



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Proudly Sponsored by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)  
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## Productivity Commission Releases Final Report Into Standards Australia

16 November 2006

Mr John Tucker, CEO of Standards Australia, said the Productivity Commission's report into Standards Australia, released today, makes a series of demanding recommendations while acknowledging that Standards Australia had "embarked on an significant plan to address key issues of concern."

"Standards Australia does not, must not and should not be seen as having a monopoly on developing industry and community standards," Mr Tucker said.

Key recommendations in the report include:

- Standards Australia continuing as Australia's peak non-government standards development body;
- Continued adoption of International Standards ahead of Australian Standards, wherever appropriate;
- Increasing the transparency of the justification for new or amended Standards;
- Maintaining or increasing current Federal funding for consumer and industry involvement in international standardisation activities;
- Increased participation by consumer groups in the ISO consumer policy group;
- Improving the balance of interests represented on committees including increasing representation from small business, consumer and other community groups;
- Reducing the barriers to volunteer participation by reducing the cost of involvement;
- Strengthening Standards Australia's appeals and complaint mechanisms.

Mr Tucker said recommendations calling for governments to undertake regulatory review statements for mandatory Standards and to fund low cost access to Standards referenced in regulations would be welcomed by all businesses and consumers.

The report concluded key elements of the publishing agreement between Standards Australia and SAI Global were of major concern noting, "some of the terms of the publishing agreement continue to create perverse incentives and constraints for Standards Australia".

Source: Standards Australia

### Safety claims against on-hire industry don't stack up, research shows

15 November 2006

New independent research commissioned by the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA) has revealed that the safety performance of the

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The Productivity Commission's final report is a lengthy document that requires considerable digestion way beyond the Executive Summary. We have requested a short article on the Final Report from the National Technical Committee Chair, Jonathon Amies, and he has agreed to provide this.

Over the next few weeks, as digestion occurs, it is expected that we will see more and more articles about specific ramifications of the final report. The Australian for November 21 (page 5, business section) discusses SAI Global's response and that of Standards Australia, under the title "Standards body under fire". The Productivity Commission's report is available for download at <http://www.pc.gov.au/study/standards/finalreport/index.html>

Editor

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on-hire industry is not - as is often claimed - worse than direct employment, but it is in fact better.

The research undertaken by the Values Bank Research Centre from publicly available data refutes the claim made in the 2002 Underhill Report, that on-hire workers, (also known as labour hire or temp workers) "are more likely to be injured than direct employees and their injuries appear to be more severe".

"Since its publication, the Underhill report has been widely quoted as the key source of information on the on-hire industry's safety record. But a review of the data shows its claims simply don't stack up.

"The key measure for safety performance is the incident rate: it is an actuarial formula the used by the insurance industry and WorkCover. Surprisingly though, the Underhill report did not use this, and without it, the claims made by the report are little more than anecdotal," Brent Taylor, Principal of the Values Bank said.

One of the reasons for this shortcoming may have been a lack of necessary data when the report was written in 2001-2002.

"The Underhill report is outdated because crucial information wasn't available at the time. Not long after its publication, however, new data was made available through HILDA, a national study of the workforce carried out by the University of Melbourne. Using this, the Values Bank has been able to calculate an incidence figure for the on-hire industry and it found a 27 per cent lower rate of claims", Mr Taylor said.

The research notes, however, that claims are not injuries.

"There are reasons to believe that people in the on hired industry may underclaim and that people in direct employment may overclaim; somewhere in between is probably the true incidence. The fact remains however, that for all the figures we can find, the incidence of claims for On Hired industry is lower than the rest of the workforce," Mr Taylor said.

According to Julie Mills, CEO of the RCSA, the research sends a strong signal to critics of the on-hire industry, especially those who would seek to set its workers compensation premiums at a higher level.

"Businesses have embraced the flexibility and efficiency that on-hire workers provide, and workers themselves benefit not only from competitive rates of pay, but the doubling up of workplace safety reviews, as the responsibility falls to both on-hire employers and their clients.

