



Working at Height Association

Reaching new levels in safety

ANNUAL REPORT

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Approved By
Brendan Sutton

About WAHA

01



Who We Are

The WAHA is dedicated to supporting and influencing the ongoing development of safe practice, equipment innovation, systems and product design, continuous education of all stakeholders and the operational competency of all persons working at height and in confined spaces.

WAHA is a centre for the working at heights, safety, engineering and design communities to come together to advance safety, increase knowledge and advocate for best practice in the discipline.

Recognised as the peak body addressing at height and confined space, the Association and its Members are available to support those seeking help and guidance in building

more robust systems and processes.

As a Professional Association, we are focused on delivering a paradigm shift in the approach to safety, focusing on safe design, education and empowerment of workers to change high risk safety culture.

Our diverse membership reflects this dedication to best practice and are representative of a professional approach to making workplaces safer by applying evidence-based, consultative approaches to solutions provision.

WAHA works in parallel with allied organisations to promote knowledge as the foundation for change, and how with the WAHA as a recognised SME, they are choosing to be active participants in the drive for better safety outcomes and an engaged and pro-active safety culture.

Mission

1. To maintain our position as the peak body for height safety, representing the interests of all those involved in providing products, services, training or advice relating to safe Working-at-Height and Confined Spaces.
2. To promote and maintain the highest standards in safety, work quality and working practices for the Working-at-Height and Confined Spaces industries.
3. To facilitate increased knowledge and compliance with safety Standards for all those involved in Working-at-Height and Confined Spaces.
4. To promote the continuous improvement of education and training in Working-at-Height and Confined Space to meet the changing needs of industry and increase the competencies and professionalism of practitioners.
5. To facilitate and encourage the exchange of technical knowledge and to encourage further research into industry issues based on co-operation and collaboration with related industries and professions.
6. To work with industries to:
 - *Reduce the number of injuries and fatalities as a result of falls from height and the risks involved in confined space works.*
 - *Drive compliance in the areas of equipment design, selection and use, and training competencies;*
 - *Provide a forum for industry-based discussion, issue identification and resolution;*
 - *Be a primary source of information for members, the industry, safety, engineering and all stakeholders involved in working at heights and confined space.*
 - *To encourage engagement from stakeholders across industries to ensure the continuous improvement of safety as work methods evolve.*

Aims & Objectives

- Support members and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to all stakeholders.
- Organise annual networking events for the Working at Heights and Confined Spaces community.
- The regulation of the WAHA Internal Audit system as used by our members.
- Continually review and update policies and procedures related to Standards and audit and assessment tools/procedures to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.
- Promote and maintain a high standard of Working at Heights and Confined Spaces activities in terms of safety and work quality.
- Provide guidance on training and certification of personnel involved in Working at Heights and Confined Spaces industries.
- Produce publications and guidance on safety, best work practice, training and other related topics.
- Prepare submissions and provide informed and evidence-based review and advice to Australian Government departments, Regulatory Authorities and other engaged organisations on matters concerning work-at-height and confined space health, safety and training.
- Development of Codes of Practice for industry to reflect and map best practice expectations.
- Assist working parties charged with reviewing, commenting on and discussing existing and draft Australian Standards.
- Provide a forum for the free and informal exchange of experience and opinion.
- Implement projects identified by Members that seek to improve systems, information, technical material or skills across the industry.

Leadership Team



Chief Executive Officer & Strategic Design Manager

Scott Barber – Melbourne

Scott is a qualified Safety Professional with extensive operational, consultant services, engineering, and manufacturing experience in working at height, confined spaces, rope access and rescue applications. As CEO, Scott's focus is the design of the WAHA engagement and education strategies targeting all our professional members, the broader safety community, and operators at height and in confined space across all industries to best facilitate positive change and ultimately safer workplaces.



Secretary, Strategic Development & Programs Manager

Deborah Chick – Sydney

With over a decade of experience in business management, Deb has extensive experience in IRATA International rope access operations and training and is a former IRATA Health & Safety Committee member. Deb specialises height safety compliance, IRATA and ISO accreditation, the development of internal company policies and procedures, rescue planning, business plans and initiating roadmaps for the continued growth of organisations.



Association Chairperson

Brendan Sutton – Perth

Managing Director of ALTURA – Height Safety Professionals, a specialist consultant firm performing design, inspection and compliance review services for height, façade and confined space access solutions.

WAHA Directors



Simon Pedretti

SafetyLink – Brisbane

Director of SafetyLink Pty Ltd., designers and manufacturers of height safety equipment that is utilised in a wide variety of sectors including construction, wind energy, oil & gas, transportation, and telecommunications industries.

Simon is also a representative on the Standards Australia SF015 Committee.



John Dollisson **Alistair Merricks**

IRATA Australasia – Melbourne & Sydney

John is the Director of Vertigo Specialist High Access Services Pty Ltd, an IRATA International rope access member company, façade and general contracting company. John is representative of the IRATA International Regional Advisory Committee: IRATA Australasia. John resigned from the board in June 2023.



Alistair is the Director of Australian Industrial Rope Access, an IRATA International rope access member company, with 30 + years in the work at height industry. Former director of IRATA International, IRATA Australasia's representative on Standards Australia SF015 Committee, and current IRATA Technician, IRATA Instructor and IRATA Auditor.



Michael Biddle

RIGCOM – Perth & Sydney

Michael is the current Managing Director of RIGCOM Pty Ltd. a leading provider of technical services and engineered solutions at height. RIGCOM specialise in the design, installation, and recertifications with a focus on height safety and rope access across a variety of industry sectors including commercial and wind energy.

WAHA Directors



Mark Anderson

Anchored Height Safety – Melbourne

Director of Anchored Height Safety, Mark brings a wealth of experience from over 20 years in Automotive development, engineering, senior project manager, safety implementation and quality auditing.



Mark Whitehurst

MSA Safety – Perth

Senior Business Development Manager of MSA Safety, a manufacturer of specialist technical safety equipment covering PPE and Engineered Fall Protection Systems. Mark is a qualified Safety Professional with extensive operational, consultancy, engineering, and manufacturing.



Ashley Campbell

Fire & Safety Australia – Sydney

National Training Manager, Fire and Safety Australia Pty Ltd (FSA), a national provider of emergency response services and emergency response & safety training. FSA provides nationally accredited training and is a Registered Training Organisation (No. 22250) with ISO 9001-2015 Quality Certification.

