



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Proudly Sponsored by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)  
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## Recent Workplace Fatalities A Concern

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13 January 2006

TASMANIA - The Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Bryan Green, has urged a greater focus on safety in the workplace in the light of a number of Tasmanian workers being killed or seriously injured in the past few months.

Since November, there have been five fatalities in Tasmanian workplaces -- three of them in the forestry industry.

"I am seriously concerned by the number of deaths and serious injuries in recent months. I have asked Workplace Standards Tasmania to continue to use all available resources to try to reduce the number of workplace accidents. While these fatalities are a great tragedy, I acknowledge that over the past 10 years, fatalities have reduced and general accident numbers have also reduced significantly. This trend must continue and I will continue to support the safety compliance campaigns undertaken by Workplace Standards. The objective of this approach is to reduce the number of workplace related fatalities in Tasmania by 20 per cent and the number of general injuries by 40 per cent, by the year 2012."

Mr Green also called on employers and workers to work together to review work practices and ensure that work was well planned and completed. "Employers and workers share the obligation to identify hazards in the workplace and take whatever steps are necessary to fix or remove the risks. Safety is not something employers or workers can take for granted—it is a fundamental part of doing business. Despite many people believing 'it won't happen to me', the fact is that workers still continue to be killed or injured and that's unacceptable.

"There is no room for complacency but there is room for taking the time to review safety and work practices and to ensure that workers are doing the right thing," Mr Green said.

Information and advice about workplace health and safety is available by visiting [www.workplacesafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.workplacesafe.tas.gov.au)

Industrial fatalities:

17 November 2005—a worker was killed in a log truck incident on a private forest road in the North West;

5 December 2005—two workers were killed in Launceston as a result of an explosion in a tank they were working on;

21 December—a forestry worker was killed in a tree falling incident in the Scottsdale area;

9 January 2006—a forestry worker was killed in a tree falling incident in the North West.

Source: Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

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**Safety Institute of Australia (Inc.)**  
 Victoria Division and Freehills presents

AN EARLY MORNING SEMINAR

### OHS Legislation

**Are you up to date with the changes in OHS Legislation for 2006?**

This Breakfast networking seminar is aimed at keeping Safety Professionals and Industry Representatives abreast of new and impending changes in OHS legislation as well as current and emergent issues for Victorian businesses.

Speakers: **Sia Lagos** WorkSafe Victoria  
**Barry Sherriff** Partner of Freehills

The following topics that may be discussed include:

- Consultation and other Practical Issues
- The OHS Act 2004 – Implementation to date

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*Why not join us in this informative session to network with old friends and make new friends!!*

**VENUE:** Freehills  
101 Collins Street,  
Melbourne

**WHEN:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006  
**Registration:** 7.00am  
**Start:** 7.30am  
**Finish:** 9.00am

**COST: Includes light buffet breakfast**

SIA Members: \$ 50.00  
 Non Members: \$ 70.00  
 (please note: all prices include GST)

If you have not yet booked a place in the SIA's February Breakfast, please do it as soon as you can by downloading the registration form from [SIA Events](#) or you can contact the SIA Secretariat for further information. Seats are limited and this annual breakfast is always well-attended so please book early.



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## Retailer fined over workplace injury

January 20 2006

MELBOURNE- Retailer Woolworths was today fined \$100,000 over an incident which left a Melbourne teenage shop assistant paraplegic.

Part-time shop assistant Michael Collins, 17, suffered sharp back pains and collapsed after lifting a 20kg bag of onions at a now closed Mulgrave Safeway store in April 1999. Mr Collins, who died last year from an unrelated incident, worked for the company for two years and became a paraplegic after suffering the injury.

Woolworths today pleaded guilty in Melbourne Magistrates' Court to failing to provide and maintain a safe workplace and contravening the provision of an act or regulation.

Magistrate Phillip Goldberg fined the company \$100,000 and said that at the time of the incident the risks in relation to lifting were well known.

Woolworths lawyer Robert Taylor told the court the company was deeply saddened by the incident. The court was told Mr Collins saw a brief video on manual handling after joining the company. Mr Taylor said the company conceded the training in place at the time of Mr Collins's injury was inadequate. He said that since then the induction process for its employees had been substantially strengthened.

The company employs 145,000 people and has 700 supermarkets across Australia, the court was told. AAP

## OneSteel told to crackdown on dust

January 16 2005

ADELAIDE- The South Australian government says metal producer OneSteel must take action to reduce the amount of dust emitted from its Whyalla Steelworks.

