



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

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## Teachers paid \$21 million in stress claims since 2002

February 5 2007

Up to 700 Victorian teachers have been forced to take stress leave in the past five years after children as young as 10 bullied, threatened and abused them on the job, WorkCover figures reveal.

More than \$21 million was paid to the teachers, who took stress leave from January 2002 to August last year because of harassment, work pressures and assault, News Limited newspapers reported today.

In one case, a primary school teacher was threatened by a Year 6 pupil with a knife after he was told to move into the shade as he was not wearing a hat.

In other cases:

- an angry parent grabbed a principal by the neck and threw her to the ground, inflicting severe bruising and forcing her to take stress leave;
- a teacher was compensated \$250,000 for what was described as an "attempted suicide/suicide";
- \$400,000 in compensation was paid to a teacher who was assaulted in 2002 and suffered post-traumatic stress disorder;
- a teacher, shoved to the ground by a parent who could not get access to a child's school bag, was unable to return to work;
- a school clerical assistant claimed she was bullied by a principal; and,
- a special school student smashed her teacher's teeth in an attack. The pupil's parents say the teacher assaulted the student first.

More than \$4 million was paid for 160 claims from teachers who could not work after being harassed, the newspaper said, using figures obtained under Freedom of Information from the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

Another \$2 million was paid to teachers who could not return to work because they were assaulted on the job or were exposed to occupational violence in 65 other cases.

A further \$13 million was paid in 279 claims to teachers who said they could no longer work because of workplace pressure and another 140 claims for "other mental stress factors".

Australian Education Union Victorian branch president Mary Bluett said anecdotal evidence suggested harassment of teachers by parents and students was increasing.

"The (offending) students seem to be getting younger," Ms Bluett said.

"We are seeing it happen in primary school in the last two years. The cumulative effect of consistently being challenged, abused and jostled just builds up."

AAP

### Warning On Duty Of Care To Public As Pizza Chain Fined.

February 4 2007

SafeWork SA is reminding businesses of their duty of care to the public under Occupational Health and Safety laws, after a prominent pizza chain was fined in the SA Industrial Relations Court.

Domino's Pizza Australia New Zealand Ltd was fined \$26,250 and had a conviction recorded last Friday, after pleading guilty to breaching Section 22 of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986 for failing to take reasonable care to avoid harm to people through an act or omission at work.

"This case highlights another side of OHS laws," says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson, "namely that employers have a legal duty of care to ensure the safety of the general public as well as their own workers."

The court heard how in June 2005, a SafeWork SA inspector was called out to

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## ADVERTISING

A limited amount of advertising has been approved by the Safety Institute of Australia.

If you want to advertise to over 3,000 safety professionals in Australia, please contact Joanne at the SIA Secretariat through [natadmin@sia.org.au](mailto:natadmin@sia.org.au)





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a Domino's franchise at suburban Gilles Plains to inspect an advertising sign that had been vandalised, exposing broken fluorescent tubes and live electrical wiring.

It was discovered that the sign had actually been damaged in February, and the offence was in Domino's failing to ensure that the sign was maintained in a safe condition.

In his ruling, Industrial Magistrate Michael Ardlie said:

"The sign was in a dangerous condition for approximately two months with exposed live wires and broken fluorescent tubes.

"The sign was close to ground level and any member of the public could easily have come into contact with the live wires thereby risking a fatal electrical shock."

The company has since amended its policies in this matter, and in reducing the fine, the magistrate took into account the company's early guilty plea, contrition, and cooperation with SafeWork SA.

"Any company that deals with the general public should heed this case," Ms. Patterson says, "and make sure that their hazard identification and risk assessment process accounts for the safety of customers, visitors and the public as well."

Source: SafeWork SA

## Women Out To Prove They Are Safer Truck Drivers Than

### Men

30th January 2007

Man's domain at the wheel of a truck may soon be over if nine women truck drivers have their way. They are among more than 900 truck drivers who have put themselves forward to highlight their skills as part of a national campaign for safer driving on the nation's highways.

Two women drivers each from Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia have joined the campaign, with others from Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania.

