



**5TH MEETING  
INTERNATIONAL  
ADVISORY PANEL 2016  
FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH**



**REPORT OF  
THE 5TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL  
FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH**



## INTRODUCTION

1 The International Advisory Panel (IAP) for Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) was formed in 2006 with the following terms of reference:

- a. Advise on significant trends and developments in workplace practices that would impact on WSH in Singapore;
- b. Share approaches to WSH challenges in other countries that might guide Singapore's WSH developments; and
- c. Critique WSH standards, practices and the regulatory regime in Singapore and provide advice on possible improvements to bring WSH standards in Singapore to the level of leading edge country leaders.

2 Four IAP meetings (2006, 2008, 2011 and 2014) had been held. These meetings contributed significantly to the advancement of WSH standards and outcomes in Singapore. Recommendations from IAP were instrumental in the formulation of the national strategy for WSH in 2008 and the establishment of the WSH Institute in 2011.

## FIFTH IAP MEETING

3 The fifth IAP meeting was convened on 23 and 25 August 2016 at the Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. The meeting was attended by six IAP members (see list of IAP members at Annex). The Fifth IAP meeting deliberated on the state and progress of WSH developments in Singapore since the last meeting in 2014.

4 The IAP also noted the WSH 2018 Plus – a plan to bring us back on track to achieve the 2018 target, while laying firmer foundation for sustained improvement beyond 2018. It focuses on improving WSH performance in the construction industry, strengthening WSH competency and building collective WSH ownership.

5 The IAP lauded Singapore's progress in her WSH performance since 2009 and highlighted that Singapore is already renowned in many areas for best practices in WSH. However, the IAP acknowledged that as we make improvement, driving further progress can become more challenging. Hence, the IAP said Singapore should not be discouraged by the

recent increase in fatalities. Similar fluctuations in workplace fatalities and injuries are also observed in other leading countries. The WSH2018 is a good strategy and has delivered positive results. Therefore, the IAP encouraged Singapore to continue building on these strategies and monitoring their impact.

6 The IAP endorsed the WSH 2018 Plus plan and supported the key priorities to advance Singapore's WSH performance. The IAP offered nine recommendations on the plan for the Government's consideration:

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Improving WSH Performance in Construction Industry***

7 The IAP recognised the significant efforts made to improve the WSH performance of the Construction Industry. In particular, the IAP noted that construction industry association leaders had reaffirmed their commitments and developed action plans towards improving workplace safety and health in the industry at the Construction WSH Leadership Summit in 2015. The IAP advised that Singapore see these plans through, reviewing progress regularly to evaluate their impact. The IAP agreed that the proposed new initiatives will serve as a good complement to these action plans and offered the following recommendations:

#### [Recommendation 1: Leverage on the Construction Industry Supply Chain to influence better WSH Behaviours](#)

8 The Construction supply chain is complex involving many independent stakeholders from developers, architects, designers, engineers, main contractors, to sub-contractors. Each stakeholder can play a strong role in raising WSH performances and influencing better WSH behaviours. Additionally, large construction companies have a legal responsibility for all workers on site including those of their sub-contractors.

9 The IAP noted that in the past 12 months, large projects above \$10 million, representing about 20% of the total number of worksites, accounted for 70% of employment and 80% of the fatal and major injuries. The IAP highlighted that working with key stakeholders in these large projects to raise WSH standards can have a significant impact on the performance of the

industry. For example, the IAP shared that large projects in United Kingdom 15 years ago used to account for more than half of the construction fatalities. Today construction fatalities are rare events.

10 Therefore, IAP recommended that key stakeholders in large construction projects should to demonstrate leadership and set the tone for the industry. All stakeholders in the construction supply chain, particularly developers, designers and large construction companies have to take ownership of the WSH performance of their building projects, and shape the safety and health behaviours in the industry. IAP said the differentiated regulatory approach that Singapore intends to adopt will be instrumental in encouraging all stakeholders to do so.

### [Recommendation 2: Raise the Competency of Front Line Supervisors to Drive WSH Improvements on the Ground](#)

11 Within the framework of the corporate culture and policy, front line supervisors play a pivotal role in ensuring safety and health at worksites. The supervisors are in a position to assist the workers in identifying and mitigating risks. Workers depend on them for guidance on safe work practices. They monitor standards as a day to day basis and therefore serve as an important link to the more senior management on how safety and health risks are being managed on the ground.

12 IAP recommended a strong focus on raising the competency of front line supervisors and equipping them with adequate skills to perform their roles effectively. For example, the training curriculum of supervisors should be enhanced to elevate their professionalism and equip them with the capability to conduct proper risk assessments and soft skills like communication and engagement.

