

# Work Health and Safety (WHS) Report

## Quarter 1 2021

This report provides an overview of Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing issues:

1. Notifiable Incidents
2. Health and Safety Representatives
3. Influenza Vaccination Program
4. Air Monitoring
5. WHS Action Plan 2020-2021
  - 5.1 WHSMS Declaration for Members of the Executive
  - 5.2 Actioning of Deliverables, WHS Action Plan 2020-2021
  - 5.3 Engaging Staff about the Plan and their Contribution
6. WHS Report for Quarter 1 2021
7. Status of Action Items, Previous WHS Reports
8. Ongoing Refinements to WHSMS

### 1. Notifiable Incidents

There were no notifiable incidents reported to relevant WHS regulators during Quarter 1 2021. However, an electrical incident was referred to WorkSafe Victoria for guidance about whether it was notifiable. The regulator advised that the incident did not strictly meet the criteria for notifiable incidents e.g. immediate treatment was not required by the impacted staff member. *Refer to page 9 for more information.*

### 2. Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)

The University continued to recruit Health and Safety Representatives (**HSRs**) during the quarter. Academic and professional staff are encouraged to nominate for vacant positions.

### 3. Influenza Vaccination Program

The annual flu vaccination program is scheduled from May 2021. Vaccination clinics will be scheduled, on six campuses, between early May and early June. All staff, including casuals and sessionals, are eligible to receive the vaccination. From late April, vaccination vouchers will be available from Vitality Work's booking portal. These vouchers will enable staff to access vaccinations from local pharmacies.

The program will be released to staff via a Staff Bulletin article on 21 April 2021 and other communications will be scheduled between April 2021 and early June 2021 that promote the benefits of being vaccinated and provide staff with easy access to the booking portal.

Staff should wait two weeks between getting the flu jab and COVID-19 vaccine to optimise the effectiveness of both vaccinations. However, the advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), is that "it doesn't matter which one you have first".

## 4. Air Monitoring

The University is currently exploring the options for sharing the data that is generated by indoor monitoring devices as part of a broader air monitoring program. The data from this monitoring will support the University's decision-making during periods of deteriorating air quality, including during bushfire seasons.

Staff are encouraged to download [IQ AirVisual](#) to source air quality ratings, and weather and air quality forecasts and associated recommendations.

## 5. WHS Action Plan 2020-2021

The [plan](#) outlines ACU's commitment to reducing musculoskeletal injuries by 15%, improving staff and student wellbeing and supporting work areas to [implement actions](#) (associated with applying ACU's [Work Health and Safety Management System \(WHSMS\)](#)) which will strengthen risk management practices.

### 5.1 WHSMS Declaration for Members of the Executive

A WHSMS Declaration for Members of the Executive and an accompanying WHSMS self-assessment tool has been developed and is currently being reviewed by stakeholders. The annual declaration will support organisational units to strengthen their risk management practices through a verification process. The declaration will also prepare organisational units for audits and support the university community to apply the WHSMS.

Members of the Executive will complete the annual declaration, on behalf of organisational units, and submit it to their relevant Senior Member of the Executive. Senior Managers will also be encouraged to complete the declaration and WHSMS self-assessment tool on behalf of their functional unit.

The WHSMS Self-Assessment Tool, which is completed as part of the declaration, outlines the key actions which should be implemented. For example:

- Six-monthly [WHS Inspections](#) of work and learning areas should be conducted;
- Significant [WHS risk](#) should be identified and managed;
- The [design of new/renovated facilities](#) should be informed by safety and wellbeing considerations;
- [riskware reports](#) should be promptly logged about incidents that occur as a result of an ACU managed or influenced activity which impacts upon staff, students, visitors, or contractors; and
- Safety should be discussed during team meetings.