Environment Minister John Hill said he met OneSteel officials along with Trade Minister Paul Holloway last week to call on the company to reduce dust levels.

The problem has recently caused concern in the Whyalla community despite assurances from the company that new work at the plant will cut the amount of dust released into the air in the future.

"The government is seriously concerned that OneSteel has allowed more emissions of dust in recent weeks," Mr Hill said.

"The company has agreed that the level of extra dust is unacceptable. We are now seeking assurances from OneSteel that this will be investigated and that the company will prepare a comprehensive management strategy to ensure the situation is under control." AAP

## WA's OHS Act Review

January 17 2006

The Western Australian government has released additional information about the OHS Act review process.

The review process will consist of the following steps:

1. An initial invitation for written submissions to obtain the views of interested parties.
2. An analysis of submissions received and of other available information, including discussions with certain individuals and relevant entities.
3. Preparation of a Discussion Paper to facilitate the receipt of more specific submissions.
4. Development of a report, and associated recommendations, for consideration by the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection.
5. Tabling of the report before Parliament.

The first stage of the review process includes seeking initial public submissions. Advertisements have been lodged with city and regional newspapers seeking public comment until 10 February 2006.

## Letter to the Editor

Geoff Taylor's comments [in the previous issue] are well made, and topical, but I think he has undercooked the issue. Having competing recognition systems for Australia can only lead to confusion in the marketplace, and inhibit the development of a recognisable profession.

In my opinion, the reasons for IFAP and ASSE joining forces in Western Australia, and IFAP charging ahead with their own agenda are more a reflection of their opinion of the Safety Institute as they see it in their State, than any demonstrable need in the market.

I recognise that there will always be different views on issues, ego needs, and interpersonal relationship issues within the context of purporting to be THE safety profession, but, unless and until we start to talk as adults, agree on fundamentals such as taxonomies, and subscribe to a body of knowledge we all recognise, then the prevention and reaction aspects of Kaleds (Derek Viner's invented word for the process, rather than the idiocy surrounding the word accident), and a profession, (as properly defined by Dine et al), will not emerge.

There are good people in a number of organisations that are trying their best to make sense of this societal disaster we see. COSHAP, the Congress of Safety and Health Association Presidents, was formed to provide the forum for these views to be aired. Our Institute, the largest of the bodies represented, has a moral obligation to encourage the use of this forum to enable that interchange of ideas and suggestions, and remove from the emerging profession those aspects that retard its development.

Multiple accreditation and recognition systems is one such impediment.

**David Skegg**  
Tas President CFSIA

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The terms of reference are:

The Minister shall carry out a review of the operations of this Act on every fifth anniversary of the commencement of this Act and in the course of such review the Minister shall consider and have regard to:

- a) the attainment of the objects of this Act;
- b) the administration of the Acts and laws relating to occupational safety and health administered by the Minister;
- c) the effectiveness of the operations of the Commission, any advisory committees and the department;
- d) the need for the continuation of the Commission and any committees established under this Act;
- e) such other matters as appear to him or her to be relevant.

More information is available through

<http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/Corporate/Content//Reviews/OSH/overview.html>

## Bullying rife in Victorian public sector - report

January 16 2006

MELBOURNE - Bullying and harassment are rife in Victoria's government departments and public agencies.

And many victims are reluctant to report the harassment because they fear it will harm them, The Age reports.

A government survey of 14,000 public service workers has found that more than one in five were bullied or harassed in the past year.

The abuse came from colleagues and managers and a further 40 per cent had witnessed others being abused.

Most survey respondents say the bullying involved psychological harassment and/or verbal abuse.

One-third of respondents say they will suffer if they complain about workplace problems and half of them are unaware of whistleblower protection laws.

The State Services Authority, Victoria's new public service watchdog, conducted the research.

Community and Public Sector Union secretary Karen Batt said bullying and harassment was one of the biggest sources of complaints from its members and the study reinforced that.

"This is a bit of a wake-up call for the premier and the government," Ms Batt said.

"Bullying and harassment can include the way someone is spoken to, isolation, physical intimidation or even excessive or unachievable workloads."

Government spokesman Geoff Fraser said bullying was "unacceptable and not tolerated".

"A key role of the State Services Authority is to identify problems in the public service workforce and find solutions, and this report is part of that process," Mr Fraser said.

Stress also remains a problem for the state's 250,000 public servants.

About one-third of workers say they are overworked.

New figures show the Victoria's human services department cost taxpayers \$2.4 million in WorkCover compensation for stress, anxiety or depression in 2003-04 to 195 employees -- or about \$12,300 each, on average.