### [Recommendation 3: Recognise the learning opportunities and importance of Minor Injuries and Near Misses in driving a Preventive WSH Mindset](#)

13 While it is important to continue to address fatal and major injuries, minor injuries and near misses should not be ignored. The industry needs to recognise that learning from minor injuries and near misses is necessary to drive improvements in policies, practices and culture. Furthermore, analysis of the causes of minor and major injuries, which are higher in numbers than fatalities, can provide insights to prevent fatal incidents.

14 The IAP recommended that Singapore considers its approach to the reporting, investigation and analysis of minor injuries and near misses by the regulator and within companies. This approach could be extended beyond construction industry.

### ***Strengthening WSH Competency***

15 The IAP acknowledged the plans to raise the WSH competencies of the workforce, and the quality of training. The IAP agreed that strengthening WSH competency at all levels of the workforce is core to bringing about sustained WSH improvement. To further strengthen our efforts, the IAP offer the following recommendations:

#### [Recommendation 4: Boards of Directors to become Champions of WSH and drive change](#)

16 Boards of Directors can be key drivers of WSH improvements. They foster WSH culture within their organisation and set the tone for line supervisors and workers' WSH behaviours. Therefore, they need to be aware of the impact of WSH on their business. They also need to know how they can influence WSH in their companies and set the direction for raising WSH performance. This can also enable them to better discharge their responsibilities under the Workplace Safety and Health Act.

17 The IAP further shared Australia's experience in legislating for officer's duties which has led to many more companies' board of directors to take an active role on WSH. The move was welcomed by the directors as it has created a culture where safety and health was discussed in the boardroom. This will bring about improved WSH practices and processes. Accordingly, the IAP recommended that the Board of Directors champion WSH and drive better WSH performance at the Board level. Such efforts will eventually translate to greater emphasis on WSH.

#### [Recommendation 5: Empower Industry to elevate WSH competency of their workforce beyond Statutory Requirements](#)

18 The IAP highlighted that work risks vary across and within industries depending on each company's operating circumstances. Hence, development of training curricula and standards at a national level through statutory requirements may not be sufficient.

19 The IAP shared that in many countries with leading WSH practices, companies work together in sector based associations to develop WSH training that meet their needs. This was effective in raising overall WSH competencies. Therefore, the IAP recommended that Singapore encourage companies at a sectoral level to take the lead in developing risk-specific training programmes. This would help small companies in particular.

#### [Recommendation 6: Manage the WSH Challenges posed by the Particular Nature of Singapore's Workforce such as the Ageing Workforce and Migrant Workers](#)

20 The IAP recognised the particular challenges faced by the Singapore's workforce. One aspect is the ageing Singaporean workforce and the effect it has on WSH. The IAP highlighted that there will be a strong need to build the competency to address the health factors of older workers and mitigate impact it poses on overall WSH outcomes.

21 In some industries, such as the construction industry, there is a high prevalence of migrant workers from different nationalities. The IAP highlighted that language and cultural barriers posed by migrant workers are important issues to take into account when building their WSH capabilities. For example, the use of pictograms to communicate and engage workers could be further expanded to help migrant workers better address WSH risks and understand their WSH rights and responsibilities.

#### ***Building Collective WSH Ownership***

22 Beyond focusing on immediate priorities, the IAP supported the need to build collective WSH ownership to drive a strong WSH culture of prevention and prepare us for the longer term challenges. The IAP also shared that there is a growing international recognition of the importance of work injury prevention and return-to-work initiatives in driving upstream WSH ownership and performance.

### Recommendation 7: Strengthen the Injury Prevention and Return to Work Focus in Work Injury Compensation

23 The IAP shared that the injury prevention and return to work focus in work injury compensation cannot be ignored if we are to build a collective WSH ownership. Insurers involved in work injury compensation have important roles in influencing upstream WSH prevention work.

24 The IAP recommended that key stakeholders be engaged so that work injury compensation can be a lever for WSH prevention. For example, beyond disbursing Work Injury Compensation, insurers can influence better WSH mindset and behaviour. They can strengthen the risk profiling of insured companies through differentiated premium tied to the WSH risk profile. Insurers can also be more proactive in managing the claims. They can engage the companies in improving their WSH performance and focus on assisting workers in returning to work. Singapore could also look into refining the insurance system, such as by encouraging the setting up of a joint database of all insurers.

### Recommendation 8: Place Equal Emphasis on Safety and Health

25 The IAP highlighted that given the high social and economic burden of occupational diseases, greater emphasis must be placed on workplace health. The IAP recommended the need for more comprehensive data to determine the nature and prevalence of occupational diseases in Singapore. Better understanding of these issues will inform and provide evidence to drive the formulation of preventive measures.