"On-hire work has grown rapidly in recent years, and will continue to do so. It is now time for critics of the industry to change with the times and recognise the benefits it brings to Australian employers and workers, including enhanced safety performance," Ms Mills said.

Source: Recruitment and Consulting Services Association

## Swedish Road Safety Expert In Tasmania

12 November 2006

Leading Swedish road safety expert Dr Claes Tingvall will visit Tasmania this week to bring local authorities up to date with the latest strategies for reducing road deaths and injury.

Dr Tingvall's visit follows Minister for Infrastructure Jim Cox's visit to Sweden in September.

Mr Cox said Sweden was recognised internationally as a world leader in road safety, Tasmania could learn much from Dr Tingvall.

"Sweden is the home of Vision Zero, which is recognised as one of the world's most innovative and effective road safety programs. We are privileged to have an opportunity to hear first-hand the ideas of an expert such as Dr Tingvall and how they could apply in Tasmania," Mr Cox said.

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## National Board of Management

The new SIA National Board of Management as follows -

President:	Geoff Dell (Vic)
Vice President:	Barry Silburn (NSW)
Secretary:	Leo Ruschena (Vic)
Treasurer:	Ralph Willson (QLD/NT)

The Divisional Representatives are:

Victoria:	Scott Puddy
NSW:	Keith Hoskins
Qld/NT:	Trevor Love
ACT:	David Segrott
WA:	Janis Jansz
SA:	Jim Toshach
TAS:	Andrew Skegg

## CANDIDATE ELECTION COMMITMENTS

In a special election edition of **SIA SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN**, each of the candidates made some pledges and promises. It is important for SIA members to remember these pledges over the next term of the National Board.

Each candidate was contacted last week to confirm, or otherwise, these commitments and were invited to comment on their successful appointment to the National Board, if they chose. Ralph Wilson's comments are not included as he made no pledges other than to continue in a similar manner. The pledges and commitments are listed below.

**Geoff Dell**, the National President, made the following commitments:

- "There is no doubt the SIA needs strong leadership. I believe that I can provide that leadership, vision and promote unity.
- It is imperative that SIA again begins to lobby Government and the ASCC to regain the lost ground.
- A united National Board will be imperative if .. challenges are to be successfully met.
- In my view, we need to appoint a CEO who can provide a full time focal point for our efforts both in the area of influencing government and in ensuring our internal processes have the fidelity and effect required of a prominent national professional body.

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As Director of Traffic Safety for the Swedish National Road Administration, Dr Tingvall has written almost 100 scientific articles on injury epidemiology, car occupant safety and safety policies for many countries.

Mr Cox said based on information gathered during his Sweden visit he asked his department to investigate a number of initiatives and ensure their inclusion in the current review of the State's road safety strategy.

Mr Cox said his visit to Sweden and the input of Dr Tingvall was timely as the next five-year Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy was currently being developed.

"I look forward to initiatives such as these helping to make Tasmania's roads safer. Road safety is something we need to work at constantly. We need to be considering as much information and as many developments as we can to save lives on our roads," Mr Cox said.

Mr Cox said he had given approval for three engineering staff from the department to travel to Europe, including Sweden, to meet with their road safety counterparts.

"This will allow my staff to investigate the technical aspects of cutting-edge European road safety measures," Mr Cox said.

Source: Minister for Infrastructure

## Coroner to investigate truck, train crash November 16 2006

A Victorian coroner has inspected the site of a fatal collision between a train and a truck in south-western Victoria.

Police said heavy haulage equipment was brought in to remove the truck from a level crossing near Cressy, north of Colac, where the Barpinba - Poorneet Rd crosses the railway line.

The 56-year-old driver died in the accident, when his truck, carrying rocks, collided with the Overlander train running between Melbourne and Adelaide, about 4.45pm (AEDT). The crossing has no lights, bells or signs.

A Rural Ambulance spokeswoman said last night all 120 passengers on the train were checked by paramedics but there were no injuries. "It sounds like the train has hit the cabin of the truck," she said. The deceased man was from Dandenong.

