October 2008 was the tenth anniversary of the explosion at Longford gas plant in Australia that resulted in many injuries, two fatalities and almost two weeks of severely interrupted gas supply to the State of Victoria.

Professor Andrew Hopkins, sociologist with the Australian National University and Fellow of the SIA, was studying safety management systems well before the Esso Longford explosion but it was that major disaster that added international prominence, and a substantial extra workload, to Andrew. Other than domestic acclaim, in July 2008, the European Process Safety Centre (EPSC) declared Andrew winner of the EPSC Award for 2008. He is the first person outside of Europe to win this award.

When presenting Professor Hopkins with the award Christian Jochum, the EPSC Director, mentioned that Andrew was a consultant to the US Chemical Safety Board in their investigation of the Texas City accident. Mr Jochum also said that "EPSC are especially impressed with a report authored by Professor Hopkins on Process Safety Performance Indicators which offered superb insight into current usage of the terms leading and lagging indicators as deployed in recent publications around the world including the Baker Panel report."

This month Andrew’s latest book is available through www.cch.com.au. The book is called Failure to Learn The BP Texas City refinery disaster

About the Award

The EPSC Award, first presented twenty years ago, acknowledges progress to a less hazardous Europe. The progress may have resulted from "a project, report, published paper, conference paper or book which, in the consideration of the EPSC Award panel, has considerably advanced the theory or practice of process safety."

EPSC gauges eligibility on the originality of the work which may involve the discovery of new knowledge or the innovative coordination of knowledge

Past winners of the EPSC Award include

- Stuart Duffield of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for his work in the RELIEF computer package
- Bernard Hancock, former International Co-ordinator of EPSC
- Jürgen Schmidt of BASF for his work on the sizing of two-phase flow relief systems.
- A combined team from the Catholic University of Leuven and DSM for research in determining and modelling the explosion characteristics related to auto-ignition and detonation of various gas mixtures at extreme temperatures and pressures.
• Professor Hans Pasman for lifelong achievement in process safety
• Robin Brooks for the application of computer modelling to chemical operations to improve process safety.
• Anders Jacobsson for his contribution to process safety relating to Safety Management Systems
• Deltalinqs for their efforts to develop a regional knowledge network
• Roland Ott for a life-time achievement in process safety; and
• Dr Helmut Schacke.

More information on EPSC is available at http://www.epsc.org/

Safe Work Australia needs to be fair
13 October 2008
The Australian Greens said today that the Government’s proposal for a new national Occupational Health & Safety body needed to be strengthened to provide for better representation of workers and employers and increased independence.

"Robust and effective occupational health and safety laws and practices are vital for the social and economic health of our workplaces and Australians and their families," said Australian Greens Senator Rachel Siewert.

"The Greens welcome the commitment of the government and the state ministers to developing a national harmonised OHS system."

"Under the last Government we saw a systematic attack on the basic principles of OHS practice – genuine tripartitism, independence and the involvement of unions at the workplace level," said Senator Siewert.

"The Rudd government has a responsibility to rectify the errors of the past and ensure that Safe Work Australia is a return to a national, robust and independent OHS body."

"We will be moving amendments to restore the representative numbers of workers and employers, remove the additional voting rights of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and strengthen the independence of Safe Work Australia," she concluded.

Source: Senator Rachel Siewert, Australian Greens Senator for WA

Fringe Benefits Tax exemptions
16 October 2008
The Federal Government has changed the exemptions on fringe benefits tax for some work-related items. It seems that the changes clarify “portable electronic devices”.

Given that many OHS management technologies involve such devices it is recommended that you bring these changes to the attention of your tax representative to discuss their relevance.

The factsheet from the Australian Taxation Office can be found at http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/Content/00167381.htm and provides the following definition

“A portable electronic device is a device that:
• is easily portable and designed for use away from an office environment
• is small and light
• can operate without an external power supply, and
• is designed as a complete unit.

Examples of portable electronic devices include a mobile phone, calculator, personal digital assistant, laptop, portable printer and portable global positioning system (GPS) navigation receiver.”

Source: Kevin Jones and ATO

New inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions
16 October 2008
The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training has been asked by the Federal Minister for Education to inquire into and report on “Combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions.”
Managing the demands of study and part-time or casual employment is part of everyday life for the majority of Australian school students. The impact of potentially competing demands is not well known, and there is little provision of information or guidance to schools or employers on the effect this has on the lives of young people generally, and more specifically on their career development and prospects for successful transitions.