26 Workplace safety and workplace health should be managed holistically. Singapore should build on the Total WSH efforts and encourage more companies to pay attention to the impact health has on workers' well-being and also safety. The IAP highlighted that given the long latency of many occupational diseases, the government needs to stimulate the co-creation of solutions to address these issues. These efforts will ensure that workplace health continues to be equally important on the industry WSH agenda and drive greater ownership in addressing workplace health.

## Recommendation 9: Encourage more Industry-led Initiatives to engender greater Industry Ownership

27 While extensive initiatives had been implemented to improve WSH outcomes, the IAP noted that many of these initiatives were mainly government driven. The IAP recommended that the industry, particularly at the sectoral level, take ownership and leadership in initiating and implementing WSH improvements. These initiatives should also be publicised to encourage similar efforts.

## **CONCLUSION**

28 Singapore has achieved improvements in WSH performance through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. The IAP believes that through WSH 2018 Plus, Singapore can achieve the WSH 2018 target by improving the WSH performance within the Construction industry, strengthening WSH competency and building stronger WSH ownership. This report is the outcome of the IAP's deliberations at its fifth meeting, and proposes a set of recommendations to elevate and sustain Singapore's WSH performance. The IAP looks forward to the adoption of its recommendations by the Singapore Government and their implementation by all stakeholders.





## ANNEX A - PROFILE OF IAP MEMBERS



### **Mr Lim Swee Say**

Minister for Manpower

Chair, IAP for WSH

Republic of Singapore

Mr Lim Swee Say studied at the Catholic High School and the National Junior College. He was awarded a Singapore Armed Forces (UK) Scholarship in 1973 and studied Electronics, Computer and Systems Engineering at Loughborough University of Technology in the United Kingdom. He graduated with a First Class Honours degree in 1976 and was admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Technology in 2006. He attended the Stanford Sloan Programme at Stanford University and graduated with a Master's Degree in Management in 1991.

Mr Lim was actively involved with the development of information technology since the 1970s. He served as General Manager of National Computer Board from 1986 to 1991, and as its Chairman from 1994 to 1998. He was also actively involved in the economic development of Singapore in the 1990s. He spent five years with the Economic Development Board, first as Deputy Managing Director based in New York City from 1991 to 1993, then as Managing Director from 1994 to 1996.

Notwithstanding his long association with technology and economic development, Mr Lim firmly believes that the end objective of exploiting technological advances and achieving economic progress is to enhance the standard of living and quality of life of the people.

Mr Lim entered politics and joined the labour movement in 1996 to help the rank and file workers upgrade and remain employable. He served as Deputy Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) from 1997 to 1999 before he was appointed Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Minister of State for Trade and Industry in June 1999. He became Acting Minister for the Environment in October 2000 and Minister for the Environment in November 2001.

In August 2004, Mr Lim was appointed Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for National Development. He served concurrently as Deputy Secretary-General of the NTUC. He relinquished the appointment of Second Minister for National Development on 1 October 2005 to serve full time in the labour movement. From January 2007, he served as the Secretary-General of the NTUC. On 4 May 2015, he relinquished his appointment as Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, stepped down from the NTUC, and took office as the Minister for Manpower.



**Mr Sam Tan Chin Siong**

Minister of State (Prime Minister's Office and Manpower)

Co-Chair, IAP for WSH

Republic of Singapore

Mr Tan began his career at the People's Association in 1983 and undertook various leadership positions. From 1992, he was Deputy Executive Director of the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) and became its Executive Director (ED) in 1997. He received the Public Service Medal (PBM) in 2002.

He served as ED of CDAC from 1997 to 2009 and CEO of Business China from 2007 to 2009. He is currently a Board Member of both CDAC and Business China.

In 2006, Mr Tan was elected Member of Parliament and subsequently appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Industry, and Information, Communications and the Arts in July 2009. In November 2010 he was promoted to Senior Parliamentary Secretary for both portfolios. He served as Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports (May 2011-October 2012), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (May 2011-April 2014), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (Nov 2012-April 2014). He served as Mayor of Central Singapore District from 2012 to 2014.

In May 2014, Mr Tan served as Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office, and Culture, Community and Youth (May 2014-Sep 2015). Mr Tan is currently Minister of State for the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Manpower.

Mr Tan graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) from the National University of Singapore in 1983.



**Dr Walter Eichendorf**

Deputy Director-General, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)

President, German Road Safety Council (DVR)

Germany

Dr. Walter Eichendorf is the president of the German Road Safety Council (DVR) and the Deputy Director General of the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). After his university education (physics, mathematics, astrophysics) in Bochum and Bonn he served as a research staff member at the European Southern Observatory (1980-1983) in Geneva, Munich and Chile.

He has been with DGUV/HVBG for over 30 years, first serving as the Head of the Statistical Department and then as the Director of Public Relations before becoming Deputy Director General in 1998. At DGUV, he is responsible for all prevention activities. In addition to his role at the DGUV, he is also involved in a number of management and advisory boards of national and international prevention institutions.