They are part of a five-month national campaign which is also seeking to find Australia's best young professional driver. The campaign has been launched by the Australian Trucking Association (ATA) and Scania Australia.

The campaign is also focussed on further reductions on the 22% fall in fatal crashes involving articulated trucks over the past five years and to attract more young people into the profession to overcome the projected shortfall in skilled drivers as the nation's road freight industry is set to double in the next decade.

The Young Australia Truck Driver (YATD) of the Year campaign is based on the highly successful European initiative sponsored by Scania and supported by the European Commission and the International Road Transport Union. More than 27,000 competitors took part in the European competition last year in Europe, South America, South Africa and Taiwan.

The National Final will be held in Sydney on 30- 31 March

Source: Australian Trucking Association

## Man fatally crushed by cherrypicker

MELBOURNE, February 2 2007

A 44-year-old man was found dead after being crushed by cherrypicker in Melbourne's south east.

The Devon Meadows man was alone when the accident happened about 3pm (AEDT) today at an equipment hire firm on the South Gippsland Highway at Dandenong South.

WorkSafe spokesman Michael Birt said the man was operating a cherrypicker machine when he fell.

"He had somehow fallen and was hit by the bucket of the machine and then died," Mr Birt said. "He was working on his own at the time."

It was not known if the man died instantly because he was alone, Mr Birt said.

A police spokeswoman said the man was pinned to the ground after he had fallen from the cherrypicker. Paramedics were called to the scene but the man had already died.

AAP

## Coal mine shuts after spontaneous combustion

BRISBANE, February 2 2007

Mine workers have been withdrawn from a central Queensland colliery after coal in a sealed section spontaneously combusted.

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## Call for Submissions by February 19 2007

The National Technical Chair, Jonathan Amies, asks that more of our members put forward their views to him on the discussion paper on chemicals of security concern.

The COAG (Council of Australian Governments) discussion paper is intended to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss and provide feedback on the review a discussion paper has been developed.

The discussion paper represents the first phase of consultation on the review of chemicals of security concern. The paper gives stakeholders an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the COAG Review of Hazardous Materials Steering Committee's considerations of:

- guiding principles for the review;
- methodology for determining formulated chemical products of security concern;
- possible security control measures; and
- management and implementation of a security control framework.

Responses on the discussion paper will be used in the development of a draft COAG report and an associated regulatory impact statement. The draft COAG report will present a proposed national framework for controlling chemicals of security concern.

The relevant web page is [http://www.dpmc.gov.au/protecting\\_australia/haz\\_materials/index.cfm](http://www.dpmc.gov.au/protecting_australia/haz_materials/index.cfm) and via this web page you can obtain a copy of the discussion paper.

## So why is your input needed?

This review is an extension of the security sensitive ammonium nitrate regulation. Those of you outside of agriculture who had relatively small amounts of ammonium nitrate would have experienced the issues with just one chemical. On the discussion paper there are well over fifty chemicals named which could lead to a rather heavy administrative issue for laboratories, and for both small and large industry. One area



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Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) state vice-president Stuart Vaccaneo said the spontaneous combustion happened on Wednesday in a worked out area of the Cook Colliery, 20km south of Blackwater.

Mr Vaccaneo said about 30 people normally worked at the underground mine, with about nine in each shift, but no one had entered since monitoring equipment detected the threat of an explosion.

"There is still the potential for that to happen and that's why men have been withdrawn," Mr Vaccaneo said today.

An exclusion zone had been established on the surface to prevent workers entering areas which could be affected by a blast, he said.

Mines Inspectorate and Workplace Health and Safety inspectors would also have to declare the area safe before work could start again.

The colliery's operating company, Cook Resource Mining Pty Ltd (CRM), is 95 per cent owned by mining giant Xstrata and five per cent by Tokyo Boeki. AAP

## Hundreds of children at risk of asbestos exposure: report SYDNEY, February 1 2007

Hundreds of children at a Sydney childcare centre could have been exposed to potentially deadly asbestos left lying at a demolition site next door.

The material was left at a demolition site on the corner of George Street and Parramatta Road, North Strathfield in Sydney's inner west near Lollypops Playland Centre and the Bakehouse Quarter shopping, commercial and recreation precinct.