The committee’s review of the impact of combined study and work on the success of youth transitions and Year 12 attainment will focus on:

• providing opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students’ part time or casual work;
• identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study;
• support that may be required to assist young people combining work and study to stay engaged in their learning, especially where work and study intersects with income support;
• the potential impact on educational attainment (including the prospects for post-compulsory qualifications and workforce productivity); and
• the effectiveness of school-based training pathways and their impact on successful transitions, including opportunities for improvement (particularly in relation to pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people).

Announcing the inquiry, committee chair Ms Sharon Bird, MP, stated “There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that in some cases, students are spending almost as many hours undertaking paid work as they are at school.”

“Through this inquiry, the committee hopes to identify and examine some possible flexible approaches to completing high school which promote a healthy balance of work and study, in order to make practicable recommendations to government.”

The committee invites interested organisations and individuals to make written submissions to the inquiry, addressing the terms of reference, by 16 January 2009.

WorkSafe blitz to prevent manual handling injuries

A state-wide campaign targeting musculoskeletal disorder injuries (commonly known as “sprains and strains”), begins on 1 November when WorkSafe begins a state-wide inspection campaign.

Improvement and Prohibition Notices will be issued where safety issues are found. In some cases, prosecutions may follow where serious safety breaches are identified.

WorkSafe’s Executive Director, John Merritt, said employers needed to do more to improve safety.

“Preventing injuries from manual lifting and slips, trips and falls of less than two meters are the focus of this campaign. These injuries accounted for more than 60% of all workplace injury insurance claims in 2007-2008.”

“Despite working with and supporting industry for more than a decade to address these risks, WorkSafe’s message does not appear to be getting through,” Mr Merritt said.

Technological solutions such as robotics and the bulk supply of raw materials are helping eliminate manual lifting in manufacturing. In the health and aged care sectors patient-lifting devices have had a significant impact on these injuries.

Mr Merritt said many employers did not seem to realise that affordable mechanical solutions were readily available and that costs of between $1000 and $3000 are no longer prohibitive.
“These solutions have been available for many years and are a good first step towards reducing unsafe manual lifting.”

Injuries from slips, trips and falls where workers were using unsuitable ladders or climbing on furniture to reach and handle objects located above shoulder height are of particular concern.

“Mobile scissor lift work platforms or mobile, stable steps with a work platform and handrails such as we see in supermarkets, are readily available. While these solutions reduce injuries, they can also increase productivity and help minimise business costs associated with managing claims and potential legal and reputational issues.

“Creating a safer, more productive workplace requires thought and action. Once the process has begun, it must be followed through. Too often WorkSafe inspectors find that plans have been developed, but not put into effect.”

Source: WorkSafe

Cancellation of security licences

20 October 2008

Mount Isa-based bouncer Darryl Dalley has lost his security licence after being convicted of serious sex offences at Croydon in Queensland’s Gulf country. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice Kerry Shine said Dalley had been found guilty on three charges of rape and one each of common assault and deprivation of liberty, which are all disqualifying offences under the Security Providers Act 1993.

Mr Shine said the victim was a 21-year-old Canadian tourist who had been working at the same hotel as Dalley during the town’s annual music festival in June 2007. “Dalley’s security licence was suspended last year pending the outcome of his trial in the Cairns District Court,” he said. “He has now been convicted and sentenced to six-and-a-half years’ jail, so his licence was automatically cancelled.”

A Mackay bouncer has lost his security licence after being convicted of assaulting a patron in an alley near Doors Nightclub late last year while off duty. Kerry Shine said Misivila Apu’Ula recently pleaded guilty to a charge of grievous bodily harm, which is a disqualifying offence under the Security Providers Act 1993.

“The patron suffered serious facial injuries and Mr Apu’Ula’s licence had already been suspended pending the outcome of his trial in the Mackay District Court,” Mr Shine said. “The security licence was automatically cancelled on conviction.”

Mr Apu’Ula was sentenced to two-and-a-half years’ jail and will not be eligible for parole until 17 March 2009. He had already served several months in custody awaiting trial.”

Mr Shine said the latest cancellations reinforced the government’s message that the delivery of security services carried a high level of responsibility and unprofessional behaviour would not be tolerated in the industry.

“Most security providers are very professional and play an important role in maintaining the peace in sometimes challenging circumstances,” he said. “But we will not hesitate to crack down on those who think their security licence puts them above the law.”

