



# 2016-2021 Strategic Plan





# Contents

1. Context	3
1.1 The purpose of this document	3
1.2 Health and safety in the workplace – an evolutionary process	3
1.3 Our members – the health and safety profession	4
1.4 The SIA – our origins and evolution	4
2. Organisation structure	6
3. The SIA 2016-2021 Strategic Plan	7

---

# 1. Context

## 0.1 The purpose of this document

The Safety Institute of Australia (SIA) is the peak body for the health and safety profession in Australia. With a history of nearly 70 years and a membership of more than 4000, our vision is for healthy and safe workers in productive workplaces. We do our part to work toward this vision, by focusing on:

- developing the skills, knowledge and capability of the profession; and
  - being a voice for the profession, advocating for, and improving opportunities for our members to influencing and contributing to better health and safety outcomes, as well as productivity and innovation in health and safety.
- We do this through engagement with our individual members, corporate and strategic partners, governing bodies and other key stakeholders.

Each year, the SIA Board updates a five-year rolling plan. This year a number of changes have been made to the plan as a result of an extensive consultation process which reflects our commitment to functioning transparently and seeking collaborative approaches to achieve our goals.

The plan contains a broad overview of our work focus in the coming five years, including 22 objectives. We seek to challenge ourselves to achieve our bold targets, which if achieved, will make a strong contribution to health and safety in Australian workplaces.

The Planning Framework does not generally drill down into specific activities to be undertaken, which are detailed in an annual operations plan which guides the work of the Chief executive and staff, with progress reported regularly to the board – and if completed, should eventually result in the achievement of our goals.

## 1.2 Health and safety in the workplace – an evolutionary process

Less than 100 years ago, workers enjoyed few of the protections that they have today. Looking at the history of occupational health and safety is one of the best ways to understand why health and safety laws and practice exist, and the benefits they offer, even if they're not always easy or convenient to comply with.

Work has always involved risk, but a focus on health and safety has not always been present. Initially, the labour movement existed for centuries in the form of guilds, and the first structured safe work practices were taught within these guilds. It was not until the 19th century in the Western world that the broader concept that workers having some level of right to healthy and safe workplaces – also driven by organised labour – began to take hold. This led to more changes, particularly in countries such as America and the United Kingdom, where employers increasingly accepted responsibilities to provide workplaces with some health and safety checks and balances. At this point, the concept of the OHS profession and practice, and the science and evidence underpinning it, still did not exist.

The development of much of Australia's occupational health and safety legislation originates from incidents that have tested our laws, and a number of reviews over the decades. For example, in a critical incident on a building site in 1956, a group of employees were hoisting buckets of hot bitumen to the roof of a five-storey building when a bucket fell onto a worker. The worker sued their employer in the High Court of Australia, and won. The High Court decided that the employer had a duty "...to take reasonable care to avoid exposing the employee to unnecessary risk of injury" (established in *Hamilton v Nuroof (WA) Pty Ltd* [1956] 96 CLR 18 at 25), and this case is still cited in Australian occupational health and safety cases today.

Another landmark in Australian occupational health and safety was the release of the Robens Report in 1972,

---

which reviewed occupational health and safety practices in the United Kingdom – which were similar to Australian systems – and made a series of important recommendations that changed Australian practice. It was during this era that dedicated OHS personnel were becoming evident across the Australian workforce. By 1981, the first tertiary OHS course was available through the Ballarat College of Advanced Education, and with this the OHS profession had emerged as a distinctive field of work practice.

Since the 1980s employers have increasingly recognised the value and importance of working safely, and as society's expectations have changed, laws have been strengthened and revised with the most significant recent national change being the introduction of Model Work Health and Safety laws. Workplace health and safety has been subjected to various federal inquiries over that time, including a review in 2010 of Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: Occupational Health and Safety, the 2004 review of National Workers' Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety Frameworks. There have also been numerous state-based and industry-based inquiries particularly into disasters such as the Gretley mine disaster, Longford gas plant, Beaconsfield, and others, and coronial inquests into deaths related to home insulation and quad bikes, and each of these contribute to the evolution of both regulation and practice.