## 5.2 Actioning of Deliverables, WHS Action Plan 2020-2021

Actions	Responsibility	How has this Been Actioned?	To be Actioned, QTR. 2 2021	Comments
<b>REDUCING MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES</b>				
Staff watch manual handling videos on Safety Hub (accessed from staff website).	Staff	229 views of relevant videos between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2021		Relevant video titles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Manual Handling; and</li> <li>• Principles of Safe Lifting and Carrying.</li> </ul>
Review of musculoskeletal injuries, logged in riskware.	Relevant nominated supervisors/responsible staff	4 of the 5 (80%) manual handling incidents, have been reviewed for WHS risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnings will be circulated via First Safety Alert, May 2021; and</li> <li>• Manual handling resources will be shared with relevant nominated supervisors.</li> </ul>	
Review of falls, logged in riskware.	Relevant nominated supervisors	8 of the 15 (53.33%) of the reports were reviewed and managed during Quarter 1, 2021. The remaining reports will be reviewed, for learnings, shortly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Quarter 1 2021 reports will be reviewed for learnings and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHS Unit, HR, will continue to provide targeted support to nominated supervisors that are reviewing these reports.</li> </ul>
Centrally funded WHS Risk Assessment Training.	Relevant staff	6 WHS risk assessment workshops were held (December 2020 to March 2021) that were attended by 60 academic and professional staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff can access the video titled <a href="#">Risk Assessment Fundamentals</a>, Safety Hub; and</li> <li>• Staff and nominated supervisors should review and apply the <a href="#">WHS Risk Management Procedure</a>.</li> </ul>
Staff watch Risk Assessment Fundamentals, Safety Hub (accessed from staff website).	Staff	23 views of Risk Assessment Fundamentals and Understanding Hazards and Risks between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2021.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should <a href="#">visit Safety Hub</a> to access these videos.</li> </ul>

Actions	Responsibility	How has this Been Actioned?	To be Actioned, QTR. 2 2021	Comments
<b>REDUCING MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES Continued...</b>				
Ongoing actioning of recommendations made by AESC during annual property and grounds inspections.	Facilities Management	Ongoing actioning of recommendations by Facilities Management.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual WHS inspection schedules are developed/actioned.</li> </ul>
WHS Risk Assessment Template for assessing manual handling risks will be released.	WHS Unit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be actioned by WHS Unit, HR, during Quarter 2 2021.</li> </ul>	
<b>STRENGTHENING WELLBEING</b>				
Continue to raise awareness of EAP services, Real Time Health resources, RU OK? and other resources.	HR	EAP was promoted via November and December 2020 Workplace posts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing promotion of these resources.</li> </ul>	
Staff will continue to be provided with educational support as they work remotely and return to work on campus.	HR	417 staff joined the Working Remotely Workplace Group which featured a number of posts about safety and wellbeing.		
Develop a Recovery at Work Program for the major states that ACU operates within, which is informed by early intervention principles.	WHS Unit	The program has been developed and is currently being reviewed by internal stakeholders prior to publication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will be published in Quarter 2 2021.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness will be raised, by the University, about this resource in Quarter 2/3.</li> </ul>
<b>STRENGTHENING THE WHSMS, INCLUDING WHS RISK MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES</b>				
A minimum of 3 safety alerts will be distributed each year – to raise awareness about learnings and safe practices.	WHS Unit, HR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaugural safety alert is scheduled for May 2021.</li> </ul>	
Targeted communications and training support provided to organisational units to support them to generate reports and apply learnings on a broader scale.	WHS Unit, HR	Actioned during Quarter 4 2020, by WHS Consultants, and ongoing requests for riskware reporting access have been received.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHS Consultant (once recruited) will provide additional support to work areas.</li> </ul>

Actions	Responsibility	How has this Been Actioned?	To be Actioned, QTR. 2 2021	Comments
<b>STRENGTHENING THE WHSMS, INCLUDING WHS RISK MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES Continued...</b>				
Implement the remaining recommendations of the audit against WHSMS Standard AS/NZS 4801.	WHS Unit, HR	94.12% (48 of 51) of the audit recommendations have been completed (46)/partially completed (2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the remaining audit recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All recommendations that are actioned are also aligned with the International Standard for WHSMS ISO 45001.</li> </ul>
WHS Inspection Checklist for grounds and properties is revised and centrally published.	WHS Unit, HR Facilities Management	This WHS Inspection Checklist is being published on the staff website.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">WHS Inspections Checklists</a></li> </ul>
Continue to align the WHSMS with the requirements of ISO 45001 to facilitate improvements in consultations, the assessment and management of WHS risk, governance, and other enhancements.	WHS Unit, HR Properties and Facilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to align ACU's WHSMS with ISO 45001.</li> </ul>	

