

QUEENSLAND HEALTH CASE STUDY



Overview

Queensland Health has approximately 75,000 employees across the state spread across 15 Districts. The department's senior management is committed to ensuring a safe, supportive, protective and healthy working environment for all employees, contractors, volunteers and any others who may be affected by the conduct of their activities.

This is being achieved through the standardization of policies, systems and practices across the entire organization. Queensland Health implemented the Incident Management System (IMS) solution from Worksafe Management Systems, State-wide in 1996 after a three year pilot in the Far North Queensland District. With figures published from this pilot showing a strong return on investment, an improved safety culture and a decrease in compensable claims the system was adopted as an Enterprise State-wide Solution.

Since the roll-out of the IMS solution it has enabled

- Better information visibility
- Improved tracking of policy effectiveness
- Standardised information collection
- Safety responsibility chains to be created

- Adherence to legislative requirement in incident information collection
- With these additions to the safety processes, Queensland Health are now more safety aware of personnel risks as well as business risks.

History

Cairns Base Hospital deployed the IMS OH&S Management System to manage all safety related issues for the entire Health District from Gordonvale to Cooktown encompassing over 1600 staff. Mr. Bob Dolan, the Workplace Health and Safety Manager for Public Sector Health across the region, said the new **system** provided the tools to better manage workplace health and safety by removing the need for paperwork which was overwhelming the resources of the safety officers.

IMS amalgamates the processes of three key areas of workplace health and safety:

- incident management,
- workers compensation claims and premium management, and
- employee rehabilitation and return-to work planning.

Mr. Dolan said *"The IMS system plays a very important role in identifying correc-*

ive actions. It looks at all possible elements contributing to the problem including equipment, the staff and even the nature of the tasks being performed at the time. Corrective action control is an automatic component of IMS and helped ensure that the work environment was proactive in dealing with health and safety issues rather than responding reactively as had been the case previously".

The benefits of the system were carefully measured to ensure that the expected improvement in OH&S were realized however, the results were far better than anyone had dared to hope for, e.g. days lost to injury went from 2,645 to 382 over a 12 month period, an 86% reduction. As a result of the significant improvements experienced in the initial year, the pilot programme was extended to cover a 3 year period with the following results:

- Workcover premium savings up by over 700%
- Compensation claims down by 60%
- Compensation payments down by over 65%
- Common Law payments down by over 80%.

The system provided greater visibility and consolidation of incident to allow the identification of trends and key risk areas.

The end result was that Queensland Health extended the system to cover 65,000 employees across the whole State.

Today

Since 1996, the Queensland Health IMS solution has evolved into a modern, innovative management tool. Under the dedicated strategies of safety improvement implemented by Mr. Ian Bynon (Director Safety & Wellbeing, People and Culture Strategic Services, Queensland Health) the IMS solution has been configured to meet the needs of the complex Queensland Health environment.

Now completely web-based and totally centralised, the system boasts one of the most sophisticated, yet easy to use, reporting tools available in any information tool. Utilizing the latest ad-hoc report builders with a simple interfaced designed to be used by the non-tech savvy the system has provided direct information access to users without the need for days of training.



A dedicated IMS Team has been formed within Queensland Health to ensure the successful management and implementation of safety goals are met utilising the reporting tool associated with the IMS solution.

The Queensland Health IMS tool has allowed the consolidation and collation of information to plan safety initiatives to achieve considerable savings in premiums and provides a greater visibility to risk areas.

Increase efficiencies

Qld Health needed to ensure efficiencies were maintained during the safety management processes. Forward thinking policies were developed that would require individual districts to be empowered to take ownership of their safety responsibilities but also allow visibility to ensure all districts were heading toward the global safety vision.

“Individual District managers and their safety teams can manage their Districts’ OH&S performance including incident escalation however, all information is consolidated to corporate office allowing accurate and up to date management at the whole-of-state level” Mr Bynon said.

The IMS tool exposes not just the data collected on safety events from each districts, but also captures the timeliness of how that information was captured and managed. Being able to see this timeliness has enabled Queensland Health to make more informed decisions on not only safety resourcing and risks inherent in how a district is

being managed, but also allows the assessment of the policy directives and how they are being implemented in the real world. Until recently, we were unsure as to how effectively the IMS users were managing their safety data within the database. Using a new report devised by the IMS Team, we can now see things like how soon after the event the data is being managed. If the time-frame is extended, we can implement strategies to remedy the situation.” Mr Bynon said.

Consolidation of information

Compensation claims are inevitable in such a large organisation as Queensland Health. The crucial component of this is to ensure that when a compensation event occurs that it is managed correctly and in a timely manner.

IMS integrates the information Queensland Health receives from Workcover Queensland with that of the information within the IMS database. This integration provides both immediate and long term benefits.

When working with the Workcover data, the responsible district is notified of any erroneous data that might be added to their policy. It also identifies claims that may have not been notified to the OHS Unit. This prompts the investigation into the event to occur and also allows for visibility that this gap in information was experienced. With OH&S management being aware of this, strategies can be implemented to ensure the risk associated with missing incident information is closed. There should be no compensation claim without an associated incident investigation.

This is no different for Queensland Health and was the force behind the implementation of the centralised IMS tool.

With being able to effectively trend across Districts, Zones and the entire organisation a fuller picture can be collected on safety concerns so that a more targeted approach could be implemented for improvements.

Mr Bynon said “Before the centralised system it was always difficult to assess the state-wide risk factors. There was a lot of reliance on getting the information exported by the Districts themselves. Now, with the one database we can analyse the information holistically, with up to the minute information. It certainly creates a clearer and more consistent picture of our safety position.” Effective information visibility brings about safety results.

Easy Reporting

Queensland Health needs to be flexible and responsive when it comes to reporting on the data collected within the IMS solution. With ministerial requests, audit responses and daily case management tasks all requiring information immediacy to all levels of users, a robust reporting tool is a must.

The Queensland Health corporate direction lead to the creation of the Executive Summary Report that allowed, through easy execution and scheduling runs, a clear corporate view of the claims active in the database.

“The Executive Summary report is something I’ve always seen as a necessity once we were settled in the use of the centralised system. WMS provided a clear snapshot of our compensation position in one easy to run report. This information provides a starting point for our compensation analysis” Mr Bynon said. Complimenting the Executive Summary reporting, the IMS solution always gives full ad-hoc reporting capability. Every District has access to be able to create, run and schedule their own reports to be able to meet their individual information needs. This empowers the Districts to be able to determine their own safety concerns and gain access to their own information in a format that is familiar to them. To become a reporting user, a half day training course is all that is required to get up to speed. Within Queensland Health there are reporting users that have found the reporting interface so intuitive that they confidently create ad-hoc reports without the need of the training course at all.

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