The health and safety field has now become more sophisticated, complex and recognised, and within that framework the profession has also developed. The practice of health and safety is now layered from the shop floor through to executive management within companies, with critical and skilled roles being played at all levels. The discourse of health and safety has continued to diversify with various technical streams emerging, complemented by safety psychology dimensions. The OHS profession and practice is still developing and continues to grow, but it is now an integral part of the framework that produces safer and healthier workplaces in Australia.

### 1.3 Our members – the health and safety profession

Our membership and stakeholders are a diverse group within the field of health and safety. We identify the health and safety profession in a broad and inclusive context, as being the people in workplaces across all strata of companies – from the shop floor to the executive management of those companies – who work in some way towards making their workplace healthier and safer. They also include the range of consultants, inspectors and auditors who work providing services, advice, audits and inspections to industry. Today, the membership of the SIA is made up of over 4000 people from all of these groups. They are from a diverse range of backgrounds, experience and education but with a common thread – their interest in and commitment to health and safety in the workplace.

### 1.4 The SIA – our origins and evolution

A common connection: The origins of the SIA belong to a small group of students who enrolled in and attended the first Industrial Safety and Accident Prevention course conducted by the (then) Melbourne Technical College in 1948. Graduates from this course were awarded a "Certificate of Industrial Safety and Accident Prevention". After completing the course this group remained together and formed the nucleus of the Safety Engineering Society of Australia, and held regular monthly meetings.

Founders: The founding members of the (then) Safety Engineering Society of Australia included Eric Warburton (first president), Chris Allan (first secretary), Eugene Falk (secretary), Harold Greenwood-Thomas, Bill Reid, Bill Jenkins, Peter Cathcart, Bill Carroll and Cecil Holmes.

Growth: Membership of the society expanded steadily and reached the stage where every state had formed a division, affiliated with the federal body. In general, membership included a majority of safety engineers and safety officers, as well as medical practitioners, insurance officers, occupational nurses, educators and many other people interested in promoting health, safety and accident/harm prevention.

A change of name: With time it became apparent that the term "Safety Engineering" in the society's name had an



---

implied bias and emphasised only one of the many disciplines associated with the effective control of accidents, injuries and diseases. As a result, the Safety Institute of Australia was incorporated in 1977 with a new constitution, and members of the society became members of the new SIA. Just some of the notable people who carried forward the aims and objectives of the society at that time were Eric Wigglesworth, Samuel Barclay, Sol Freedman, Frank Kuffer, Roger Smith, Cip Corva, Hilton Ludekens and Fred Catlin.

Creating valued resources: In 1977, the SIA joined with the (then) South Melbourne Technical School in establishing a specialist resource collection in the field of industrial safety and health. This library became the most comprehensive research available for safety professionals and was maintained by institute members for many years. This commitment to providing high quality resources to the profession is reflected today in the role the SIA has to maintain the OHS Body of Knowledge.