### 5.3 Engaging Staff about the Plan and their Contribution

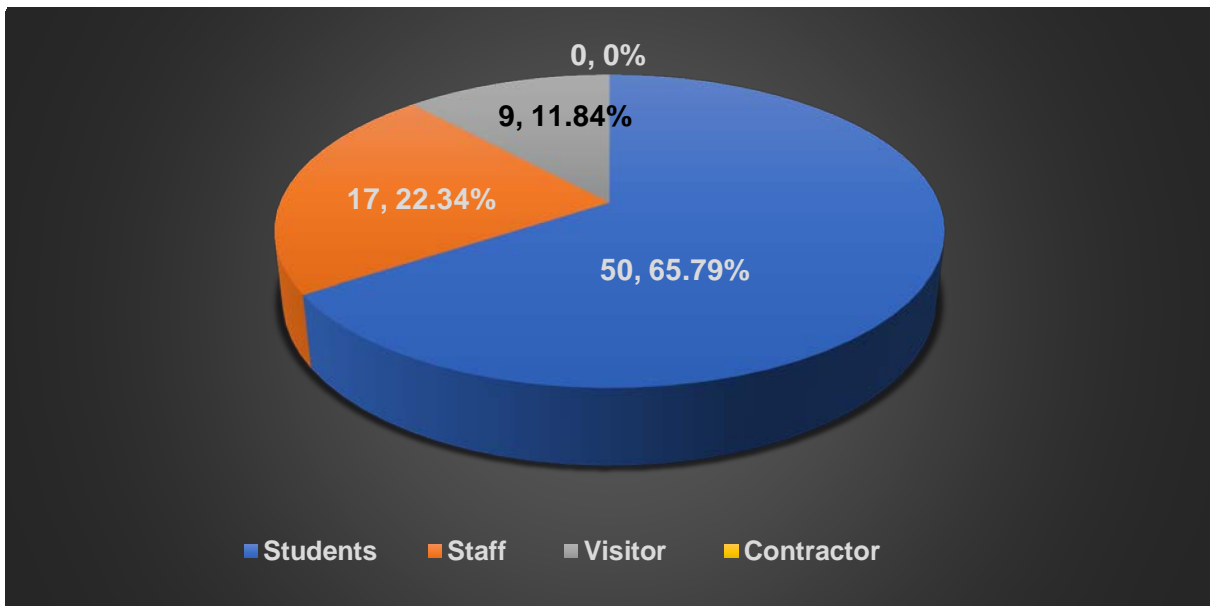
An annual WHSMS Communication and Engagement Plan was developed for 2021 to support ACU's consultations and the engagement with staff about their role in contributing to the safety of their campus and the WHS action plan.

#### Communications scheduled for Quarter 2 2021

Target Audience	Communication
All Staff	Staff Bulletin article and associated Workplace post that highlights safety achievements, 2020, and summarises some of the key priorities for 2021 which will facilitate improvements in ACU's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS).
All Staff	Workplace post that launches Safety Alerts (a deliverable within the WHS action plan) that highlights learnings from injuries and other incidents which have impacted upon members of the university community.
Vice-Chancellors Executive Board (VCEB)	Briefing during the June meeting about the July launch of the pocket-sized WHS action plan.
Members of the Executive	Email that engages this group about the July launch of the pocket-sized WHS action plan and their role in influencing staff to contribute to the success of the plan.