Chairman Report

Dear Members,

The last year has seen most of the industry return to a pre-covid environment which has enabled reengagement, new opportunities, and greater diversity in the association's activities. Notwithstanding many are still shaking off the after effect of the last few years challenges, the board has adapted to roll with the punches and evolve.



After taking on the role of Chairman in August 2023, this has also been my first partial period of influence in the association's undertakings and administration. Aside from some minor changes to the board of Directors, our intent has been to maintain the cross-sectional experience across the fundamental elements of the industry including:

- Training
- Manufacturing
- Installation; and
- Design
- Engineering
- End User

Most notably last year was the board's strategic focus to branch out beyond the reliance on technical publications and content to provide influence and value to the industry. This year has been all about building relationships and leveraging technology to make the association more impactful and relevant.

Scott and Deb have been committed to implementing these opportunities which are now beginning to take shape. A limited summary of these objectives includes:

1. Attendance and presentation at several local and international industry events
2. Developing multiple MOU's with other relevant associations
3. Establishing connections and relationships with each of the state and territory regulators
4. Providing strategic assistance and expertise to regulators and industry partners
5. Research and develop of enhanced adaptive training products with industry partners
6. Establish partnerships with commercial entities and government departments to deliver new training products with the intent of establishing a new industry standard.

The results of these activities have seen an unprecedented new interest in the association both locally and internationally. The association's leadership team is currently inundated with prospects that have potential for commercial success and reach across the industry. The next chapter of the association is looking very bright, and the current board is excited to continue this work into the coming year.

We thank our current members for their commitment and encourage potential members to consider the opportunity to be part of this evolving community.

Brendan Sutton

CEO Report

Professional Associations can be small, but still complex. WAHA is made up of many stakeholders with different ideas and passions, and as a group we have ambitious objectives that can challenge the resources that are available.

But with such a diverse team of leaders and members, we have been able to build a community of likeminded professionals to advocate for systemic change and explore new ways to positively influence safety culture.

These tasks require diverse internal capability, thought leadership and constant reflection. As an organisation we're continuing to develop the strategies to build the future as we want it to be, all while keeping an eye out to ensure that everyone is joining us and has a voice on the journey.

2023 was a continuation of our transformation, and we successfully created a hub for innovation and teamwork to help us continue to grow and evolve. We are also on track and in the final stages of a significant technology project which will bring into play a new approach for industry partners to have a means of competency verification for those operating at heights or in fall-environments.

This exciting project will support us in delivering improved education opportunities and increased reach into industry sectors, enhancing our profile, and benefitting our members with greater recognition of WAHA and our best practice philosophy.

It has also allowed WAHA to forge strong ties to key stakeholders and organisations in key market sectors. All of which are focus areas as per our strategic plan. This project also adds another revenue stream to further support out activities.

Our growing influence in the field is evident in the expanding reach of the WAHA. We're added new pathways to education and improvement, involvement in research, insights, and resources.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our Board, members, stakeholders, volunteers and the incredible WAHA team who have been behind all our activities this past year. Thank you for your unwavering support, which has been the cornerstone of our ongoing success.

Scott Barber



Secretary Report

With another challenging year behind us, it's worth reflecting on the resilience of the Association and our Members.

We have once again been able to see our Members face-to-face, and had our biggest year to date with the number of exhibitions and events the Association has attended in person. We've had significant progress against our strategic plan, but there is still a lot of work in front of the Association.



As a group we have positioned ourselves as the leading voice in the working at heights sector, reflected in the number of new partnerships the Association has made, and the increased involvement with regulators and industry groups.

With increased relevance, and subsequent recognition of WAHA, 2024 will see the introduction of a new education platform designed in collaboration with foundation partners in the construction industry, utilities and rail, developed to empower operators at height and adding a new revenue stream.

Inside the organisation we continue to build a community of great people, improve our internal systems, as well as build stronger finances to expand our work. We are taking huge strides in getting the recognition of WAHA as a professional association and we can see month to month how our influence is being felt.

We look forward to another exciting year of change and continued growth of the organisation.

Deborah Chick

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Chick', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Rick Millar Award

Named after our late CEO, Richard Millar, the “Rick Millar Award” is a way of recognising individuals within the working at height and confined spaces sector, who over the last year have made significant contributions to the safety of all workers at height and confined spaces.

There are three primary categories for nomination:

- Outstanding Contributions to Safety
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Longstanding Contribution to Safety

To be eligible for nomination, the person must be an employee of a WAHA Member Company. In-line with the Associations Objections, the individual will have upheld our core values of safety, worked to bring long term advantages to the Working-at-Height and Confined Spaces industry rather than short term advantage of individuals or companies, conducted themselves ethically and with integrity.

We are pleased to announce that the 2022 recipient of the Rick Millar Award “Volunteer of the Year” is Glenn Heatley, in recognition of promoting core values and representing the Association.

We are also pleased to announce that the 2023 recipient of the Rick Millar Award “Longstanding Contribution to Safety” is Michael Biddle, in recognition of promoting core values and representing the Association for many years as Chair.

Congratulations to both Glenn Heatley and Michael Biddle on your awards and thank you for representing the Association.



WAHA Membership

02

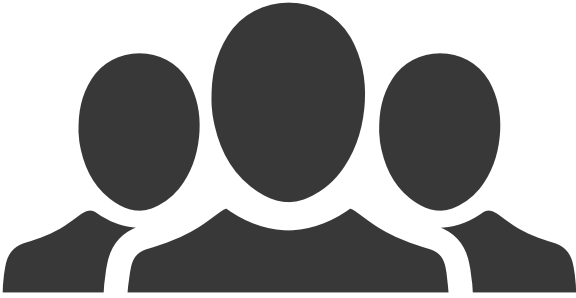


Stability of WAHA

The events of the last few years have led to a fluctuating membership base, and with added psychosocial and workplace pressures like staffing and resources, this last year we have managed a degree of stability in a market that is very stressed.

Admittedly, we as an Association struggled to devote the time and resources we have to active recruitment of new members, as we have been heavily focusing on strategic partnerships over the last year. Moving in to 2024, we need to be reinvigorated, and look to devote a time and effort into advocating for safer workplaces with a membership reflecting that philosophy, as well as recruitment of new Members as well as strengthening the strategic partnerships we have established.

