

Annual Report
of
Safety Risk Officer
Angela Byrne
For Fiscal Year 2020

Technical Standards and Safety Authority

August 2020

Introduction

As the newly appointed Ontario Safety and Risk Officer (SRO) for the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) I am pleased to present my first Annual Report for the year ending April 30, 2020.

One of my responsibilities is to release an Annual Report to the public. As described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) and the TSSA the purpose of my report is to provide *“an overview of the CSRO’s activities and operations, highlight key recommendations arising out of any other report issued by the CSRO in the preceding year, and any other matter the CSRO considers relevant to the public¹.”*

The intended audience for the report is the general public.

Being appointed in October 2019, my first Annual Report is for a partial year; from October 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020.

Changes to the Safety Risk Officer Role

It is important to note that my Annual Report for fiscal year 2020 looks quite different from reports issued in the past.

Over the last few years TSSA was seeking to improve the effectiveness of the SRO role and this was supported by recommendations in the Auditor General’s report of 2018. Given that the SRO’s mission is to provide the Board of Directors with an independent review of the public safety responsibilities assigned to the TSSA applying an audit focus to SRO activities was deemed to provide greater value.

TSSA in collaboration with the MGCS, clarified the SRO’s responsibilities through a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October 2019. Activities were defined to reflect an audit lens supported by reporting and advisory activities, thus allowing for greater reliance on the SRO’s evaluation of TSSA activities.

To ensure expectations of the new role are being met, TSSA established a Performance Management Framework. The Framework sets out the SRO key responsibilities and priority weighting. It guides and supports the Board of Directors in its oversight of my role and the evaluation of my performance.

To this new role my audit experience lends itself to delivering a range of assurance services that can be tailored to meet the needs of the TSSA Board of Directors. I bring a variety of audit techniques and an approach to the role with a common theme of ensuring that a level of evidence exists to support all findings and conclusions.

My approach is rooted in a belief that everyone is striving to deliver their best and there is always room for continuous improvement. With that in mind I work collaboratively with TSSA staff to ensure that we work together to improve public safety and support TSSA in achieving its vision and mission.

Applying an audit lens to my activities combined with a participatory approach provides the Board of Directors with an independent view while supporting TSSA in continuous improvement.

Overview of SRO Activities for Fiscal Year 2020

As the new incumbent embracing the newly focused SRO role my first partial year has been exciting and full of discovery. Starting in October 2019 I began to learn about TSSA, the value that it delivers to the province, and the dedication of staff. Much reading ensued and I had the opportunity to tag along with inspectors

¹ “Memorandum of Understanding”, Technical Standards and Safety Authority, October 2019, page 12, <https://www.tssa.org/en/about-tssa/resources/MEMORANDUM-OF-UNDERSTANDING---October-2019.pdf>

during field visits. I was impressed with their rapport and style in dispensing their inspection duties while working collaboratively with the industry and operators. I quickly saw that we were all on the same team in striving to strengthen public safety in Ontario.

I submitted a Work Plan to the Board of Directors for approval in January 2020 and proposed activities for a partial year only; to April 30, 2020. My Work Plan sought to identify activities that would provide value and further the transition of TSSA to an outcome-based regulator while effectively reducing safety risks. The theme of data quality was selected as my area of focus as it is viewed as an essential component of successfully becoming an outcome-based regulator.

My first area for review was to gain an understanding of existing and developing processes for data quality, specifically processes related to the Annual State of Public Safety Report (ASPR). The intelligence gathered during these activities was instrumental in informing my focus for fiscal year 2021 and the focus of the review of the ASPR for fiscal year 2020.

The Report I issued from the Data Integrity engagement noted that a number of steps implemented by TSSA to improve the ASPR over the last few years were making a difference. In consultation with key stakeholders we observed three areas that provided an opportunity to continue to strengthen the quality of data in the ASPR; the collection of data, the purpose of the ASPR and the interpretation of data.

In responding to the observations a common theme permeating through all the recommendations was the need to pause to measure progress regularly, debrief for lessons learned and application to other areas, and adjust next steps as necessary.

It was important to highlight that although the Strategic Analytics Team, responsible for reporting the data, has an important lead role to play in responding to the observations in the report, success will only be achieved with the active participation of the business and technology.

I will note progress on the recommendations during my review of the FY20 ASPR to be undertaken early in fiscal year 2021.

During fiscal year 2020, I also reviewed the recommendations made by the previous Chief Risk and Safety Officer (CSRO) in the review of the ASPR FY19 and the response by TSSA. It was noted that work was currently underway for most of the recommendations and their status was monitored through other reporting mechanisms. As a result, I consider the recommendations of the previous CSRO to be completed.

The Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Work Plan identified the following deliverables:

- Submit 2020/21 Work Plan for approval by the Safety and Regulatory Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors (SRAC)
- Gain agreement on 2020/21 audit themes from senior management, Internal Audit and SRAC
- Address recommendations from previous Chief Safety Risk Officer
- Report on Process and Data Integrity

All deliverables were completed.

Overview of SRO Activities for Fiscal Year 2021

The Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Work Plan continues to build on the theme of data quality and leverages activities completed for FY20. The main deliverable will be the SRO Report on the Annual State of Public Safety Report (ASPR) FY20.

As a result of the redefined role of the SRO, FY21 will be the first year that an audit lens is applied to assess the quality, accuracy and clarity of the data used in the ASPR.

The ASPR plays an important role in demonstrating TSSA value as it provides tangible evidence of the role and actions of TSSA in the state of safety in Ontario. It “ ... reports on safety data as collected by TSSA and estimates the level of risk that Ontarians are exposed to through TSSA-regulated technologies, devices, equipment and certified trades people. In doing so, it relates critical information about the documented state of safety in the places where Ontarians live, work and play.”

My report will assess the reliability of the data and the conclusions in the ASPR and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. Readers of the report will find this of benefit as they gain a better understanding of the quality of data.

Other deliverables in the Work Plan for FY21 are:

- The SRO Annual Report FY20 (to be delivered with this report), and
- The submission of the FY22 Work Plan and Budget for SRAC Approval.

Conclusion

Fiscal year 2020 was a pivotal turning point for the role of the SRO as TSSA implemented changes to improve the effectiveness of the role.

The role was redefined by applying an audit lens to activities and a Performance Management Framework to ensure activities met expectations was put in place.

I was excited to be hired as the new incumbent and support the success of TSSA. During this first partial year under this new approach I delivered a report on Data Integrity; specifically related to understanding the processes used in producing the ASPR. Recommendations related to data collection, the purpose of the ASPR and the interpretation of data will be implemented to strengthen the FY20 ASPR.

The focus on data quality is viewed as an essential component to TSSA successfully moving to becoming an outcome based regulator. The theme of data quality will continue as my focus for FY21 as I review the FY20 ASPR. The main deliverable for FY21 will be the report on my review of the ASPR FY20.

With the redefined role of the SRO initial steps are beginning to make a difference and are building a strong foundation for future benefits to TSSA. As the SRO activities continue to evolve there is every expectation that the SRO role will continue to add value and support in guiding TSSA to fulfill its vision to be a valued authority for a safer Ontario.