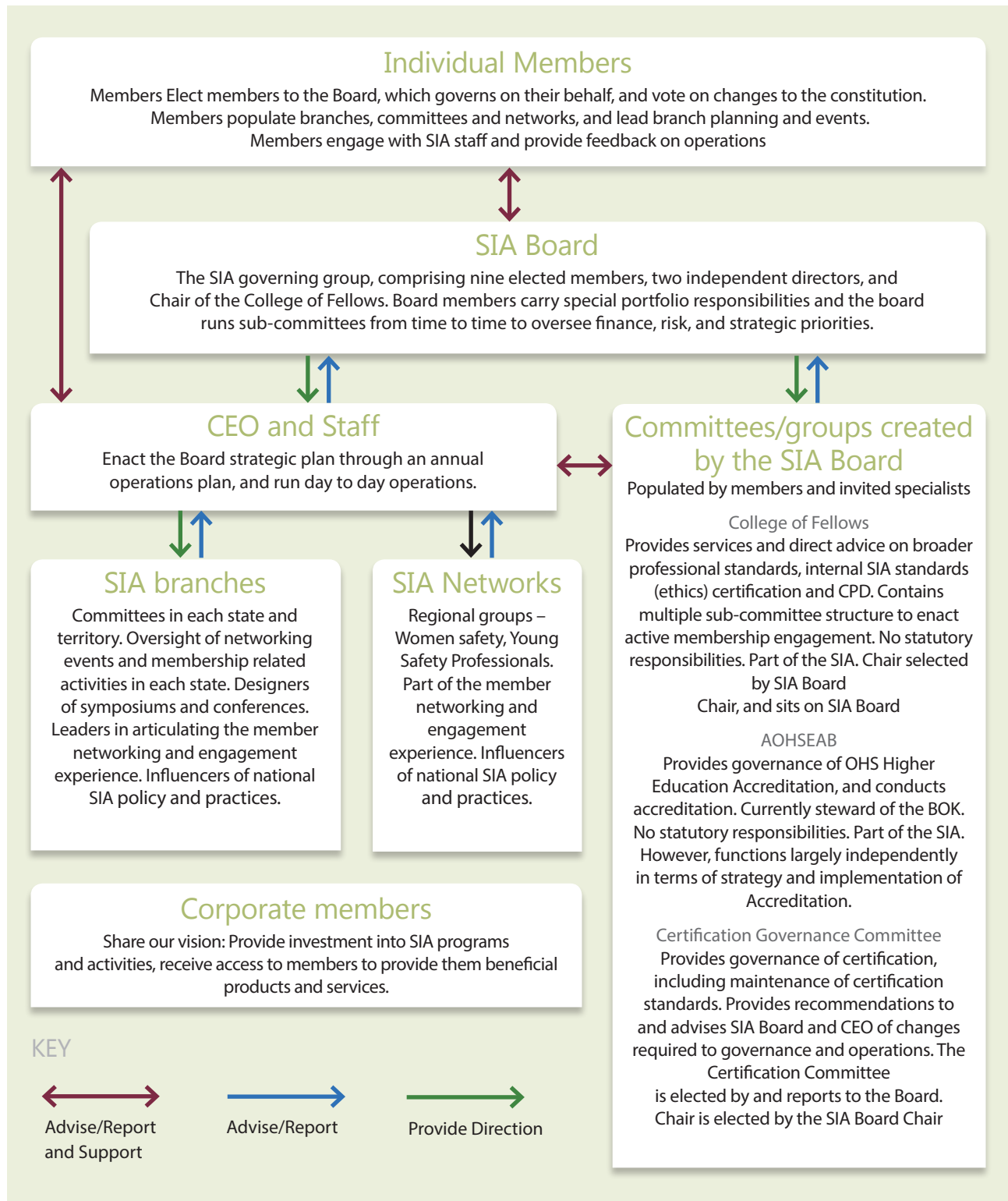
Forty-five years supporting health and safety education: In 1981, the institute played a major role in the first tertiary level (Graduate Diploma) course, being the Ballarat College of Advanced Education's Occupational Hazard Management course. Since that time, the SIA has successfully promoted and supported a large number of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate educational courses around Australia, and today the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board (AOHSEAB) continues this work.

Thirty years running conferences: Through its early decades, the SIA ran many events and conferences for its members. In September 1987, things stepped up when the institute joined with the International Commission on Occupational Health and ran the 22nd International Congress on Occupational Health in Sydney, Australia, titled "Work for Health". The program offered 288 oral presentations and 178 poster presentations, selected from 760 abstracts submitted by professional persons having an interest in the science of safety and injury prevention. Since that time, the institute has run nearly 100 state and national conferences and continues to provide an active conference program including state and territory events as well as a national annual safety convention which brings together the wider health and safety community.

Fifty-five years contributing to health and safety standards and policy: During the period 1958 to the present day, the Institute has maintained a close working relationship with the Australian Standards organisation (now standards Australia). The Institute has served on many Technical Committees dealing with, among others, Risk Management, Fire Safety, Occupational Health and Safety, Road and Traffic Design, the Building Code of Australia. Institute members have represented Australian Standards while attending conferences and working parties with the International Standards Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland and the European Standards Organisation, Brussels, Belgium. Today, the SIA has representatives on 15 standards committees.

The SIA also has a long history in working with regulators, employers, unions and government departments in the pursuit of more effective health and safety policy and regulation. Over the decades, our branches have often had very strong links to the regulators within their state/territory, engaging in shared activities and projects which reflect the common interests that the institute has with these bodies. The institute has also engaged actively over the years with employer and union groups, and was originally a member of the National Occupational Health and Safety Council (NOHSC) – the pre-cursor to Safe Work Australia. Since that time, we retain ongoing links with Safe Work Australia, and take a particular interest in the key elements of its ten year strategy which relate closely to the work of our profession.