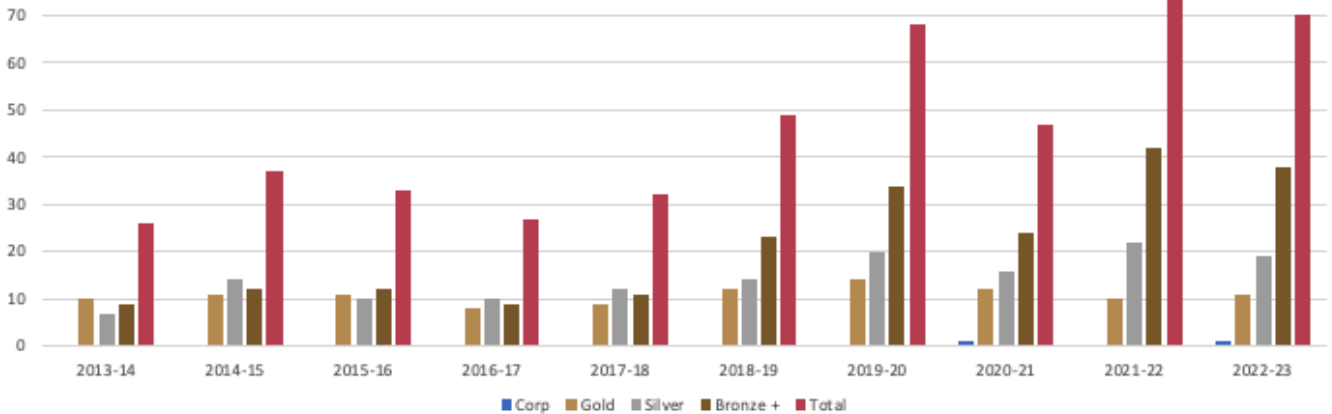
We encourage Membership at the level relevant to the size of your organisation and capacity. We are also striving to encourage new Membership and increase representation across the industry.



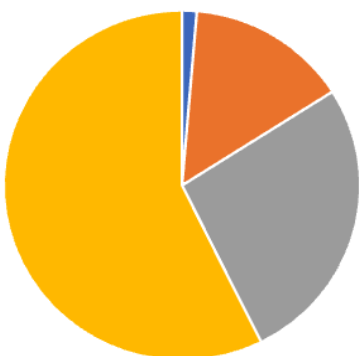
We would also like to see more active engagement from Members in meetings and projects. One of WA-HA's core objectives is to engage with industry and be the conduit for information and assistance with working at height matters. To follow along from this; where we focus as an Association is largely dependent on what the industry needs - this requires active engagement and participation from our Members.

Since our organisation restructured our Membership fees (~11% increase in fees) we have seen a ~17% reduction in expenses over the last financial year, placing the Association in a stronger position to be able to re-invest into the future.

As Membership is currently the primary source of income for the Association, finishing the last financial year in a net positive / neutral fiscal position is a success for us, given the diverse activities, engagement and exposure the Association has achieved over the last 12 months.

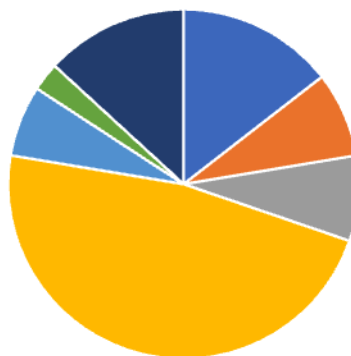


Member Tier 2023



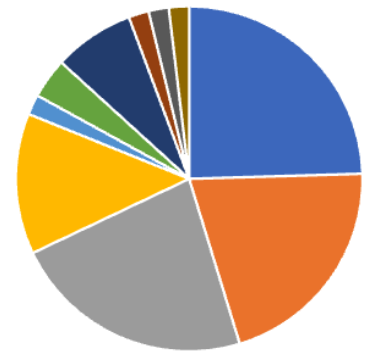
■ Corp ■ Gold ■ Silver ■ Bronze +

Member Profiles 2023



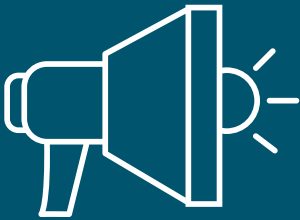
■ Manufacturer &/or Retail
 ■ Training & Operations
 ■ Training
 ■ Operations
 ■ Retail, Operations & Training
 ■ Retail & Operations
 ■ CSE

Member Geography 2023



■ National ■ QLD
 ■ NSW ■ Vic
 ■ Tas ■ SA
 ■ WA ■ ACT
 ■ NZ ■ Malaysia

Benefits



Contribution & Engagement

Subject Matter Experts across membership represents all facets of the industry providing expert guidance on policy and advocacy.

Development of State and application focused communities within the membership base to design solutions to existing and future working at height and confined space issues.

Encouraging contribution of articles for WAHA and industry journal publications.



Professional Development & Learning

Member forums, conferences, peer review and training development.

Mentoring and support for Members to increase knowledge and competency.

CPD delivery to allied industry and professional associations.

Addition of Student and Individual Memberships to encourage engagement from outside industry and increase education footprint.



Trusted Knowledge & Information

Continual development of the WAHA Body of Knowledge.

Targeted Social Media campaigns referencing key collateral from the WAHA Body of Knowledge Library.

To facilitate and encourage the exchange of technical knowledge and to encourage further research into industry issues based on cooperation and collaboration with related industries and professions.



Advocacy & Policy

Advocacy for change on current and emerging issues.

Prepare submissions and provide informed and evidence-based review and advice to Govt. Depts and Agencies, Regulatory Authorities and Industry.

Engagement with Industries to inform future development of Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes and campaign content.

WAHA as the peak industry body and primary expert resource.



Professional Development & Learning

Member forums, conferences and training development.

Mentoring and support for Members to increase knowledge and competency.

CPD delivery to allied industry and professional associations.

Student and Individual Memberships to encourage engagement from outside industry and increase education footprint.



Affordable Membership Tiers and Resources

Restructured Membership Categories provide multiple pathways for professional development and organisation engagement.

Digital resources available for free; physical copies for a nominal fee.

Member discounts available for external events and exhibitions.

Engagement Strategy

03



Opportunities

Despite the progress against our strategic plan, there is still a lot of work in front of the Association. As a group we have positioned ourselves as the leading voice in the space, reflected in the number of new partnerships and increased involvement with regulators and industry groups.

With increased relevance, and subsequent recognition of WAHA, 2024 will see the introduction of a new education platform designed in collaboration with foundation partners in the construction industry, utilities and rail, developed to empower operators at height and adding a new revenue stream.