Victoria Police acting sergeant Julie-Anne Newman said the train had not derailed after the collision. The train's operator, V-Line, organised buses for the passengers.

Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service members worked at the scene last night. The cause of the crash is under investigation. The train would not be moved until it was inspected by officials from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The man's death takes the state road toll to 281, which is down on the 306 deaths at the corresponding point last year.

AAP

## Man crushed between trucks at Bendigo workplace MELBOURNE, November 14 2006

A man has been crushed to death between two trucks in a workplace accident in Victoria's north.

Police and officials from WorkSafe Victoria were at Crystal Ice and Cool Stores, in Garsed Street, Bendigo after the incident about 4.30pm (AEDT) today.

"A man has been crushed between two trucks," WorkSafe's construction and utilities division director Geoff Thomas told AAP.

He said a police investigation was under way but it appeared one truck hit the man, which wedged him against another truck that was reversing nearby.

"He was in between the front of a truck that was being backed into a loading dock, and another one that was outside waiting to come in," Mr

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- We need to make the transition from running a small association to the National, indeed International, professional safety body of distinction."

Barry Silburn, the Vice President, made the following commitments:

- "The Institute is to be known as the leading Safety professional body within Australia, and our region of South East Asia.
- Membership of the Institute is recognised as being the primary requirement for all professional safety appointments.
- Governments and advisory bodies seek out members of the Institute for involvement and advice on OHS matters.
- The College of Fellows is recognised as the custodians of the body of knowledge in safety science.
- It is time to appoint an Executive Director that is able to seek out alternate long range funding that is not based upon the subscription fees of our members.
- The Institute should take up the IOSH model of promotion of training courses delivered by their members."

Leo Ruschena, the National Secretary, made the following commitments:

"In the coming year, the prime activities of the National Secretary will be to bed down the new web so that it reflects our desire to be seen as the premier Australian OHS professional body, and to increase the expertise and efficiency level of the Secretariat.

The SIA also needs to develop and implement a National Strategy that includes:

- Establishing closer links with OHS regulators
- Develop the RSP(Aust) brand and on-line register of OHS skills by category and geography, and to enter dialogue with other OHS professional organisations for their participation.
- Improve access to technical expertise for responses to Standards and legislative changes
- Develop criteria for certification of OHS tertiary education courses
- Develop new revenue streams."

The Editorial team of the **SIA SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN** congratulates the new Board members and look forward to a productive 12 months.



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Thomas said. "He has been hit by the second truck."

Mr Thomas said there were no witnesses to the incident and the man, who was aged in his 50s and lived in the Bendigo area, was found by a workmate.

"The ambulance was called but it was unable to help," he said.

Mr Thomas said it took the number of traumatic work-related deaths in Victoria this year to 22, and he issued this reminder.

"Always be aware of the circumstances you are working in," he said. "And for employers and workers to constantly keep a close eye on known and potential hazards in their industry."

AAP

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## Coroner recommends govt regulate recreational dive industry

SYDNEY, November 13 2006

A coroner has recommended WorkCover regulate the recreational diving industry after a policeman drowned while diving with colleagues off Sydney.

NSW police sergeant Edward Van Putten died after he ran out of air during a recreational dive with six other police officers at Colours Reef, near Watsons Bay, on December 13, 2004.

An inquest into his death found the 53-year-old was a relatively inexperienced diver who ran out of air during the dive.

Sgt Van Putten was a very large man and his air consumption was at least twice that of the average diver, Deputy State Coroner Dorelle Pinch said in her findings, handed down in Glebe Coroners Court today.

Sgt Van Putten's air consumption was described as "enormous" and placed him in a special needs category, Ms Pinch said.

On the day of the dive, he had borrowed an air cylinder with a capacity of 80 cubic feet from another diver, despite previously being advised he needed an air tank with 120 cubic feet capacity, she said.