“The Queensland Government recently allocated $2 million to implement and enforce continued on page 5

Collaboration with IFAP and AIOH in WA

Following the success of the inaugural WA Safety conference in August 2008, the President of the SIA WA Division, Gavin Waugh, has begun discussions with IFAP for greater collaboration between the two organisations. These initial discussions have identified an all day safety seminar in February and a safety conference in August for joint developments that would be co-branded by both safety organisations.

Similar discussions have also commenced with AIOH in WA and a joint publicity effort occurring prior to the AIOH national conference in Perth initiates that collaboration. Gavin has described the initial meetings as very productive and sees collaboration as the best way forward for all players in the Western Australian safety industry.

More information is available at www.siawa.org.au or by contacting Gavin Waugh at gbwuagh@starwon.com.au

Continued from page 3

2008 NATIONAL AGM

Our National Office based in Victoria will have a telephone link to the National AGM held in Sydney on the 29th October. All financial members are welcome to attend.

Date: 29th Oct 2008
Time: 6pm
Location: 2/217-219 Mickleham Rd
Tullamarine
RSVP: 28th October 2008 to Rachelle Bullock
e: vicadmin@sia.org.au

Members in other States should contact their local Divisions or the National Office for local contact arrangements.

The CEO will be distributing further details on this matter shortly.

Continued on page 5
We have allocated two weeks for capability, both current and future, in relation to our eNewsletter and aspirations of SIA members to more clearly identify the needs and aspirations of SIA members in relation to our eNewsletter capability, both current and future.

You can access the survey by going to the website www.sia.org.au and logging into the member area. In the Members Area on the left hand side panel, click on 'SIA National Updates' and the eNewsletter survey will be the top item displayed.

Alternatively, if you are already logged-in as a member you can access the survey directly via the following link:


For those who may not be aware, SafetyWeek and more recently SafetyWeek+ have been produced for several years by Kevin Jones, Workplace Safety Services, under contract to the SIA.

The National Board of Management agreed in April 2008 to conduct such a review and Keith Hoskins, NSW Division Vice President & National Representative, accepted the task to co-ordinate the development and distribution of this member survey.

The Board considered that with the recent publication of the new SIA magazine “Australian Safety & Health Matters” and the current development of the new peer-reviewed journal “Safety In Australia” (which will be a first for the SIA) now would be an appropriate time to conduct a survey, using the functionality of the new SIA website, to more clearly identify the needs and aspirations of SIA members in relation to our eNewsletter capability, both current and future.

We have allocated two weeks for requirements.

The tough new laws that took effect in July. Those changes were introduced to enhance public safety by ensuring only appropriate and competent professionals are licensed to operate within the security industry.

Source: Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland

Safe Work Australia Week Is Here. Get Involved 17 October 2008

Safe Work Australia Week, 19 - 25 October 2008

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) Chairman, Mr Bill Scales AO, today encouraged all Australians to get involved in national Safe Work Australia Week and make workplace safety a priority.

Safe Work Australia Week, being held this year from 19 - 25 October, is a national week to focus attention on workplace safety issues around Australia. The week aims to encourage all working Australians to get involved in, and concentrate on, safety in their workplace to reduce death, injury and disease.

Mr Scales said that that over 3000 organisations from a diverse range of industries across Australia are participating in Safe Work Australia Week 2008.

"Safety is everybody's business. I encourage all employees and employers to get involved in Safe Work Australia Week.

"It is not too late to get involved. You can get involved in the week by holding Safe Work Australia Week events such as a safety BBQ, refreshing safety procedures and starting a safety noticeboard.

"Safe Work Australia Week events don’t need to cost a lot of money or take a lot of time, they just need to get the word out about the importance of workplace safety.

"Every year, more than 250 Australians lose their lives as a result of a work-related injury and over 14,000 Australians are seriously injured at work. Work-related injuries also cost the Australian economy some $34 billion a year.

"It is the personal cost of workplace injury, illness and death that puts these economic costs into perspective. Every life lost is someone’s child, someone’s husband, someone’s wife – someone’s loved one.

"It is everybody’s right to come home safe from work. Safe Work Australia Week serves as a timely reminder of the importance of workplace safety.

"Australia currently ranks in the top five countries for reducing work-related deaths. While this shows we are taking steps in the right direction, more needs to be done and more can be done to improve workplace safety.

"Workplace safety matters. In a country as prosperous as ours there is no reason why Australia should not be the world leader in workplace safety."

The ASCC website has a range of information about Safe Work Australia Week including ideas for events, downloadable resources, information and inspirational messages from Safe Work Australia Week Safety Ambassadors, industry workplace safety statistics and links to each state and territory WorkCover and WorkSafe organisation.