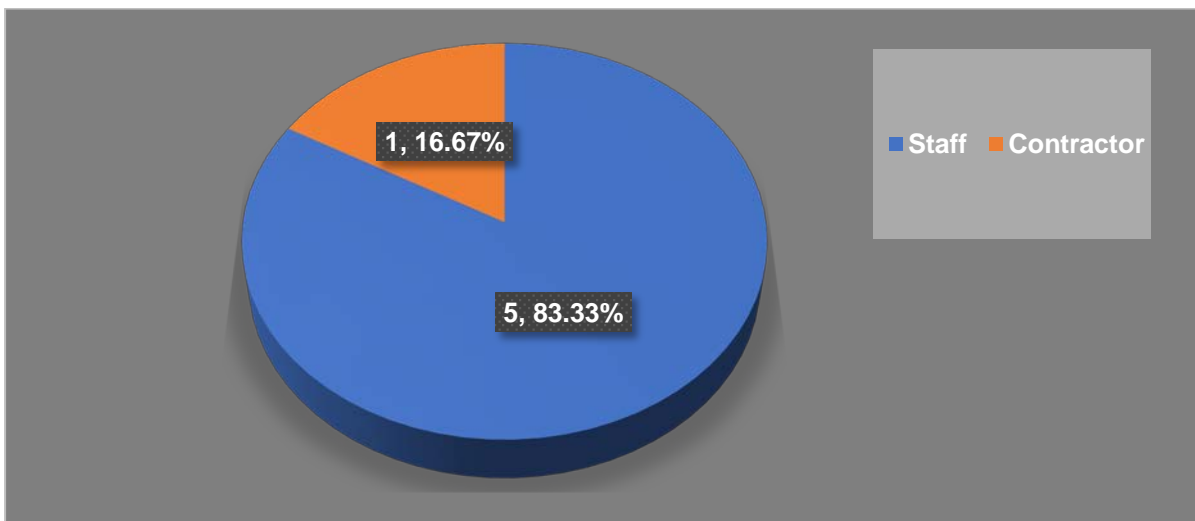
## 6. WHS Report, Quarter 1 2021

### 6.2 Number of riskware Incidents about Each Person Type, Quarter 1 2021



Number of incidents: 76

### 6.2 Number of Hazards Logged About Each Person Type, Quarter 1 2021



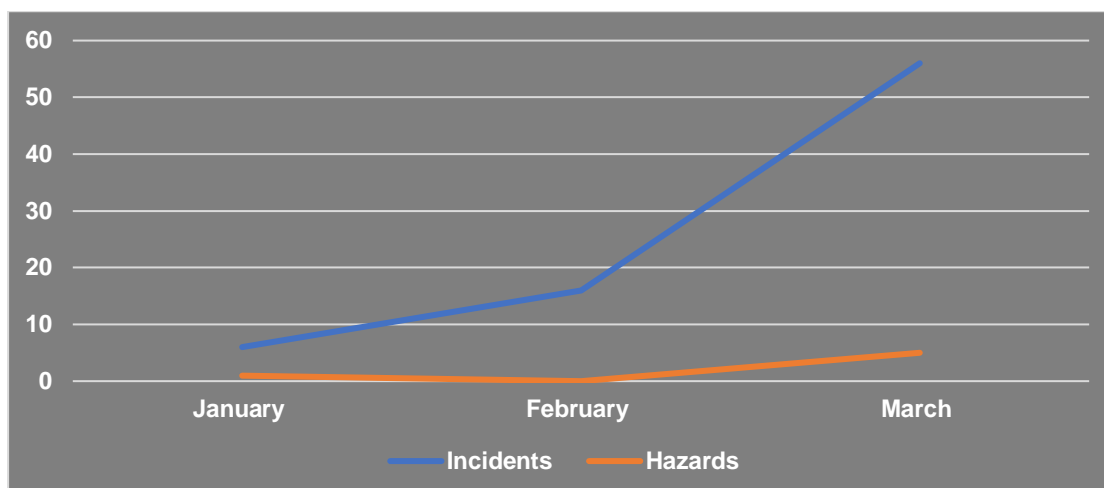
Number of hazards: 6

Student reports accounted for 50, 65.79%, of the incidents that were logged in Quarter 1 2021. A significant portion of these reports, 20, were about placement incidents and 24 reports occurred within learning spaces. Forty-seven of the 50 student reports were logged about Faculty of Health Sciences students. The WHS Unit continues to engage ACU's other faculties about the under-reporting of student incidents.

