



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

CHANGE WITHIN A UNIVERSITY SAFETY SYSTEM

adelaide.edu.au

seek LIGHT

My reflection on 10+ years of
being responsible for a
University safety system

(and another 25 years
working in the sector).

**Insanity: doing the
same thing over and
over again and
expecting different
results.**

Albert Einstein

PictureQuotes.com

A brief look at some of our
changes over time

Electrical Testing – corrected over-reach

The distant past



Nothing

The recent past



Everything

Now

**Risk
Managed
Approach**

Only where
needed

WHS Act drove this thinking – but it started us looking at what was required

Workplace Inspections

When?

Was the outcome worth the effort?

Something different

Pages of tick
boxes

Screens of
tick boxes

Small number
of targets

At some
point there
must have
been nothing



No tick
boxes

Deep dive into
how safety is
managed by the
Supervisor

?

Workplace Inspection

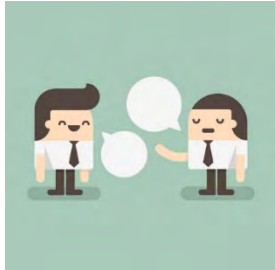
**Safety
Review**

We stopped inspections as we think it is time to evolve

Incident Reporting – general evolution

Images from freepik

Pre-1980's



Talk

Whatever was asked

1980's – 2008



Form

2 pages of questions
(Aust Stds)
Fill in what you can

2008 – 2018



Online Form

Notify function
Fill in what you can

Remaining questions
in back end

2018 – ?



App

6 easy questions

Lean back end

Contingent workflow

App workflow was designed to encourage reporting and free up time

Safety Committees

University Health and Safety Committee

5 Faculty Health and Safety Committees

3 Divisional Health and Safety Committees



1986 - 2018



Dis-Banded

Re-Focussed

Re-Focussed



2018 - ?

Our latest change - trying to refocus our committee structure



What is important isn't
that there is change

What is important
is the
'why'
that goes with it.

Compliance culture issues

Looks like

- The paperwork/systems become the focus
- Processes are put in place to ensure mistakes cannot be made
- Safety people become the gate keepers

Feels like

- Academics feel dis-empowered
- Resentment of lack of trust
- Resentment of time taken in processes they see as of little value (*Safety itself seen as a pain point*)

'Safety is not something I do, it is something done to me'

Improving our safety culture

- Safety people need to step back and let academics do safety
- Focus on **enabling not controlling**
- Empower your academics
- **Trust your academics**
- Remove processes that are too much effort for too little return
- Check that any process is **Required, Efficient and Effective**
- Consider where each process might **undermine** your safety culture

You have to be willing to allow your academics to fail

Our current change focus:

- free up time to allow safety professionals to enable academics and/or
- improve our culture through new approaches

Enabling the enabling
(a major piece of work)

Community of Practice

Bringing together the safety professionals

- To focus safety staff on enabling
- To support safety staff through change
- To bring a focus on what we do that works and what doesn't
- To overhaul processes with CULTURE in mind
- To discourage active disabling – reinforcing the 'Why'
- To provide training and up skilling

Bi-monthly CoP forums and monthly Lunch & Learn sessions

We are changing

We are questioning

We are doing things differently



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