## 2. SIA Structure



---

## 3. The SIA today

### Our vision

Our vision is for safe and healthy workers in productive workplaces

### Our mission

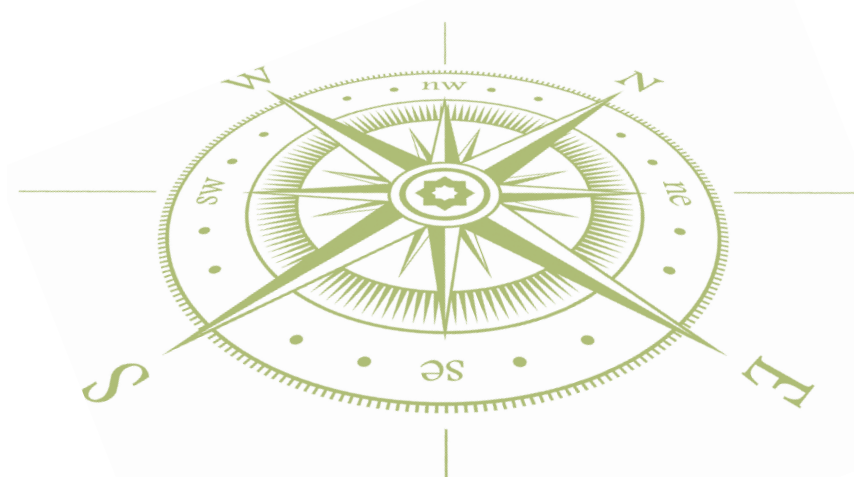
We pursue our visions by:

- Advancing the health and safety profession, to deliver the highest quality advice; and
- Being a voice for the profession to positively influence the development of health and safety policy and practice.

### What we do

We carry out our mission by:

- Building educational standards and consistency through the Accreditation of higher education
- Maintaining and developing a body of knowledge for the health and safety profession
- Building confidence in the capability of the profession through the certification
- Creating and delivering professional development opportunities for our members and others in the field
- Fostering innovation to ensure the growth and development in ideas and the adoption of new knowledge in the field.
- Fostering positive discussion and debate on health and safety models and practices.
- Providing policy advice and advocacy on behalf of our members
- Forming views on health and safety research priorities and promulgating those views
- Supporting our members to undertake research
- Delivering a range of information products and services to members
- Creating opportunities for participation in standards committees, and the conduct of advocacy on policy
- Engaging in partnerships with other stakeholders to achieve common goals.



---

## The guiding principles by which we work

In the conduct of our activities and in the behaviour of all of our representatives, from board members, staff members, branch representatives and throughout our membership, we seek to reflect the following values:

- Openness and transparency. While protecting individual rights to privacy and organisational responsibilities, we are open in our dealings with our own membership and with other stakeholders.
- Delivering and executing. We judge ourselves and are judged by others on not just our words but our actions. Our focus is on delivering results.
- Listening and learning. We will be informed by the insights of our diverse membership and other stakeholders.
- Acting with integrity and respect. The leadership of the SIA – its governors, staff and many volunteer leaders – will act with integrity and show respect for others and the diversity of their views.
- Being Collaborative. We seek to achieve our goals through collaboration and partnerships with organisations that share our vision and our values.

## Four key pillars of our work

### 1. Capability

Developing the skills, knowledge and capability of the profession to deliver highest quality OHS advice to industry

- We believe that health and safety work practices are heavily influenced by the quality of education and training of all Australian workers, including health and safety professionals. The SIA will contribute to the content and quality of general health and safety training, nationally recognised competencies, VET and university qualifications and on-the-job training, including continuing to deliver accreditation of higher education.
- We believe that the quality of health and safety advice provided by professionals is enhanced by continuous professional development. The SIA will provide a CPD program that is recognised by industry, regulators, employee bodies and members for its contribution to professional development.
- We are committed to continuing our work to further develop and maintain a body of knowledge for the profession, ensuring that it is contemporary, representative of high standards, and relevant to the workplace.
- We are committed to contributing to the continuous improvement of health and safety work practices, and the promotion of the profession. As a result we are committed to continuing to provide a professional certification program based on a combination of experience, education and capability.
- We believe that building capability across the field of health and safety is not only about the core business of communicating existing wisdom but also fostering innovation and new ideas which can lead to greater productivity and better health and safety outcomes.