WorkCover shut the site on Tuesday and an expert has been sent to investigate the matter, News Limited reports.

It is unknown how long the asbestos had been there.

The childcare centre caters for hundreds of children under the age of 12 and more than 500 children attended a recent event.

Centre Director Myreeann Tchoporian said she had not been told about the asbestos.

Trevor Marinovich, the manager of Wynn Tresidder Management, the owner of the contaminated site and the Bakehouse Quarter precinct, has confirmed small fragments of asbestos were found exposed at the site.

He said the demolition contractor had taken pains to remove the asbestos and did not know how the exposed pieces were left there.

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW Secretary Andrew Ferguson said the lives of hundreds of children had been placed at risk because of "the developer's neglect and failure to follow basic safety laws". AAP

## Queensland Health And Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007

February 5 2007

According To the Queensland Premier's office, Queensland Parliament will be presented with amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991 and the Health Services Act 1991 to introduce root cause analysis (RCA) to the health services. RCA is a quality improvement technique used in other high risk industries such as the airline and mining industries. RCA explores the chain of events responsible for adverse events in order to identify the factors which caused or contributed to the event as well as the measures that may be implemented to reduce or prevent recurrences of the same type of event.

## Traffic management company fined \$60,000 over death of worker

February 5, 2007

A Perth traffic management company has been fined \$60,000 over a failure to provide a safe working environment for a 19-year-old woman who was killed while at work in 2003.

The company that was formerly known as Advanced Traffic Management Pty Ltd was found guilty in the Joondalup Magistrates Court on Friday of failing to provide a safe work environment.

Natasha Coles was employed as a traffic controller at a road construction site in Wanneroo Road, Neerabup in February 2003.

On February 17, in the course of that work, Natasha Coles was standing in the middle of the road between the construction area where mobile plant was operating and the lane that carried passing traffic when she was struck from behind by a road roller and killed.

The Court found that the location in which she was standing was not safe, and that she should have been standing on the curb rather than the middle of the road, away from the construction area and facing the passing traffic, about 400m north of the mobile plant.

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where I recently had dealings with had nearly thirty of these chemicals and some of your areas may have even more. Should there finally be a large number of chemicals to deal with similar exemption quantities and security issues to ammonium nitrate then administration may get quite difficult or perhaps meaning it is easier to simply choose not do some activities.

Many safety professionals have some sort of responsibility for chemicals and would understand the situation quite well. You will undoubtedly have some rather good ideas to input on how reasonable security can be achieved without having a large administrative burden to deal with.

Remember that when this becomes law you really would like to have a workable system. Some out there may already have one. Please send in your views by email in Word or PDF format to **National Technical Chair** before 19th February so a coordinated SIA reply can be finalized by 1st March. Unless requested in writing material will treated as non-confidential

**Jonathan Amies**  
National Technical Chair





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The Court found that the company did not have a proper traffic management plan that identified the proper location for the traffic controllers, and did not provide adequate supervision.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that the case highlighted the extreme hazards of mobile plant operating in the vicinity of pedestrians and other workers.

“Fifteen Western Australian workers have died over the past six years in incidents involving mobile plant and pedestrians, and a further 880 workers are injured each year seriously enough for them to require time off work.

“A major concern is that the operators of mobile plant often have restricted visibility of ground workers and other pedestrians, especially when they are close to the machine, and there needs to be a series of controls in place to prevent injuries and deaths.

“In this tragic case, a safe system of work needed to be in place and appropriate supervision provided so workers were positioned away from moving machinery with oncoming traffic always visible ahead and a clear escape route behind the worker.

“Some of the other measures that need to be considered include an effective means of communication between operator and pedestrians, flashing lights, rear and side mirrors and audible reversing alarms.

“The Commission for Occupational Safety and Health has published a Guidance Note on the Safe Movement of Vehicles at Workplaces, and I encourage all relevant workplaces to have a copy readily available for workers,” Ms Lyhne said.

“If the information supplied in the guidance note was applied across all relevant workplaces, we could well prevent another tragic incident such as this.”