Inside the organisation we continue to build a community of great people, improve our internal systems, as well as build stronger finances to expand our work.

In our advocacy, we are taking huge strides in getting the recognition of WAHA as a professional association and we can see month to month how our influence is being felt.

As we deliver on our key mission, we are also continuing with new initiatives, expanding the value we provide our stakeholders, and building the framework needed to support a growing professional association:

- Building effective partnerships.
- Building a new advocacy agenda.
- Designing a more systemic approach to professional development and creating more diverse learning opportunities.
- Expanding the types of learning people can undertake with the development of a new adaptive learning platform coming out in the coming months.
- Adopting new revenue streams to support member events and activities
- Involving more people from our volunteer workforce in what we do.

Our Phased Approach, as defined in the Strategic Plan, has been successful in creating defined targets and opportunities to expand our sphere of influence for the benefit of both falls prevention advocacy and education, as well as the expansion of our brand and increased recognition of WAHA’s mission to benefit our members.

There was always flexibility built into this approach to allow for immediate response as our network increases, and this has helped refine our activities and where our resources and efforts are best placed for the Association to grow. The plan is now under review, and with the benefit of our experience since the re-launch, we are able to focus in more effectively on key areas and build a growth strategy to see us into our next chapter.

PHASE 1 2023 Year



Safe Work / Work Safe
Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner
Australian Institute of Health & Safety
Construction Industry

PHASE 2 2024 Year



Industry Associations (WSAA, QMCA, WIOA, EWPA, SAA, SARNZ, FIA, FMA & CIC)
Architecture / Designers / Specifiers
Water, Utilities & Rail
Solar Installation

PHASE 3 2025 Year



Oil, Gas & Petroleum
Telecommunication
Power Transmission
Mining

New Targets

Our targets for 2024 are relatively simple; the successful roll-out of our Adaptive Learning project, the smooth integration of the program into our primary partners induction and training platforms, and securing a secondary revenue stream for the Association for us to continue growing.

Our project partners represent the construction and facility management verticals, but also have divisions operating in the water and utilities space. The further integration and development of variations of our Adaptive Learning content is underway for new users, expanding our network and revenue base further, and making the profile of WAHA, our Members and mission more visible in the community.

We have already initiated discussions with industry associations (QMCA, FMA, WSAA, and WIOA) as well as individual organisations within these aligned industries, fostering robust connections and establishing new partnership models. This effort aims to enhance our influence and integrate them as SMEs into our continuous program development with industry groups, in alignment with our strategic plan.

Our 2024 plan is focused on the delivery of these programs, increasing the WAHA brand currency and providing opportunities for our members to connect with this expanded network and leverage the work the Association has been doing.

The potential revenue raised from these new streams will be invested back in to events and programs, all designed to expand our reach and provide face-to-face opportunities for discussion of issues affecting our stakeholders.

Our partnerships are critical in ensuring the ongoing relevance and sustainability of WAHA. The more important WAHA becomes in the evolution of best practice, the greater the opportunity is for us bring renewed benefits to our members who have been supporting the transformation of the Association and our new agenda.

Our relationship with Area9 has opened up new pathways for the organisation, to not only increase our sphere of influence, but to change our value proposition and be more relevant across all industries working towards better safety outcomes and fall prevention solutions. This has been an exciting, but challenging, project, and I would like to personally thank all those who have committed to, supported and contributed to its success.



Emerging Success

Engagement

- Encourage engagement and membership as a means to influence and inform.
- We have been able to develop and manage industry and government relationships, guided by a clearer framework to maintain beneficial relationships
- We continue to work towards improving working at heights knowledge, education and training within the wider community.
- We continue to develop and provide access to working at height and confined space information and guidance for all organisations and workers at all levels.

Collaboration

- Established collaborative relationships to further identify any emerging issues and assess appropriate responses through collective problem solving.
- Increase the profile and relevance of WAHA values and principles to all segments, creating benefits for WAHA Members as benchmarks for quality.
- Actively pursue new relationships, and work with regulatory bodies and peer industry associations.
- Build on existing relationships with key publications, expanding our opportunities to reach wider audiences and enhance and amplify the WAHA profile and messaging.

Standards Australia

Over the last 18 months, the WAHA have been working with Standards Australia on the curation of a small business suite of standards to be available for businesses at a low cost. The “working at height” small business set of Standards are now available for WAHA Members to subscribe to. This set includes:

- **AS/NZS 1891.4:2009**, Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices, Part 4: Selection, use and maintenance.
- **AS/NZS ISO 22846.1:2020**, Personal equipment for protection against falls — Rope access systems, Part 1: Fundamental principles for a system of work.
- **AS/NZS ISO 22846.2:2020**, Personal equipment for protection against falls — Rope access systems, Part 2: Code of practice.
- **AS 1892.5:2020**, Portable ladders, Part 5: Selection, safe use and care.
- **AS 1657:2018**, Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders — Design, construction and installation.
- **AS 2865-2009**, Confined spaces.

The standards in this set help to ensure safety and compliance in preventing falls and injuries, with the aim of reducing the risk of significant harm to workers.

For more information head to: <https://store.standards.org.au/curated-subscription/work-at-height>

Publications and Marketing

04



Promotion Points

We've been looking at a variety of metrics to measure the success of the strategy implemented at the start of last financial year, and with Social Media being a big part of the amplification of our message, it's a good example of how effective the execution of the strategic plan has been sphere of influence increasing.

Our LinkedIn profile continues to provide the most engagement of all our social media platforms, and we have had a **30%** increase in new followers in the last 12 months. With a focused approach to engagement, we expect to see this increase significantly going into 2024 and beyond.

All these reporting metrics help inform and provide indicators of growth, and also the resonance of our messaging and content. Using social media is just one method of we will use for our performance mapping.