Seventeen reports, 22.34%, of incidents were logged about staff during the quarter and visitor incidents accounted for 9 reports (11.84%). Many of these visitor reports were about incidents that occurred while clients were attending health clinics or being serviced by students on placement.

Five of the 6 reports of hazards submitted were about staff. In addition, a staff member reported an incident on behalf of a contractor who identified an electrical hazard as part of the ongoing consultations between ACU and its contractors.

### 6.3 Number of Reports Submitted by Month, Quarter 1 2021



### 6.4 Number of Reports Reviewed and Managed for Risk, Quarter 1 2021

Month	No. Logged	No. of Completed riskware Action Plans	% of Total
January	7	7	100.00%
February	15	15	100.00%
March	60	27	45.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>58.54%</b>

The number of riskware reports logged each month, during Quarter 1 2021, is reflective of the campus populations during this period. There is a strong correlation between the start of semester and the significantly larger number of reports that were submitted in March. Sixty reports were logged in March, in comparison with 22 during January and February combined.

All of the riskware reports, which were logged in January and February, were reviewed for learnings and managed by responsible staff. This is attributed to higher levels of engagement and awareness about safety and wellbeing by university staff. Additional automated riskware reminders and escalations are also contributing to this awareness.

There is a time lag between riskware reports being logged and reviewed for risk. As at 9 April 2021, only 45% of the reports that had been submitted in March had been closed. Approximately half of these reports were logged from 15 March 2021 and based on previous trends, the vast majority of these reports will be reviewed and closed by late April.

## 6.5 Mechanism of Injury by Person Type - QTR.1 2020, in Comparison to QTR.1, 2021

Mechanism of Injury by Person Types	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021		
	Student	Staff	Visitor	Contractor	Sub-total	% of Total	Sub-total	% of Total				
Falls on the same level (incl. trips and slips)	3	8	7	8	0	3	0	0	10	15.87%	19	23.17%
Illness (excl. psychological) incl. fainting, pains in chest, heart palpitations	10	10	3	2	0	3	0	0	13	20.63%	15	19.51%
Sharps (needle stick injury)	12	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	13	20.63%	9	10.98%
Unspecified mechanisms of injury or other	4	6	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	6.35%	8	9.76%
Other Muscular Stress (incl. manual handling)	1	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	4.76%	6	7.32%
Sporting Injury (incl. gym/cardio and recreational activities)	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0.00%	6	7.32%
Hitting objects with a part of the body	3	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	6	9.52%	4	4.88%
Verbal abuse/exposure to violence	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	4	4.88%
Other and multiple mechanisms of injury	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	3.17%	3	3.66%
Exposure to mental stress factors	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	2	2.44%
Being hit by moving objects	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	5	7.94%	1	1.22%
Contact or exposure to heat and cold	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.59%	1	1.22%
Contact with electricity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.00%	1	1.22%
Exposure to sharp, sudden sound	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	1	1.22%
Long term contact with chemical or substance	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	1	1.22%
Ampule Injury	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3.17%	0	0.00%
Contact with, or exposure to, biological factors	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3.17%	0	0.00%
Single contact with chemical or substance (excludes insect and spider bites and stings)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Utility failure (power, gas, water)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Vehicle accident	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3.17%	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

Eighty-two riskware reports were submitted during Quarter 1 2021, in comparison to 63 in the corresponding quarter in 2020. The lower levels of reporting in 2020 is mainly attributed to COVID-19, which was beginning to impact upon the University and campus populations.

53.66% (42) of the reported riskware incidents/hazards during Quarter 1 2021 addressed Falls on the Same Level, Illnesses and Sharps.

Falls on the same level are consistently the University's most common mechanism of injury and the management of this and other musculoskeletal WHS risks have been prioritised within the WHS Action Plan 2020-2021. These types of injuries, which are usually sustained as a result of falls, manual handling, and performance of repetitive



tasks; contribute to over 90% of ACU's accepted workers compensation claims and a significant number of lost time injury days. Three of the falls impacted upon clients – one person tripped on a treadmill and a client tripped while a student was assessing his walking endurance. Three falls on the same level also resulted from sporting activities, including a tumbling activity. Reports of fall hazards were also logged during Quarter 1 2021, including electrical cords causing a trip hazard and a slippery floor surface. Facilities Management placed signage on the wet surface to reduce the risk of falls.

