



Fact Sheet

Contracting for Australian Government funded building work: the OHS Accreditation Scheme

If you:

- are planning to contract for building work valued at \$3 million or more funded by the Australian Government **and**
- will be the head contractor;

you may be required to be accredited under the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme.

If you are considering contracting for Government funded building work you should apply for accreditation now.

What is the Scheme?

The Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme) is designed to improve health and safety in the building and construction industry.

The Scheme is established under the *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005* (the BCII Act).

Subject to certain thresholds, only head contractors who are accredited under the Scheme can enter into contracts for building work that is funded directly or indirectly by the Australian Government. For directly funded projects, the threshold is \$3 million. Where the Australian Government contributes funding indirectly via a third party such as a state government, the threshold is generally \$5 million.

Why was the Scheme established?

The Scheme was established in 2005 in recognition that something had to be done to improve the unacceptable OHS performance in the building and construction industry.

The Scheme enables the Australian Government to use its influence as a major construction client and provider of capital to improve the OHS performance of the industry. Through the scheme, the Government aims to foster a new culture where work must be performed **safely** as well as on budget and on time.

Why should I become accredited?

The BCII Act requires head contracts for building work to be signed with accredited builders (subject to the thresholds above).

There are now over 150 accredited companies enjoying the benefits of accreditation. Not only are they eligible to contract for Australian Government funded projects but they are reaping the benefits of improved OHS performance. Improvements in safety leads to increased productivity, lower sick leave, reduced insurance and workers compensation costs, improved retention and greater innovation.

How can I become accredited?

Getting accredited involves two phases: a desktop assessment and on-site auditing by a Federal Safety Officer.

As a prerequisite, applicants must have an OHS Management system certified to the Australian Standard AS/NZS4801:2001. Applicants must also satisfy a separate set of criteria including six specific elements that are seen as critical to improving safety by driving cultural change.

The Scheme sets a high benchmark and some applicants may need several months to reach the OHS standards required for accreditation. Accreditation is valid for a period of up to three years from the date of accreditation.

You can find out more about the accreditation process or download application forms from the FSC website at fsc.gov.au.

For further information you can:

- visit the FSC website at fsc.gov.au
- contact the FSC Assist Line on **1800 652 500**
- contact the OFSC via email at ofsc@deewr.gov.au

This fact sheet is correct as of 23 October 2009. Produced by the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner.

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