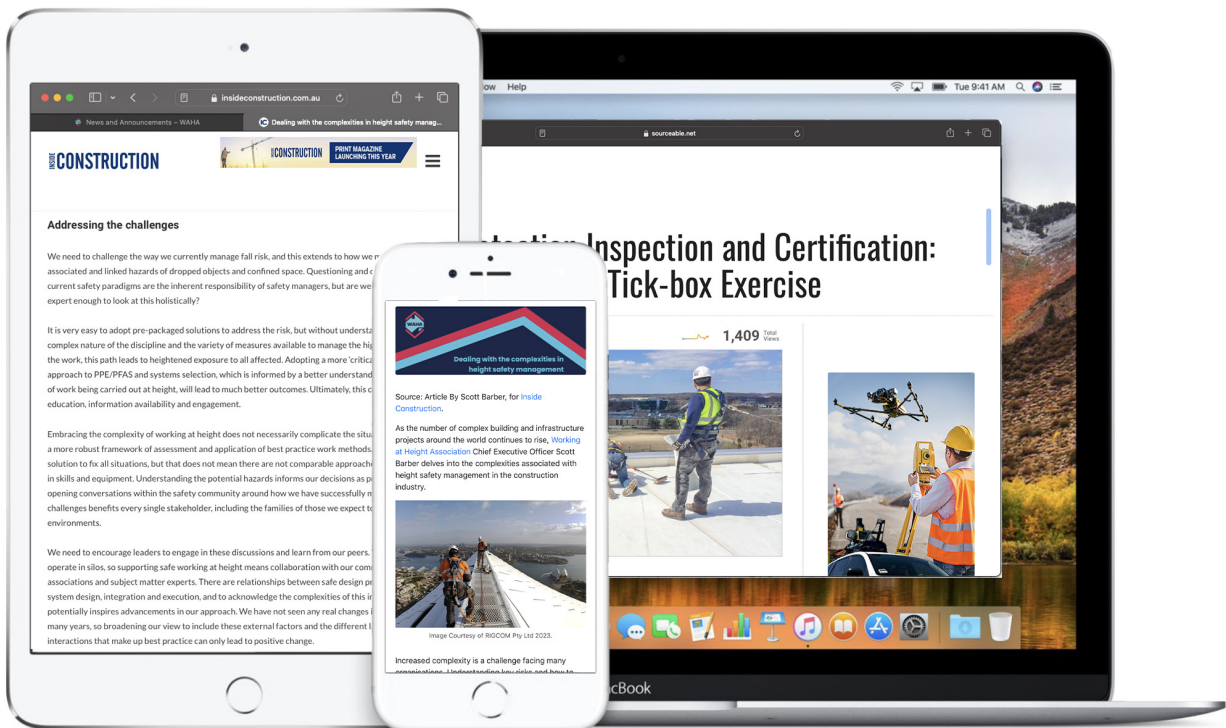
Marketing Strategy

We continue to build our relationships with key publications, expanding our opportunities to reach wider audiences and enhance and amplify the WAHA profile and messaging. This content has also been used as inspiration for a range presentations delivered to different industry groups, reinforcing our position as the peak body.

Throughout 2023 we worked on a number of publications to continue to promote the Association. This included multiple articles with Strategic Partners Inside Construction, Sourceable and even worked with the Australian Local Government Yearbook, with an editorial piece around Safe Design and PCBU Responsibility.

We expanded our activities in 2023 by attending new industry events as well increasing our involvement with the WHS Show and becoming an Association Partner with Inside Construction. With growing exposure, WAHA was invited to be involved in a range of discussions at a grassroots level, allowing us to focus on brand building directly with those strategic targets.

We focused on quality with marketing opportunities, identifying those where we could reach stakeholders face-to-face to impart our message. The impact of speaking directly to different Associations and industry stakeholders has lifted WAHA to a new level, positioning us for even greater growth in 2024.



Key Industry Events

05



SafeWork Australia CoP

The SafeWork National Community Code of Practice (CoP) has been set up with the intent to bring a cohesive, collaborative and national approach to strategic safety.

With a primary focus on construction safety, and an early emphasis on working at height, WAHA has been introduced as the subject matter expert and will be deferred to in technical matters relating to falls prevention and confined space.

The SafeWork National Community CoP is supported by representatives of all the State Regulators, SafeWork Australia and the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner

During the first CoP meeting, the focus was on designing parameters and focus. The WAHA were able to explain its mission and capabilities. SafeWork South Australia provided additional support in our message, referring to instances where the WAHA has provided assistance during investigations.

The WAHA was able to establish itself as the subject matter expert in the working at heights matters, and were supported by SafeWork NSW, SafeWork SA and SafeWork VIC.

By the close of the meeting, we received confirmation that the WAHA would continue its involvement in campaign development.

FMA National Summit

The Facility Management Association (FMA) is the peak national industry body for facilities management, representing and supporting professionals and organisations responsible for the operational management of Australia's built environments.

Established in 1988, today FMA has branches in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania Victoria and Western Australia.

A primary focus of the Association is to ensure the needs of professionals and organisations working in and dealing with facilities management are understood and considered in government and business policy formulation and decision making.

FMA provides a range of services to members, including advocacy and industry standards development, research, networking and information based events and seminars, education and professional development opportunities and support for special interest groups.

FMA Future Facility Management (FM) National Summits are held to provide FM Industry professionals and supporters the opportunity to make new connections, renew old ties, and keep abreast of the very latest in professional practice and research from across Australia and overseas, as well as to contribute to the body of knowledge and to the evolution of the FM Industry.

WAHA was invited as one of eight speakers to present to a group of 80 x FM Professionals on topics relevant to key areas of focus for the FMA and work at heights industry.

Our topic, "Working at Heights – Design and the Regulatory Environment" focused on the importance and implementation of safe design principles to managing working at height risk, and regulatory framework which defines this.

Our partnership with the FMA is testimony to the advocacy and education stance the Association has taken and the FMA's pro-active approach to enhance the knowledge and skills of its members.

SafeWork SA Webinar

WAHA has been working closely with SafeWork South Australia, advising in a number of investigations and providing guidance to its Inspectorate. As a trusted partner, we were invited to speak at a webinar targeting all stakeholders in the residential construction sector.

SafeWork led the panel discussion into a number of areas, including

- Approaches to managing risk and responsibilities as PCBU.
- Utilisation of the Hierarchy of Controls and application of its principles.
- SWMS as a productivity tool and means to address the changing risk environment.

WHS Show - BRIS & SYD



The WAHA were delighted to be back as a Supporting Association Partner at the Workplace Health & Safety Shows in Brisbane and Sydney in 2023. The partnership with the Workplace Health and Safety Show has proven to be a successful means of engaging with external stakeholders and increasing the breadth of our profile.

There were two shows in 2023, with the May - June event in Brisbane and Sydney being held in September. Scott gave a presentation on Collaboration to affect change in Height Safety, on the Spotlight Stage at both the Brisbane and Sydney events, drawing over 100 attendees to each one.

WAHA have been emphasizing and promoting the importance of collaboration and partnerships to create opportunities for change. The WHS Show provided an opportunity for Scott to highlight these opportunities and how a united voice can be a powerful tool for engagement and to amplify our message around education, competency and safe design.