Manual handling incidents impacted upon a student and two staff during Quarter 1 2021. The student was on placement and the incident involved moving a patient. One staff member felt some minor pain as a result of moving a box. Medical treatment was accessed the following day when it became clear that an injury had been sustained. Another report detailed a manual handling injury that was sustained while a staff member was recovering from surgery. Staff are being encouraged to seek Concierge assistance to move boxes and other awkward and/or heavy items and watch Safe Manual Handling, [Safety Hub](#).

Of the riskware reports, reporting during Quarter 1 2021, 19.51% (15) were predominately about Illnesses. Ten of the 15 reports impacted upon students. Eight of these 10 reports detailed incidents of students feeling dizzy or fainting. One of these students had not eaten prior to attending university. Another student was diagnosed with high blood pressure during a placement activity and was instructed to seek a medical clearance.

Sharps/needlestick incidents accounted for 9 (10.98%) of the reports that were logged. These incidents, which impacted upon students within the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine, occurred on campus.

Verbal Abuse/Exposure to Violence was added as an additional mechanism of injury category, within riskware during the previous quarter to improve the visibility of these incidents. These incidents predominately impact upon students. Four of these 5 reports impacted upon placement students within the health system and schools. One of the students was provided with support and training because of her exposure to allegations of racism. An academic staff member who was exposed to significant criticism from a student. As a result of this behaviour, the student was excluded from the learning activity and misconduct procedures were activated.

The two reports of Exposure to Mental Stress Factors also impacted upon students on placement. One student was confronted by a patient with a broken chair – she locked herself in a room until the area was secure. The other (paramedic) student was called to an incident and witnessed police restraining a man who was holding a knife. WHS staff are continuing to raise awareness among responsible staff of the need to offer student counselling support to those students that are impacted by traumatic events.

One of the reports logged, during the quarter, detailed a low level of awareness about accessing after-hours first aid.

An incident was reported, during March 2021, about a staff member being exposed to bare electrical wires. The staff member was not physically harmed but was provided with support. As a result of the incident, the University is undertaking a review of the equipment within simulation laboratories, electrical safety devices and the trip hazards which can be associated with the use of extension cords. Learnings from this Ballarat incident will be applied across the university.

**Action Item 1**

**Manager WHS and Wellbeing will post on Workplace to increase awareness of first aid processes.**

**6.6 New Staff Injuries that Resulted in a Lost Time Injury (full days within Quarter 1, 2021)**

Mechanism of Injury	No. of Lost Time Injury Days, Qtr. 1	Contributing Factors to Injury	Corrective Actions Initiated/Proposed
Falls on the same level	1	Slipped on a step, while carrying a basket full of	Signage will be displayed that notifies pedestrians to watch

Mechanism of Injury	No. of Lost Time Injury Days, Qtr. 1	Contributing Factors to Injury	Corrective Actions Initiated/Proposed
		teaching materials	step and/or clearly mark the edges of step
Falls on the same level	31	Slipped on a slippery surface within a local supermarket, during a recess break (lunchtime).	First aid was provided by the supermarket.
Other Muscular Stress (Including Manual Handling)	12	Lifted a box from a trolley and twisted shoulder	Safe Manual Handling Safe Work Method Statements should be followed; and Staff can also access <a href="#">Safe Manual Handling, Safety Hub</a>
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>		

Three riskware reports resulted in significant injuries and absences from university during Quarter 1 2021. The most significant injury occurred during a lunch break within a local supermarket. A staff member tripped on a slippery surface within a local supermarket. An additional report details a fall on the same level and another injury occurred as a result of manual handling.

