

Australia: GHS Going Live in 2017

Mr Drew Wagner
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Presenter biography

Drew has a background as a research scientist, with a BSc in biochemistry and a MMedSci in toxicokinetics. After a stint in medical research, Drew worked for the Australian Government for 25 years, mainly as a regulatory toxicologist involved in setting public health standards for pesticides and environmental chemicals and in the development of national and international chemicals management policy.

From 2001, Drew led the Australian delegation to the United Nations' Sub Committee of Experts on the GHS on numerous occasions and managed the development of national workplace chemicals hazard classification and communication material. Drew also spent two years with the OECD in Paris leading the National Test Guidelines Programme.

Presentation abstract

Australia substantially adopted the GHS hazard classification and communication elements into their national model Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation. Those requirements were then adopted by the Commonwealth and most of the state and territory work health and safety regulators in 2011-12. At that time a five-year transition period was agreed to allow for full implementation of the requirements by 1 January 2017. With that date rapidly approaching, there are still a number of areas where the hazard classification and communication requirements are a source of some debate. This presentation identifies the work done to date to allow the smooth transition to the WHS laws by January and some of the pitfalls and uncertainty ahead.