AAP

## UK News

### Government urges all health and safety practitioners to gain Chartered status

January 11, 2006

The Government says it is "fully supportive" of the introduction of a chartered qualification for professional health and safety advisors and pledges to recommend all advisors, where appropriate, to work towards achieving it.

In response to a Parliamentary Question, Anne McGuire, Minister for Disability in the Department for Work and Pensions gave her unequivocal support to the UK's 6,000 recently chartered practitioners. Last year, 220 people died and 30,666 suffered major injury through work activity. Over 2.2 million people experienced ill health attributable to work, and more than 39 million days off work were caused by injuries and illness.

The Government's support comes after the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health awarded Chartered Status to its members, having been awarded corporate Chartered Status earlier last year. To receive the new designation, practitioners will have to undertake Initial Professional Development (IPD) as well as enrol on mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD). An open book assessment and professional interview ensure that their skills and knowledge are fresh and kept up to date.

IOSH immediate past president, Lawrence Waterman, said, "You wouldn't employ someone who wasn't Corgi-registered to deal with a faulty boiler, and you wouldn't want an accountant dealing with your finances who wasn't chartered. The same rule should apply to health and safety.

"We're raising our game so that

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## Workplace bullying briefings continue in 2006

19 January 2006

WorkSafe is stepping-up its campaign to stamp out workplace bullying with a series of information workshops being held across Victoria.

Sessions will be held at Preston, Horsham, Melbourne (CBD), Traralgon, Geelong, Ballarat. Details for briefings at Swan Hill, Mulgrave and Bendigo in March and April are to be confirmed.

Bookings for the workshops can be made online at [bullying\\_info@workcover.vic.gov.au](mailto:bullying_info@workcover.vic.gov.au)

The anti-bullying workshops will provide practical information about what constitutes bullying, how to prevent it from occurring through the introduction of anti-bullying policies.

WorkSafe's 'Prevention of Bullying and Violence in the Workplace' will be available at the workshop. It is also available online at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) or by calling WorkSafe's advisory service on 1800-136-089.

"The personal and financial cost of bullying to the community is enormous," WorkSafe's Executive Director, John Merritt said.

"Despite increasing awareness of bullying as a serious workplace health and safety issue, the number of workplace injury insurance claims for harassment has steadily risen. The cost of these claims indicates only part of the impact of bullying. The average cost for medical and rehabilitation of someone making a bullying claim is more than \$41,000 compared to \$23,000 for physical injuries. The effects of bullying can last a lifetime. The broader community cost is measured in lost productivity and absenteeism resulting, increased staff turnover and replacement costs. Some national estimates have put it at between \$6-billion and \$13 billion a year."

Mr Merritt said the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires employees and employers to ensure they identify and address workplace hazards that affect the psychological health of employees. "Workplace bullying doesn't only affect the victim but also their family and workmates. As a community, we must do all we can to stamp out this destructive behaviour," Mr Merritt said.

In a Ballarat case in 2004 an employer was convicted and fined \$50,000 for failing to protect employees from bullying. The employee who bullied his colleague was convicted and fined \$10,000.

Source: WorkSafe

## Geological factors caused Lane Cove Tunnel collapse: report

SYDNEY, January 19 AAP - Geological factors have been blamed for the partial collapse late last year of Sydney's Lane Cove Tunnel, severely damaging a unit block and forcing the evacuation of about 50 residents.

The tunnel gave way during construction on November 2, opening a 10 metre hole beneath an adjacent unit block in a major embarrassment to the NSW government, already reeling from anger over the cross city tunnel.

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business and industry can reap the benefits. The days when a health and safety practitioner could go around a workplace with just a checklist and pen have long gone. Chartered safety and health practitioners will be a different breed, providing practical solutions to everyday problems in the workplace and communicating in the language of business."

Source: IOSH

Region	Date & Time	Venue
Preston	Tue-31-Jan 2006 9:00am – 11:30am	Darebin Arts Centre Cnr. Bell Street & St Georges Road Preston
Horsham	Tue-07-Feb 9:00am – 11:30am	Westlander Motor Inn Western Hwy Horsham
Melbourne (CBD)	Tue-21-Feb 9:00am – 11:30am	The Windsor 103 Spring Street Melbourne
Traralgon	Wed-01-Mar 10:30am – 1:00pm	Quality Inn Latrobe Convention Centre 5601 Princes Hwy Traralgon
Geelong	Wed-08-Mar 10:00am – 12:30am	Mercure Hotel Cnr. Gheringhap & Myers Sts. Geelong
Ballarat	Wed-15-Mar 10:00am – 12:30pm	Doherty's Ballarat Lodge 613 Main Road Ballarat

## Tractor under tow kills Englishman

January 16 2006

MELBOURNE - A young Englishman has been crushed to death in a freak tractor accident in Victoria's north.

