Safe Work Australia conducted free face-to-face training for approximately 2500 stakeholders at venues around Australia between 2012 and 2014. Information and awareness campaigns targeted at all duty holders across the supply chain, including end users using the theme “Are you GHS ready?”<sup>3</sup> developed by SafeWork New South Wales ran throughout the transitional period.

### **Australia’s list of Hazardous Chemicals**

12. The [Hazardous Chemicals Information System](#), (HCIS) is a searchable advisory database of GHS classifications. The HCIS was launched in July 2016 and contains classifications provided by the [National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme](#) (NICNAS), and harmonised classifications from Annex VI to the Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulation ((EC) No 1272/2008)). The HCIS was updated in May 2018 with amendments made to 672 existing chemicals, and the addition of 755 new entries, bringing the total number of chemicals listed to over 5600.

13. The HCIS has been accessed by some 36,000 users in the last 12 months, totaling 393,000 pages views<sup>4</sup>, and is the most visited part of the Safe Work Australia website.

### **Implementation of GHS, sixth revised edition in Australia**

14. Work has commenced towards implementation of the sixth revised edition of the GHS in Australia through the model WHS laws.

---

<sup>1</sup> Labelling requirements for consumer products are outlined in the Poisons Standard.

<sup>2</sup> GHS pictograms are not required to be added to market labels for agricultural and veterinary chemicals. GHS hazard and precautionary statements do not have to be added to market labels where the statements are inconsistent with, or duplicate, label statements approved by the [Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority](#). Veterinary medicines for listed on Schedule 8 (Controlled Drugs) and Schedule 4 (Prescription medicines) in supplied in a form for direct administration to animals do not have to comply with GHS labelling requirement.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of resources used in the awareness raising campaign can be found on the Safe Work Australia website.

<sup>4</sup> Data from 31 May 2017-8 May 2018

15. Australian Government requirements for regulatory change requires an assessment of the costs and benefits of the regulatory change to be considered. This includes potential impacts on international trade and competition.

16. The GHS fundamentally recognises the importance of international harmonisation of classification and labelling in the global chemical trade (Chapter 1.1, paragraph 1.1.13).

17. Imported chemicals comprise significant proportion of the Australian chemicals market. To ensure that adoption of the sixth revised edition of the GHS in Australia is aligned with major chemicals markets it would be beneficial to co-ordinate adoption with other economies.

## **Next steps**

18. The expert from Australia welcomes information from other economies on the status of GHS implementation and intended timeframes for implementing the sixth revised edition of the GHS.

19. The expert from Australia suggests that as countries consider transitioning to later editions of the GHS, reports to the Sub-Committee on the progress and expected adoption timeframes will become increasingly valuable to economic trading partners and support furthering the goals of the GHS.

---