

Introduction:

The Changing World of Work and Implications for OHS Regulation

Over 30 years ago, in July 1972, the *Robens Report of the Committee on Safety and Health at Work*, was presented to the United Kingdom parliament. The report had a profound effect on occupational health and safety (OHS) policy making in countries adopting the 'Robens model' and resulted in widespread legislative reform. Change was away from detailed and prescriptive standards towards a much more 'self-regulatory' approach to the prevention or minimisation of work-related injury and ill-health.

Since that time significant changes have occurred to the economy, the labour market, and the nature of work and its organisation, not only in Western Europe and Australia (the focus of this volume) but elsewhere as well. These changes are so far-reaching as to challenge many of the assumptions underpinning the 'Robens model', and to call into question the effectiveness of contemporary forms of OHS regulation in this changing world of work, work relationships and occupational risk.

This volume, inspired by the 30th anniversary of the Robens Report, not only assesses its legacy in light of the challenges facing OHS regulators and stakeholders in the 21st century, but also explores new models of OHS regulation that take account of gaps and deficiencies in current arrangements. In so doing, it explores the lessons that might be gained from the experience of regulating OHS in Western Europe and Australia in particular. Fundamentally, this volume is concerned with exploring what kinds of regulatory strategies, including both OHS law and enforcement policy, are most likely to produce good OHS outcomes in this changing world of work.

The changing nature of work and its impact on OHS

The Robens-style legislation of the 1970s and early 1980s was designed to address the OHS issues of that era, and it is increasingly ill-suited to deal with important changes that have

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