We were also fortunate to meet with the Scaffolding Assoc. of Australia (SAA) and Scaffold, Access and Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ) to formalise our MOU and to determine actions and strategies which will benefit all parties into the future.

WAHA have been forging strong ties with the Australian Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS), and with the National Conference run in conjunction with the WHS Show, we were able to sit down with their new CEO, Julia Whitford, their Chair, Naomi Kemp, and Deputy Chair, Cameron Montgomery to discuss the future state of safety and the role our organisations will be playing, both independently and collaboratively.

WAHA took a different approach to highlight our position as thought leaders in the space by hosting a discussion panel built upon our previous presentation in Brisbane on "Collaboration to affect change in height safety".

We invited Ryan Tinker and Josh Kent from SafeWork NSW, Dom Weir from AIHS and Michael Sugg, CEO of the Formwork Industry Association to sit with us and discuss the different approaches from a Regulator, Professional Assoc and Industry Association perspective to deliver different outcomes in safety.

It was apparent, despite some disagreement, that there are definitive synergies in our desire to provide safer workplaces, with a focus on genuine competency and verification of competency as a critical piece of the puzzle to see a shift in the SafeWork statistics, which are remaining stubbornly despite all our best efforts.

These conversations proved to be valuable with an engaged audience asking a range of questions throughout the discussion, as well as after the panel finished, and requests for more of the same kind of content delivery.

The increased recognition and exposure to new sectors has been a direct effect of the panel, with the amplification of our message providing new partnership opportunities and an expanded network.

- Increased recognition
- Amplified messaging and exposure to new sectors
- Extremely positive response to Panel – request for more face-to-face WAHA events and webinars

The WAHA look forward to continuing our partnership with the Workplace Health and Safety Show in 2024, with an event being held in Melbourne in May, and again in Sydney in October, where the WAHA will not only be able to pursue our objectives in industry, but also allow our Members to receive exclusive discounts on stalls and floor space.

MELBOURNE - Wednesday 22nd - Thursday 23rd May 2024

SYDNEY - Wednesday 23rd - Thursday 24th October 2024

www.whsshow.com.au

London WAH Seminar

The London Working at Height Seminar (LWAHS) is aimed at all professionals who have an interest in working at height within the City of London, and beyond, including local government authorities, procurement professionals, health and safety professionals, building and facilities managers and many more. Through the creation of a collective forum of leading experts and industry professionals, LWAHS facilitates collaboration, mutual consultation, the sharing of best practice and industry developments. Deborah attended the 2023 LWAHS on behalf of the Association.

Ultimately, the LWAHS's aim is to improve access to quality information to support decision-making. Their focus is to drive positive action, reduce occupational incidents, minimize risk of harm to workers and the general public and to continuously raise the safety standards in the work at height sector.

The LWAHS had several guest speakers, presenting on matters relating to workplace health and safety, as well as the challenges faced in their organisations or industry sectors. Each guest presenter was engaging throughout the seminar, and there were a lot of shared concerns expressed that correlate to what we see in Australia, including workplace fatality statistics.



There was an emphasis on collaboration with other industry associations, the need for fall prevention at the design phase of projects, and strategic shifts each year to support the conversations around height safety, including psychosocial and behavioural influences at height.

The event was a huge success for the City of London and IRATA International, and proved to be a valuable event for the WAHA in brand acknowledgement on a global platform.

Inside Construction

Through our increased activity and profile in the construction sector, WAHA was approached to be a supporting Association Partner for the inaugural Inside Construction Expo.

As part of the partnership arrangement, WAHA was given a stand, supported by one of our Directors, Mark Anderson from Anchored Height Safety, and Lou Mezio from one of our Gold Members, SpanSet, who also supplied an Xtirpa Davit System to bring a little “bling” to our space.

We were also invited to sit on an expert panel and to act as mediator on another 2 x discussion panels. This was an amazing opportunity to present WAHA as a definitive SME, influencer and important stakeholder in evolving safety culture.

Our involvement also led to new network and partnership opportunities with RMIT School of Built Environment and Sustainability and the College of Vocational Education, AEFAC and the Elevator Association of Australia. All of which are included in active in our strategic plan for 2024.

Panel 1 – Developing an Education and Skills Pathway – Safety Focus
Scott Barber- WAHA, Michael Sugg – FIA, Andrew Smith – Area 9 Lyceum

Panel 2 – Safe Working Environments, Scott Barber – Moderator
Jeremy Trotman – AIOH, Giselle Phillips – Brisbane Airports Corp, Michael Sugg – FIA

Panel 3 – The Use of Technology to Improve Safety (AI Solutions), Scott Barber – Moderator
Martin Smith – John Holland Group, Kieren Mackenzie – Presien, Brandon Hitch – CICA

WH&S World Congress

First held in 1955, the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work is one of the largest international conferences for work health and safety.

As a global event occurring every 4 years, the World Congress came to Australia for the first time. It was an amazing opportunity for the Australian safety community to connect with like-minded professionals and SMEs from all sectors and disciplines in the safety space. The event provides a platform for sharing knowledge, innovation, research, and strategic and practical ideas to immediately implement.

The theme of the 2023 Congress was “Shaping Change: collaborating for a healthier and safer world of work” and was broken down into three key topics:

1. Collaborating for a better future.
2. The changing world of work.
3. Future proofing against risks.

With over 3000 Delegates from 170 Countries, CEO Scott had meetings with Safety Leadership from major construction, mining, infrastructure, utilities, and regulators from across the region. Focusing on the practical safety elements and new innovation in supporting technology, Scott attended panels, workshops and presentations on advances in PPE, risk management and the relationship between the process and the selection of PPE and provided a forum for the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and experiences to promote safe and healthy work for all.

Having met with some major stakeholders across a number of sectors, WAHA has strengthened connections, networks and alliances while laying the groundwork for cooperation and deepening relationships between all concerned.

It was an incredibly effective networking opportunity for WAHA to meet key stakeholders from large organisations, to promote the Association, gain leads and insights for future projects and to support our ongoing Adaptive Learning project. We have subsequently expanded our allies and increased our reach and profile which will benefit the Association going into 2024 and beyond.



Key Industry Partnerships

06



Partner Organisations

One of the key focuses for the WAHA over the last year has been associating with, and strengthening relationships with other key organisations in the working at height and confined space sectors. Through these strategic partnerships, the WAHA is able to strengthen our key messaging, as well as brand recognition on a national and international stage.