"If Mr Van Putten had appreciated the safety implications of his excessive air consumption ... then he ought to have raised the issue at the earliest opportunity, ie when arranging to borrow the air cylinder," Ms Pinch said.

She recommended the NSW government take over regulation of the diving industry, citing WorkCover as the appropriate authority.

While there was a code of practice in place to guide the industry, there was no obligation to comply with the provisions and they were not enforceable, Ms Pinch said.

AAP

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## TWU Condemns Sham Safety Code

14 November 2006

The National Transport Workers' Union (TWU) has today warned a voluntary retail supply chain code of conduct, supposedly designed to strengthen safety standards in the transport industry, could be nothing more than a get out of jail card for companies breaching safety laws.

TWU National Secretary, Tony Sheldon today said the Retail Logistics Supply Chain Code of Conduct, to be released early this week by the Australian Logistics Council (ALC), based on drafts read so far does not adequately force clients and transport companies to put in place OH&S chain of responsibility laws or safety measures but rather is an avenue to protect companies in the face of legal action.

"The ALC has failed to properly consult industry groups. Despite TWU requests we have not yet seen the final code nor have we had a response to our own submission and we are very concerned based on the drafts we have read so far that this supply chain code of conduct is a front for a hidden agenda," said Tony Sheldon.

"If the Australian Logistics Council is serious about fixing the problems which lead to death on our roads then they should start by putting together a code which is not voluntary, contains proper enforcement mechanisms and outlines specific requirements that would lead to accountability in the supply chain.

"Until this is done, companies under this code can still set unrealistic trip schedules only now they can look like they are delivering improvements without doing anything of the sort.

"There have been 81 people killed in heavy vehicle accidents in NSW roads alone so far this year and dozens more across the country.

"We have all heard about the pressures drivers are put under. They either do the job in the time specified or they risk getting the sack. Coroner after coroner, judge after judge have all said that more proactive measures have to be taken so that drivers don't become another casualty of the heavy transport industry and have their lives ruined 'by the imperative of greed which lies at the heart of the interstate transport industry.'"

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"It's hard to see how the code, as drafted is going to deliver any concrete safety outcomes for transport workers and road users."

Source: Transport Workers' Union

## **December 1 deadline for WorkCover Construction Induction Certificates** 10 November 2006

WorkCover NSW Chief Executive Officer, Jon Blackwell, today issued a reminder to construction workers that they must replace their green cards with the new WorkCover Construction Induction Certificate by 1 December 2006.

"From 1 December 2006, the old 'C type green card' will no longer be valid on any construction site in NSW," said Mr Blackwell. "The new arrangements will help to ensure safer workplaces in NSW by providing proof that the card holder has completed WorkCover approved safety training for construction work.

"After 1 December, 2006, all construction workers will be required to carry a current Construction Induction Certificate to work on construction sites," he said. "The new system provides businesses with assurance that workers have been properly trained through a new, credit card-size proof of safety induction.

"Although most cardholders have already converted to the new WorkCover certificate, some green card holders missed the two-year conversion period, which ended on 29 March 2006. Following a high demand for training courses, the timeframe for transition was extended to 1 December 2006," he said.

Mr Blackwell urged those who have not completed construction induction training to enrol in an approved course as soon as possible. For further information on licence conversion phone the WorkCover Assistance Service on 13 10 50. Source: NSW WorkCover

## **Builders Awarded For Attention To Safety** 14 November 2006

Master Builders Australia, in conjunction with the Federal Safety Commissioner, announced the 2006 winner of the National Federal Safety Commissioner's Excellence in Occupational Health and Safety Award at Master Builders' National Awards dinner held at Parliament House on 10 November 2006.

The winner was A W Edwards Pty Limited for the STAT-EAST works of the Epping to Chatswood railway line.

Mr Wilhelm Harnisch, Chief Executive Officer of Master Builders Australia said, "The hazards that confronted A W Edwards in undertaking work in an underground tunnel were significant and included working at height within the tunnel and the need to constantly monitor air quality and velocity. Overall the judges were impressed with the very strong commitment to safety demonstrated and the quality of OH&S documentation. Importantly, on the ground, the documents were given practical effect."