The 22-year-old dairy farm worker was behind the wheel of a tractor being towed along a country road near Cobham when it rolled about 3pm (AEDT) today, police said.

"The tractor was being towed by a four-wheel-drive west along Chapel Road towards Cobram to be repaired," Senior constable David Fitzgerald said. "...The tractor rolled over, killing the man instantly."

A report is being prepared for Victoria's coroner. The death took the state's road toll to 10, three fewer than at the same time last year.

AAP





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Tunnel builder Thiess John Holland today said a review of the incident by rock mechanics expert Professor Ted Brown had found no single factor caused the collapse.

"The report finds that there's a range of complex geological issues that interact together in the area of that excavation," spokesman David Saxelby told reporters. "There's no single cause of the collapse. The collapse arose from a combination of factors that were not present together at any other location in the underground works on the project."

The collapse was caused by "the presence and alignment of a low strength dolerite dyke", "orthogonal jointing associated with the dyke" and "the presence of faults which in conjunction with the dyke and the jointing created unstable ground", the report found. Water did not contribute to the collapse, Professor Brown found.

Mr Saxelby said the dyke - a vertical intrusion of igneous rock into the parent material - had not been identified during early feasibility works but had been noticed later. Support structures in the area of the collapse had been inadequate, he said.

He again apologised to residents affected by the cave-in, and said Thiess John Holland would do all it could to help them. "We apologise to all of those people who were disrupted by that event, particularly the residents who were forced to leave their homes," he said.

But he denied the episode had damaged Thiess John Holland, saying the report praised the company's work practices. "I don't think it's done damage to our reputation at all," Mr Saxelby said. "I think it's enhanced our reputation."

The tunnel's design had been reviewed following the collapse and motorists could be confident the \$1.1 billion project would be safe when it opens in May next year, he said. The design for the section of tunnel that gave way had been altered, he said.

Mr Saxelby said the company had purchased four of the 31 units affected by the collapse.

Discussions were continuing over the purchase of 15 more, while 12 owners were either returning or remained undecided, he said.

WorkCover is conducting a separate investigation into the tunnel collapse.

AAP

## Bodies issue safety warning over MVACs

January 20 2006

SYDNEY - WorkCover NSW and the state's Fair Trading department have issued a joint safety alert about flammable gases in motor vehicle air conditioning systems (MVACs).

Although the standard type of refrigerant in motor vehicle air conditioning units is non-flammable, some units may contain flammable gases, WorkCover and the Fair Trading's Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Authority said. They said fire and explosion could result if flammable refrigerant leaks and unites.

Both bodies are urging consumers and vehicle repairers to be aware of hazards when re-gassing MVACs with flammable hydrocarbon gases. They are encouraging anyone who works on motor vehicle engines to conduct a risk assessment and use appropriate risk controls when re-gassing MVACs.

AAP

## Man dies in farm accident

January 16 2006

BRISBANE - A man has died in a farm accident in Queensland's central west.

Police investigating the incident said the 64-year-old man had parked his utility near a dam while he pumped water about 3pm (AEST) on the property between Roma and Condamine.

The vehicle rolled down an embankment onto the man who died at the scene, police said.

Investigations are continuing. AAP

## Adobe Acrobat V7 Information

Some readers have expressed difficulty in upgrading to the latest version of Acrobat Reader with one of the problems being that the download can be over 25 megabytes - a substantial burden to dial-up internet connections.

Safety At Work publishers are now allowed to distribute the latest edition of Acrobat Reader on a CD. If you want a copy of Acrobat Reader 7.00 please email me at [jonesk@sia.org.au](mailto:jonesk@sia.org.au) and include your full postal address. A CD will be mailed to you shortly after.

The CD won't be pretty as it is a burnt copy of the software that Adobe permits us to distribute. It is not allowed to be given to anyone other than the person requesting the CD and all CDs will be checked for viruses before distribution.

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Editor Kevin Jones  
Editorial Inquiries +61 (0)3 9478 9484  
[jonesk@sia.org.au](mailto:jonesk@sia.org.au)

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849 High Street, Regent VIC 3073 Australia  
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