

Ku-ring-gai Council is responsible for civic leadership, integrated planning, community development, corporate services, natural and built environment, and financial sustainability in Sydney's leafy North Shore.

History

Following the commencement of the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Ku-ring-gai Council updated its Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) to reflect the new legislative environment.

Despite a well-trained experienced workforce and a reinvigorated WHSMS, incidents were still occurring. Management began to recognise that compliance with the new WHSMS, although necessary and desirable, wasn't going to prevent the majority of incidents they were having. They also noticed that many people believed that their personal safety at work could be left to someone else to take care of.

To deal with safety from a different perspective, Ku-ring-gai Council turned to SafeStart. The SafeStart personal safety skills gave staff more responsibility and addressed the causes of unintentional mistakes that lead to the majority of their incidents. Since the 180-person Operations Department had the highest incident rate, in the council they were selected for the initial rollout of the SafeStart program.

Results

The graph shows the number of hours lost to injury was reduced from over 3,283 to 153 within 4 years. That is a 95% improvement.

Two years prior to implementing SafeStart, Ku-ring-gai was dedicating 5.5% of its payroll to workers' compensation premiums. Four years after completing SafeStart, Ku-ring-gai spends less than 1.2% of its payroll on workers' compensation premiums, one of the lowest rates for councils in NSW. They have saved the rate payers more than \$2 million.

Comment

According to Peter Maitland, Health and Safety Coordinator for Ku-ring-gai Council:

"SafeStart has not only reduced the number of incidents but also introduced a common language that has enabled our staff and managers to talk positively about the causes of injury and what each of us can do about it."

Ku-ring-gai Council will continue to embed SafeStart into its WHSMS, progressively spending fewer resources on injury management and more on keeping people safe and productive in the workplace.

Ku-ring-gai Council was one of the first local governments to implement SafeStart in Australia. Four years after implementation, Ku-ring-gai Council achieved:

- 74% reduction in workers' compensation claims
- 95% reduction in hours lost to injury
- Saved more than \$2 million in workers' compensation annual premium payments



Workers' Compensation Costs

Ku-ring-gai Council was able to save more than \$2 million in worker's compensation costs in 4 years.