## 7 Status of Action Items, Previous WHS Reports

Action Item	Action	Status
1.	WHS staff will engage relevant nominated supervisors about injuries that are associated with mental stress factors, falls, manual handling and ergonomics (priorities of the WHS Action Plan 2020-2021). Support will be provided to identify the contributing factors to these incidents and to apply learnings across the University.	<b>Ongoing</b>
2.	WHS staff will contact placement and other teams to prompt these work areas to remind students that counselling support is available whenever they are impacted by traumatic events, both on and off campus.	<b>Ongoing</b>
3.	ACU will continue to engage work areas about the need to contribute to the success of the WHS Action Plan 2020-2021.	<b>Completed/Ongoing</b> WHSMS Communication and Consultation Plan and associated communications have been rolled out/distributed.
4.	Manager WHS and Wellbeing will upload a sample WHS risk assessment to the WHS SharePoint site by the end of Quarter 1, 2021 which focuses on excessive workload. This resource will support work areas to assess and manage this type of wellbeing risk.	<b>To be Actioned</b>
5.	HR's WHS Consultant will upload a hazard identification checklist to the WHS SharePoint site, by the end of Quarter 1, 2021 to support work areas to identify and manage a broad range of wellbeing hazards and associated risks.	<b>To be Actioned</b> (The WHS Consultant position is currently vacant. The selection process has commenced)

Action Item	Action	Status
6.	WHS Risk management resources, which will support work areas to manage the risks of falls and manual handling injuries, will be uploaded to the WHS SharePoint site and emailed to relevant work areas by the WHS Consultant by the end of Quarter 1, 2021.	To be Actioned
7.	The Manager WHS and WHS Consultant will provide targeted support to those organisational units that uploaded less than 3 risks, to CARM, in 2020, to increase their understanding of the types of risks which are likely to impact upon their staff, students and others.	To be Actioned
8.	WHS Consultant will email Members of the Executive some educational materials about their legal responsibilities, as Officers of the University, by the end of Quarter 2, 2021.	To be Actioned
9.	Manager WHS and Wellbeing will conduct a review of the reports that don't identify the mechanism of injury. Additional options may need to be included within the relevant 'look up table'/pick list to reduce the number of uncategorised reports that are logged in riskware.	In Progress
10.	WHS Consultant will engage relevant staff within the Faculty of Health Sciences about the review of relevant WHS risk assessments that address needle stick risks within learning spaces and on placements.	In Progress

## 8 Ongoing Improvements to the WHSMS

ACU has actioned a majority of the audit recommendations, arising from the audit of the University's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS or framework). All recommendations are scheduled to be completed by early 2021. The framework was audited against *AS/NZS 4801:2001* and *Model WHS Legislation 2011*. The University is also implementing actions to align its WHSMS with International Standard ISO 45001: *Occupational health and management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*.

The following table provides a list of key actions that will support ACU to strengthen its WHSMS.

Requirements	Requirement Informed by	Status
Revisions to the WHS Communications and Consultation Procedure.	ISO 45001	Near completion (consulting about revised changes)
WHSMS Implementation Procedure (describes ACU's WHSMS and provides easy access to framework policies, procedures, and tools).	The release of additional WHSMS procedures	Near completion (currently consulting about changes)
WHS Recover at Work Program	NSW and QLD compliance	Near completion (consulting about revised changes)
WHS Skills Matrix.	To ensure that staff have appropriate competencies	Completed Consulting with relevant stakeholders

Requirements	Requirement Informed by	Status
Corrective Actions Requirements that are associated with the Work Health and Safety Management System.	ISO 45001	<b>In Progress</b>
Internal audit schedule to be developed.	ISO 45001	<b>To be Actioned</b>
Incident investigation training to be provided to staff to increase their capabilities to identify and apply learnings from incidents.	AS/NZS 4801 Audit Recommendation	<b>To be Actioned</b>
WHS Consultants to support work areas to conduct regular WHS inspections of their work and learning areas.	AS/NZS 4801 Audit Recommendation	<b>Completed</b>
Increase awareness of the University's consultations about safety and wellbeing by placing noticeboards across all campuses.	AS/NZS 4801 Audit Recommendation	<b>Partly Completed</b>
Update WHS Policy posters and circulate across ACU, to increase awareness of the University's commitment to safety and wellbeing.	AS/NZS 4801 Audit Recommendation	<b>To be Actioned</b>

Submitted for Information  
by Human Resources

April 2021