For an Association such as WAHA, our ability to be heard and influence positive change can only happen through partnerships, collaboration and building trust with all stakeholders.

This is why there has been a concerted effort to build our profile, network and list of allies to ensure our message reaches our target audience, pre-qualified and endorsed by these partners.

We are very happy to have signed MOUs with the newly formed Scaffolding Association of Australia, Scaffolding (SAA), Access and Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ), Formwork Industry Association (FIA) as well as starting negotiations with the Facility Management Association (FMA),

Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA), Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA), the Elevated Work Platform Association (EWPA), Crane Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the Australian Elevator Association (AEA) and the Australian Carpentry Association (ACA).

We have also built strong connections and partnerships with State and Federal Regulators, Emergency Services (as external SMEs), and have been invited to sit on advisory boards and panels in mining, tier 1 construction and arboriculture.

Partnerships in Progress and Partner Organisations:



In addition to creating and strengthening partnerships, the Association has been developing our brand recognition through a number of key promotional avenues.

This includes collaboration with the **Australian Local Government Yearbook**, where the WAHA had an editorial opportunity around safe design and PCBU responsibility, articles for **Inside Construction** where we collaborated on the importance of safety when working at heights and the businesses championing height safety, along with dealing with the complexities in height safety management.

Increased complexity is a challenge facing many organisations. Understanding key risks and how to apply suitable solutions is critical, but how do we distil the problem to find the best remedy? Most efforts to improve safety are still based on the assumption that our safety management systems are effective, and that it is the behaviours of individuals, who either take shortcuts or fail to follow procedures that create unsafe workplaces. It's an easy line to follow if there is a disconnect between engineered safety management and the actual application of policy and procedures.

The WAHA also continue to provide articles to **Sourceable**, with topics like PPE selection, as despite PPE being the lowest position in the hierarchy of controls, on face value it appears to be the simplest solution so is often adopted as the primary response from employers in addressing the risk. But what is very clear is employing this methodology without a very clear selection criteria based on relevant risk assessments can often place workers at a heightened risk, rather than offering a genuinely safe solution.

Adaptive Learning

07



Learning through AI

This year, one of the primary projects of the Association has been a partnership with Area9 Lyceum. This project came about through the identifiable gaps in the levels of competency delivered under the current RTO framework for safe Working at Height. The model is flawed and often leaves critical gaps in skills and knowledge which in turn increases the potential for safety incidents.

This issue is compounded by skills shortages across multiple sectors which leads to engagement of work forces with lower levels of knowledge, skills and experience. Whilst compliance training is being undertaken, there is no guarantee genuine competency is being delivered, and it is these 'unknown unknowns' from each worker which is of the greatest concern. Organisations simply do not have line of sight on the 'transparency of competency' and have to assume training is relevant and workers safe to work at height.

Through collaboration with likeminded parties, like Area9 Lyceum, we are supporting the empowerment of operators at height to work more safely by providing relevant, intuitive and practical education via an AI learning model.

The opportunity for organisations to combine efforts, resources, and intellectual property to develop a solution that provides not only validation of competencies across this workforce but eliminate the gaps in knowledge critical to safe work practices.

The combined focus of our partners will deliver a modular training package with targeted key learning areas and the flexibility to be tailored to suit roles, worksites and offer each learner a personalised learning experience. This will serve to reduce risk, save time, improve safety outcomes, and provide high levels of actionable data.

Some of the key goals of the collaboration include:

- Saving lives in the workplace.
- Meaningful and cost-effective interventions that can be tailored and scaled to maximise impact.
- Build stronger skills and competency across multiple sectors with regards to falls prevention.
- Reduce risk and improve safety outcomes.
- Impact and influence behaviour change at the operational level.

These project outcomes align with WAHA strategic plan through:

- External stakeholder engagement.
- WAHA as a positive influence for change.
- Education and empowerment of all stakeholders.

Tailored to specific work settings like facility management, utilities and construction with heightened efficiencies and effectiveness, the focus will be on the engagement of partners to utilise the courses across induction and training activities. While training staff and subcontractors, the modules can be delivered both directly to employees through existing LMS infrastructure, through subcontractor portals such as Donesafe and 3D Safety or contractors can access directly through Rhapsode.

So what is Adaptive Learning? It is an online delivery method that automatically adjusts to the needs of each learner. It recreates at scale the optimal teaching approach of a one-on-one personal tutor. It uses proven data analytics and intelligent technologies to adjust in real-time to deliver an optimal experience

Gaps in knowledge have significant impact when working in high risk environments with significant exposures to falls. Where standard eLearning is a 'one size fits all' solution and does not address in competency, adaptive AI learning provides a personal teaching experience for each learner but at scale. With over 30 million users, evidence shows gaps in knowledge are eliminated, and there is a up to 50% time saving in the delivery when compared against standard eLearning, leading to improved safety and reduced risk in a range of settings including construction, mining and utilities.

Current eLearning, as good as it may look, simply does not support individuals. It leaves considerable gaps, and creates risk exposure and potentially false confidence, especially in high-risk industries. If we were to take a cynical position, a lot of what is being delivered could be considered an exercise in compliance rather than building a genuinely competent workforce.

AI Learning Can ...

Fill the gaps = empowering workers to operate more safely at height

Assist in identifying and rectifying gaps in learning under RTO model

Enable a more competent and aware workforce

Assist in the Elimination of Class 1 safety events

Provide Transparency of competency – industry adoption

Ensure Consistent outcomes from training – “guaranteed” base level competencies/proficiencies

Provide Data and analytics to support program

The AI within Area9 Lyceum solution evaluates each learner using over 1 billion data points as they work through your existing or new training content and supports the individual’s gaps in knowledge. This has significant impact on the development of competencies, and has a personalised learning approach at scale.

The key aspects for the success of this adaptive learning in high-risk environments such as utilities / construction/ mining / transport and medicine are:

- A proven method of learning with over 30 million users.
- Elimination of critical knowledge gaps for each learner that standard eLearning fails (compliance driven only), but at scale (personal tutor).
- Supports behavioural change and enhances operational and field training.
- Saves up to 50% in time due to the personalised approach when compared to standard eLearn course (proven to increase productivity and reduce costs).
- High engagement of staff due to the personalised approach.
- Provides exquisite data to support the impact of the educational intervention and reduction in risk.
- Works in all LMS.
- Project outcomes align with WAHA strategic plan.
- External stakeholder engagement.
- WAHA as a positive influence for change.
- Education and empowerment of all stakeholders.