### 2. Policy and research

Being a strong policy voice for the membership to positively influence Australian health & safety policy and regulation, and contributing to practice development through the promotion of research

- We understand that a cornerstone of ensuring workplaces are healthy and safe is the direction of health and safety policy and regulation. The SIA is made up of members in practice across the spectrum of roles, with a diversity of knowledge and experience that can contribute to this policy. The SIA is committed to seeking mutually beneficial relationships with Safe Work Australia and jurisdictional policymakers and regulators. These relationships will be enhanced by providing committed support to the achievement of Safe Work Australia strategies that align with the profession's goals; expert commentary from the profession on policy papers and reviews; the preparation of proactive papers on issues; providing service to Safe Work Australia and regulators as requested on working groups; and participation in campaigns.
- We believe that the health and safety profession deserves higher status in regard to its contribution to health and safety.



- 
- We believe that evidence-based practice is a critical element of the development of the profession. This includes focusing research where it is most needed and ensuring that research can be translated effectively into practice.
  - We are committed to developing partner relationships with those who fund and those who undertake research. These relationships will be enhanced by:
    - seeking and analysing the views of members on topics that should be researched
    - providing direct assistance to researchers by serving on research project boards, steering committees and as supervisors and mentors to students and graduates; arranging surveys/focus groups/review panels of SIA members; and facilitating access to practice experts.

### 3. Engagement

Achieving better OHS/WHS outcomes by leveraging relationships with members and other stakeholders

- We believe that engaging and working with other entities that have shared interests in the health and safety of Australians will improve health and safety outcomes. We will encourage coalitions of interest amongst entities with shared values and enable the sharing of information, resources and knowledge between stakeholders.
- We believe that strong connections within the health and safety field based on shared values and approaches are vital to building a stronger voice for the profession. We will seek to reduce the level of disconnection amongst the profession, foster greater co-operation and provide a platform for shared values.
- We believe that our branches are a critical part of our organisation. The work of the SIA cannot be conducted without them, and we will support their growth and development.
- Members of the SIA play a critical role in contributing to its effectiveness and success. We will seek to harness their skills and capabilities by providing increased opportunities for participation and leadership.
- We believe that informal engagement and networking is as important as the formal programs and activities that the profession undertakes. The SIA will widen the range of networking and engagement opportunities that it provides in all states and territories.

### 4. Member services

Delivering high quality services and support to our members

- We understand that our members choose and maintain their membership for a wide variety of reasons, and we remain committed to ongoing improvement in the delivery of all products and services.
- We believe that information from trusted sources is essential for professional practice, and we will seek to enable ready access to members for current research, regulation, best practice, issues papers, guidance material, case studies and discussion forums.
- We believe that we must provide a wide range of information which addresses the diversity of needs of our members, regardless of the level at which they work within the field of health and safety.
- We believe that there is a need for better-targeted, well-organised and affordable events, focused on current issues relevant to professional practice. We will design and implement an events program based around active engagement from our branches.
- We believe that members can benefit from access to products to assist them in their professional lives (such as discounted training courses, conference fees and public liability insurance, and the purchase of health and safety equipment, publication subscriptions and information technology).

## Our aims, objectives and five-year goals

### Focus area 1: Capability

Our aim: To develop the skills, knowledge and capability of the profession.

Objective	5-year goal
1.1: Make a positive contribution to influencing the quality of health and safety education and training, including the accreditation of higher education	Consistently higher quality tertiary education, VET sector training and other health and safety training, influenced by the SIA within a sustainable funding model
1.2: Provide professional development opportunities for the health & safety profession	A diverse range of SIA-approved CPD products, including an active mentoring program available to the profession
1.3: Provide an up-to-date body of knowledge for the profession on which higher education and continuing professional development is based	A fully sustainable, funded framework for ongoing maintenance and development of the Body of Knowledge, supported, by evidence-based practice
1.4: Provide a certification program for the health and safety profession, recognised by industry.	A program with strong participation from the profession, demand-driven by industry, with greater confidence of regulators, employers and employee bodies in the quality of health and safety advice
1.5: Support and promote innovation within the health and safety sector	SIA recognised and functioning and as an incubator of ideas and innovation

### Focus area 2: Policy and research

Our aims: To be a strong policy voice for the membership, positively influencing Australian health and safety policy and regulation and promoting the profession. To contribute to practice development through the promotion of research.