Dr Eichendorf currently serves as Vice-President both of the Research Division and the Prevention Culture Division of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and as board member of the European Traffic Safety Council (ETSC). In August 2014, he received the Federal Cross of Merit from the German Federal President for his work on road and work safety.



**Mr Kevin Myers**

President, International Association of Labour Inspection

United Kingdom

Mr Kevin Myers joined the Health & Safety Executive UK (HSE) as a Factory Inspector in 1976. During his career he held a wide range of operational, policy and strategy posts in HSE – as well as a three year secondment to the European Commission in Brussels.

Between 2000 and 2005 he was HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction. Between 2005 and 2008 he was Director of HSE's Hazardous Installations Directorate with responsibility for HSE's regulation of 'major hazard' sectors, including the offshore oil and gas industry, the onshore chemical and explosives industries and mining. In October 2008 he was appointed HSE's Deputy Chief Executive. He was Acting Chief Executive of HSE in 2013/14 and retired from HSE in March 2016.

Mr Myers is the current President of the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI), having previously served as Secretary-General between 2011 and 2014. He is also a member of the Singapore International Advisory Panel (IAP) on Workplace Safety & Health, and a Trustee of the British Safety Council.



**Dr Ken Takahashi**

Professor/ Chair Department of Environmental Epidemiology,  
University of Occupational and Environmental Health (UOEH)

Japan

Dr Ken Takahashi is a Professor of Environmental Epidemiology and Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health at the University of Occupational and Environmental Health (UOEH), Japan. Graduated School of Medicine, Keio University in 1983 (MD), received PhD from UOEH and MPH from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr Takahashi engages in epidemiologic research of occupational diseases, with special interest on occupational lung diseases, and asbestos diseases in particular.

He is a past Board Member of the International Commission of Occupational Health and former President of the Asian Association for Occupational Health. He frequently served as consultant/advisor to the WHO and ILO and examiner/advisor to academic institutes in several Asian countries. He currently serves as WHO Expert on Chemical Safety/Environmental Epidemiology under the International Health Regulations and is a Fellow (Executive Board) of the Collegium Ramazzini, Italy.



**Ms Michelle Baxter**

Chief Executive Officer, Safe Work Australia

Australia

With over 20 years' experience Ms Michelle Baxter has held a range of senior positions in the in the Australian Public Service, including senior executive roles with the Fair Work Ombudsman, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and with the Department's Council of Australian Governments Taskforce.

In addition to her current role as Safe Work Australia Chief Executive Officer, she is a Commissioner on the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, and represents Safe Work Australia on the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities and Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities.

Ms Baxter holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts from the Australian National University and is admitted to practice as a barrister and solicitor in the Australian Capital Territory.



**Ms Marie Larue**

President and CEO, Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST),

Canada

After completing a master's degree in organic chemistry, Ms Marie Larue has also successfully completed master's level studies in industrial toxicology and administration, in addition to obtaining four scholarships and being the recipient of two awards. She holds the title of Certified Corporate Director since 2015.

She began her research career at Merck Frosst Laboratories Canada before dedicating herself to the field of Occupational Health and Safety.

For nearly 25 years, she became completely familiar with the Québec's Occupational Health and Safety regime in the completion of many mandates at the Québec's Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST). Quickly, the CSST benefited from her skills by appointing her as Regional Director, before giving her important responsibilities (policy and regulation making) in the central units.

From 2000 to 2005, Ms Larue headed the Prevention-inspection Department with determination and leadership and where, with a multidisciplinary team, she developed and implemented orientations and policies. She was also responsible for negotiating amendments to regulations with employer and worker representatives, in a labour-management context.

In 2005, she faced new challenge by assuming the responsibility for the CSST's Compensation and Rehabilitation Department whose client services generate expenditures in the order of 1.4 billion CAD per year. In 2008, Ms Larue was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail.





Dr Antti Koivula

Director General, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH)

Finland

Dr Antti Koivula is the Director General of Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Prior to this, he was the Director of Client Services within the institute, as well as Managing Partner of TINNOFF; a start-up developing a state-of-the-art technology enhancing well-being by stimulating the vagal nerve and limbic system. Simultaneously, he also acted as business advisor for cutting edge investors at the Wall Street and in the Silicon Valley.

Dr Koivula had also worked for more than a decade at different key leadership positions at NOKIA. This includes deep experience from various type of management teams for R&D, product development as well as business line and brand management on global scale. During the 90's, he led research teams in Laboratory of Industrial Psychology at the Helsinki University of Technology with a scope to study knowledge intensive organizations.

Dr Koivula had also completed his doctoral thesis on “productized knowledge and team-building”, established himself as a respected leadership evangelist. He had written several books and articles about high performance teams, leadership, change management and process development.