WAHA and Area9 are proud to partner with **Programmed** and **John Holland Group** in the development of our first packages targeting verifiable competency in the construction and facility management sectors. With their support we have developed content building on the core competencies as determined by the RTO framework, and contextualised via a scenario based module focused specifically on work practices, environments and practical application of their knowledge for those worksites. Connecting with the workforce and providing relevant contexts for this knowledge has been shown to have a significant impact on safety practices and statistics. This program is the first of its kind, and WAHA are very excited to be at the forefront of using this technology to affect change on a large scale.

Based on the project structure, content and approach, WAHA and Area9 are also in negotiations with other industry sectors and large organisations to implement the program as standard industry requirements for safety.

There are developments already in the planning stages, for not only other industry specific scenario content (written in collaboration with SMEs in those sectors), but also expanding the content to include working at heights supervisor, systems installer, systems design, inspection and technology programs to be delivered to continue to increase the knowledge and professionalism of our industry and to support our members.

2024 will be a big year for WAHA, and on the back of the success of this project, we will be in the best position in the history of the Association to deliver great outcomes for safety, our allies and advocates, and our members.



Key Industry Statistics

08



Key WHS Statistics 2023

Each year, Safe Work Australia produces national work health and safety statistics, providing important evidence on the state of work health and safety in Australia.

There are still too many serious injuries, fatalities and illnesses arising from work. The findings from the latest Key Work Health and Safety Statistics 2023 show that:

- *Body stressing, Falls, slips and trips, and Being hit by moving objects are the cause of most work related injuries in Australia,*
- *Vehicle incidents and Being hit by moving objects continue to account for most fatalities, and*
- *Work related mental health conditions are rising, with time off work in these cases more than four times longer than for other injuries.*

Falls from height continue to be a major cause of serious accidents in the workplace. Notwithstanding the overall improvement of health and safety at work over recent years, falls from height still occur. Indeed, falls from height were one of the principal cause of fatalities in the 2022 pe-

riod, comprising 9% of all fatalities according to Safe Work Australia figures. Where such incidents happen, employers and controllers of the premises are likely to face investigations by the state and territory regulatory bodies. The outcome can be prosecutions with resultant significant fines and/or prison sentences. Incidents are also more likely than not to lead to personal injury claims which in view of the circumstances and nature of the injuries sustained can often be substantial in value.

The 2023 **Work-Related injury fatalities / Key Work Health and Safety Statistics** publication shows that risks rising from work at height remains a major source of incidents and that those involved in such works still need to do more to minimise the dangers.

Falls, trips and slips of a person make up 22% of all serious compensation claims throughout 2022.

The Construction Sector remains one of the leading industries work workplace fatalities and incidents / workers' compensation claims. The outcomes of falls in the workplace are more likely to be life-threatening when compared to many other incident types.

Other common mechanisms of injury, such as manual handling, overexertion, and vehicle or machine accidents are more likely to cause injury to a particular body part. The injuries sustained from a fall from height can easily have wider spread complications which can affect the whole body, cause significant damage to vital organs, and if not directly resulting in death, have life-altering long term consequences.

Another cause of injury and illness that is becoming a serious concern, is those relating to Mental Health. Mental health conditions accounted for 9.2% or 11,700 serious claims in 2021-22p. While this was a slight decline on 2020-21, it remains substantially higher than 10 years ago. How does it relate to us in the working at heights sector? Well, in the Construction sector alone, workers are 8x more likely to die by suicide than from an accident at work. The following unique stressors were identified in the *"Mates in Construction" Blueprint Roundtable*: competitive and male-dominated workplace culture; stigma and fear around the subjects of mental health and suicide; ignorance of the increased risk of suicide and mental health issues for workers; failure by management to accept or apportion responsibility; higher levels of substance and alcohol misuse; disparate workplaces, FIFO (Fly in, Fly out) and DIDO (Drive in, Drive out) work; working while exposed to the elements; and, inconsistent/intermittent work.

Over the 10 years to 2021-22p:

The proportion of claims for Mental health conditions has increased from 6.5% in 2011-12 to 9.2% in 2021-22p. This has been driven by growth in the number of serious claims each year for Mental health conditions of 3,500 claims, or a 43.3%, increase over the period.

- This represents the largest growth in the number of claims each year for a Nature of injury/illness Major group observed over the period.
- Workplace mental health conditions are one of the costliest forms of workplace injury. They lead to significantly more time off work and higher compensation paid when compared to physical injuries and diseases.
- The median time lost from Mental health condition claims in 2020-21 (34.2 working weeks) was more than four times the median time lost across all claims (8.0).
- The median compensation paid for Mental health condition claims in 2020-21 (\$58,615) was close to four times the median compensation paid across all claims (\$15,743).

Closing Statement

09



Future Growth

Another transformative year has passed, and the WAHA has been afforded many opportunities to promote its brand, our goals and objectives, and our Members.

The Association has begun to formalise working relationships with key stakeholders and other industry organisations to ensure that working at height and confined spaces matters are advocated for, with a united voice. We believe that as these relationships develop, we will be able to fulfil our key organisational aims and objectives.

We continue to adapt as new opportunities arise to promote the Association, not only nationally within Australia, but for the first time we have been able to promote our organisation internationally.

Throughout 2024 we will continue to strengthen existing relationships, promote our Members and interact with industry peers to ensure the highest standards in safety, work quality and working practices for the Working-at-Height and Confined Spaces industries are developed further.

With many projects on the go, we look forward to delivering unique professional development opportunities for members through adaptive learning, developing new resources for our Members and seek new opportunities to promote the continuous improvement of education and training in the Working at Height and Confined Space sectors, to meet the changing needs of industry and increase the competencies and professionalism of operators.

We are proud of our diverse membership, and we look forward to the opportunity to continue to facilitate and encourage the exchange of technical knowledge and to encourage further research into industry issues based on cooperation and collaboration with related industries and professions.

Thank you for supporting us, and continuing to promote workplace health and safety in a challenging commercial climate.

We look forward to supporting your successes in the future.

Regards,

The Working at Height Association of Australia.



Working at Height Association

Reaching new levels in safety

The WAHA would like to thank the following Members for providing photos for the Annual Report:
ALTURA, Bunzl Brands, KASK, RIGCOM, SAYFA, SafetyLink Australia & Skylotec.



Working at Height Association

Reaching new levels in safety

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