Objective	5-year goal
2.1: Build SIA capability to ensure that the profession's voice is heard in the development of policy and regulation, through the establishment and advancement of an SIA policy agenda	SIA views sought by government, regulators, media and other stakeholders as a trusted and professional commentator on health and safety issues
2.2: Provide proactive advocacy in support of the profession and its contribution to health and safety	Strong status for the profession within the workplace and throughout the workforce and in the community
2.3: Promote the conduct and use of effective research and analysis, and its translation into effective practice, through (a) the establishment and advancement of a research agenda and (b) through the promulgation of emerging knowledge and ideas	SIA research agenda successfully promoting and influencing research funding, with the SIA reporting regularly on the application of research into practice
2.4: Develop partner relationships with those who fund and those who undertake research and analysis	SIA engaged in active support of a range of beneficial research projects

### Focus area 3: Engagement

Our aim: To achieve better OHS/WHs outcomes by leveraging relationships with members and other stakeholders.

Objective	5-year goal
3.1: Engage with and build coalitions of interests in health & safety	SIA an active contributor to international, national and state/territory coalitions that work together towards common health and safety goals
3.2: Promote and encourage a focus on shared values	A health and safety sector full of a diversity of views passionately expressed, but united in core values
3.3: Grow branch activity and other membership engagement	All SIA branches as vibrant networks of the membership, delivering events and activities of interest to all members, including across regional Australia
3.4: Engage with SIA members to utilise their high level knowledge and expertise	The SIA as a broad-based and extensive community of leaders, spread throughout its branches, its networks and its college
3.5: Provide all members a range of opportunities for professional networking and engagement	A range of thriving and engaged networks, providing members (including rural and remote members) diverse opportunities to connect with colleagues

---

## Focus area 4: Member services

Our aim: To deliver exemplary services and support to our members.

Objective	5-year goal
4.1: Ensure continuous improvement in the quality of products and services for members	An administration highly regarded by members, delivering all core elements of its services to a high standard
4.2: Be a trusted source of high quality information advice and representation for the health & safety profession	Extended internal capacity to provide expert information, advice and representation on health and safety issues and career development for the profession
4.3: Keep members up to date with current best practice in OHS for people working at all levels in the industry	Magazine, e-news, journal and research database highly regarded and extensively read and utilised; conferences and other related events regarded as sources of the exploration of best practice and innovation
4.4: Provide an events program that will enhance the professional development of members and the knowledge of health and safety matters in the community	A successful program of high quality annual events and activities throughout Australia, accessible to all members at affordable rates, which promote professional development and excellence
4.5: Provide SIA members with a range of financial benefits through discounts obtained from providers	A stable of products offering significant cost savings to SIA members

## A strong foundation: Successful business

Our aim: To ensure a sustainable and well-managed organisation, utilising member funds responsibly and effectively. Although we have many management systems, controls and goals, the board has identified the following objectives for priority focus:

Objective	5-year goal
5.1: Broaden revenue streams beyond membership revenue, and build sustainable funding models for projects	A strong balance sheet, supported by sustainable revenue from a range of sources other than membership fees
5.2: Grow membership to represent a greater representation of the profession	A strong SIA brand with membership reflecting a greater proportion of the profession, and those member views driving our work
5.3: Build communications capability to support effective policy, stakeholder engagement and operations	A strong communication framework, utilising contemporary social media, which enables two-way engagement and interaction between the SIA and people in the broader field of health and safety in Australia, and overseas

The SIA Board has an internal performance management document which identifies specific short- and medium-term targets under each objective.

The SIA CEO develops and maintains an annual Operations Plan which contains programs of activity which work towards each goal. The CEO 's reporting to the Board is on the basis of progress against this Operations Plan.