Further information on safe work practices and the Guidance Note on Safe Movement of Vehicles at Workplaces can be obtained by telephoning WorkSafe on 08 9327 8777 or on the website at [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au).

Source: DOCEP

## National campaign on farm machinery leads to improvements

February 2, 2007

A nation-wide program to inspect farm machinery has revealed problems with used machinery, but has led to an overall increase in compliance with occupational safety and health laws.

The Agricultural Plant Designer, Manufacturer, Supplier and Importer Program was conducted across the six States and was completed in February 2006.

The program involved collaboration between all six States to develop uniform materials and checklists for inspections, with more than 50 seminars held across the nation to advise the industry of the program prior to the inspectors' visits.

A total of 672 workplace visits took place, with more than 100 inspectors using a common inspection checklist to inspect 2502 pieces of farm machinery held by more than 500 suppliers, 114 manufacturers, 47 designers, 16 importers, one auctioneer and one wrecker.

### CPD Points - Errata

In the last issue of **SIA SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN**, there was a mistake in the table showing the allowable points applying to Fellows and Chartered Fellows. The following table provides the correct figures.

My apologies for any inconvenience caused by this mistake.

Members raising enquiries should forward these to the Secretariat and these, together with the answers will be included in the FAQs on the web.

Leo Ruschena  
National Secretary

#### Summary of Points per Membership Grading

	CPMSIA	FSIA/ CFSIA
Total points required over 5 years	50	65
<i>This may be made up of maximum points from the following categories</i>		
1. Active Safety Practice	20	20
2. Conferences, Seminars, Education	30	30
3. Professional and Community Service Activities	10	15
4. Papers and conference presentations	10	15
5. Development and implementation of original OHS material	10	15

The program focused on four specific types of farm machinery – tractors, tractor attachments, grain augers and attachments for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

The program found that the percentages of machines compliant with safety legislation ranged from 100 per cent for new ATV attachments to a low 51 per cent for used augers.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne believes the program has already led to important improvements in compliance with farm machinery safety standards.

“This program – as with others of this type – really focused on informing those in the agricultural sector about their rights and responsibilities regarding the safety of farm machinery,” Ms Lyhne said.



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"It involved designers, manufacturers, suppliers and importers, informing them about the required safety standards to ensure that farmers purchase machinery that is safe to use.

"It did reveal a lower level of compliance with safety standards for some items of farm machinery than we would like to see, but compliance has already significantly improved since the program was implemented.

"One of the concrete results of the inspection campaign is that the Tractor and Machinery Association of Australia, in conjunction with a number of manufacturers and dealers, is now working on the development of a national Industry Safety Standard for Grain Augers.

"The development of the Standard was prompted by the low level of safety compliance for used augers that was revealed by this inspection program.

"In addition, the program was an excellent example of cooperation between the States, and another important means of ensuring national consistency in workplace safety and health, particularly in the agriculture industry."

The program resulted in four recommendations, all of which will be followed up by work safety authorities.

"The recommendations resulting from the program will make a significant contribution toward ensuring that farmers are better off in the future, more secure in the knowledge that the machinery they are buying complies with safety standards," Ms Lyhne said.

Source: DOCEP

## New, Free White Paper Detailing EH&S Compliance Strategies for College and University Laboratories

January 23, 2007

EH&E, a provider of health and safety and engineering consulting services, has announced the availability of a new, free white paper for environmental health and safety managers of college and university laboratories. The white paper, titled "Three Proven Strategies for Upgrading Your Laboratory Environmental Health & Safety Program," details three strategies developed by EH&E staff for improving laboratory compliance programs.

Small and midsize colleges and universities with laboratories must manage complex environmental health and safety (EH&S) compliance programs, involving federal, state, and local regulations with limited resources. In this new white paper, EH&E staff outline the strategies they have developed to maximize the effectiveness and the efficiency of these programs.

Download the free white paper, "Three Proven Strategies for Upgrading Your Laboratory Environmental Health & Safety Program," at: <http://www.eheinc.com/labprogram.htm> .

Source: Marketwire

## 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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