"The safety of workers in the building and construction industry is of paramount importance to our members, and Master Builders Australia is proud to offer this award in conjunction with the Federal Safety Commissioner," Mr Harnisch concluded.

Source: Master Builders Australia

## **Four injured when shop awning collapses** SYDNEY, November 19 2006

Four people have been taken to hospital after falling from a shop awning in Sydney's south, apparently while hanging Christmas decorations.

NSW Police said the four plunged from the shop in Gymea Bay Road, Gymea, when the awning collapsed about 10.20am (AEDT) today. They were taken to St George and Sutherland hospitals with non-life threatening injuries, police said.

A police spokeswoman could not confirm the gender of the people involved or whether their injuries were serious. One theory is that they were trying to hang Christmas decorations when the awning collapsed. NSW Police and WorkCover NSW are investigating what happened.

AAP

## **Iemma Government increases workers comp' benefits** 16 November 2006

NSW Minister for Commerce, John Della Bosca, said legislation to increase workers compensation benefits had been passed by the NSW Parliament last night.

"By returning the WorkCover scheme to financial health, the Iemma Government has been able to increase benefits for injured workers and reduce premiums for business," Mr Della Bosca said. "The legislation passed by the NSW Legislative Council last night authorises a ten per cent increase in permanent impairment benefits for workers injured after 1 January 2007. The maximum payment in the scheme rises to \$231,000, in addition to weekly benefits, ongoing medical care, rehabilitation and other support.

"Historically, 99 per cent of injured workers have received their compensation from this scheme. The most seriously injured workers can, if they choose, forfeit these benefits and make a common law claim instead."

Source: NSW Minister for Industrial Relations

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## Outside workers warned on the dangers of lightning

November 15, 2006

WorkSafe WA has reminded employees who work outside to use extreme caution during thunderstorms.

Acting WorkSafe Executive Director Gail McGowan said today there had been three work-related deaths from lightning strikes in WA since 1998.

“We are all aware of the awesome power of lightning, but most would think they could never be unlucky enough to be struck,” Ms McGowan said. “The reality is that it is entirely possible, and precautions should be taken during thunderstorms to lessen the risk of being struck. The fact that golfers will invariably be called in from courses when there is a thunderstorm in the vicinity demonstrates that lightning is recognized as a serious hazard. Lightning strikes can travel up to 80km before striking the ground, and will usually target the tallest object or the best electrical conductor in the area. Hence, the persons most at risk are those working out in the open, on the sea or other waterways or sheltering under trees or other structures.”

The three most recent work-related fatalities from lightning in WA were:

- in December 1998, a 23-year-old jockey was killed when struck by lightning while exercising a horse at Ascot Racecourse during an electrical storm;
- In January 2001, a 42-year-old truck driver was killed when the truck he was standing next to was struck by lightning; and
- Also in January 2001, a 39-year-old underground mine manager died after being struck by lightning while inspecting a water storage pond at a mine.

Recommended precautions to be taken if outdoors during a thunderstorm include:

- Seek shelter immediately in an enclosed car or substantial building;
- Never shelter under trees because your body is a better conductor of electricity than the tree;
- If boating or engaged in other aquatic activities, head for shore straight away;
- Do not handle fishing rods, umbrellas, golf clubs or any other metal objects and stay clear of sheet metal, wire fences, clotheslines and so on; and
- If caught in the open, crouch down with your feet together. Do not lie down – the idea is to be as low as possible, but with minimal contact with the ground.

“Using wired electrical equipment, hand-held tools or appliances and landline telephones should also be avoided during thunderstorms,” Ms McGowan said. “Employers need to recognize the hazards associated with an electrical storm and, where appropriate, have safe procedures and systems of work in place to minimize the risk of injury or harm to employees.”

Source: DOCEP

## Adobe Acrobat V7.08 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 20 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 7.08 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.

For those readers who are unconcerned about download limits, the latest version of Acrobat Reader is available for free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

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