Source: ASCC

ACCI Welcomes Safe Work Australia Week 19 October 2008

Statement by Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), welcomes Safe Work Australia Week 2008, which is occurring from 19 to 25 October 2008.

It is a time for all Australians to renew their commitment to achieving safer workplaces and for joint efforts between governments, industry and trade unions to create better and more effective health and safety regulation.

ACCI is a signatory to the National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2002-2012. The strategy set a target to reduce work-related fatalities by at least 20 per cent by 30 June 2012 and to reduce the incidence of workplace injury by at least 40 per
This joint commitment is paying dividends. While there is no room for complacency, Australia is now in the top five countries worldwide for reducing work-related deaths. The Strategy is a demonstration of the ongoing support and commitment of industry to health and safety.

During Safe Work Australia Week ACCI encourages practical initiatives by business owners and managers. A good place to start is a safety audit which identifies workplace hazards and assesses risks.

Safe Work Australia Week is an initiative of the Australian Safety Compensation Council that provides a great opportunity to reflect on the importance of safe workplaces, recognise the significant amount of work that has been done, and join together as a community to consider what initiatives and efforts might produce even greater results.

Source: ACCI

**WorkSafe update on Arthurs Seat chairlift**

WorkSafe Victoria rejects claims that it is delaying a re-opening of the Arthurs Seat Chairlift.

The claim was made by the chairlift’s operator in media reports today.

WorkSafe’s Executive Director John Merritt said the workplace health and safety regulator’s role was to help the operator ensure the chairlift meets the Canadian standard Z.98 which is used in Australia.

“Our aim is to ensure the operator has a clear understanding of his responsibilities, particularly in relation to ongoing maintenance once the ride re-opens.

“This facility is open to the public – locals, and visitors to the area from Melbourne, interstate and overseas. Their safety cannot be compromised.

“WorkSafe is in frequent contact with the chairlift's operator as we help implement a court-ordered safety improvement project which was agreed to by the company, which would make it compliant with Z.98 (see below).

While WorkSafe is offering assistance, the owner’s responsibility is to put that standard into effect and ensure it is maintained.”

As a result of two comprehensive WorkSafe investigations arising from incidents in 2006 and 2004, the company has pleaded guilty in two prosecutions in the past year. WorkSafe found that inadequate maintenance was an issue in those incidents.

In 2006, four chairs crashed together when the cable became entangled stranding passengers for some hours. The chairs that collided were empty and no one else on the ride was hurt. The safety improvement project arose out of this incident.

In 2004, an elderly woman suffered serious leg injuries when her chair slipped down the cable and crashed into another. The County Court found the bolts on only 8 of 64 chairs on the ride were adequately tightened.

**SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

A Frankston Magistrate ordered Arthurs Seat Scenic Chairlift Company to undertake...
the project, agreed to by the firm August. The plan was developed in consultation with U.S. experts who sit on the Z.98 panel and who visited the chairlift this year.

WorkSafe determined it was in the interests of safety and the Victorian community for the money that would have been paid by way of a fine to be spent improving chairlift safety.

The proposal was put to the company in court in May this year and accepted at a prosecution in August.

Arthurs Seat Scenic Chairlift Pty Ltd pleaded guilty to not taking care of people other than employees as a result of a May 2006 pile-up of chairs when the chairlift cable jumped off drive wheels.

The Frankston Magistrate’s Court ordered the company to make a number of safety improvements and report on compliance with international standards every three months for the next two years.

The company was also ordered to pay costs of $15,000 and was not convicted.

Safety improvement projects are among a suite of alternative means of dealing with some workplace health and safety issues and incidents allowed under the OHS Act 2004.

In the past, fines and good behaviour bonds, with or without convictions, were the only options for dealing with companies or individuals found guilty of breaching the OHS Act.

The improvement project agreed to by the company and imposed by the Frankston Magistrate’s Court requires the company to:

1. Engage a consultant (the cost of which is to be borne by Arthurs Seat Scenic Chairlift) who is approved in writing by WorkSafe to audit ASSC’s compliance with its operations and maintenance manual produced under point 2 and to report in writing to WorkSafe. The report to WorkSafe is to be provided before recommencement of operations and at intervals of not greater than 3 months thereafter for 24 months.

2. Engage a consultant (the cost of which is to be borne by Arthurs Seat Scenic Chairlift) who is approved in writing by WorkSafe to assist in the revision and/or preparation of a written operations and maintenance manual for the Chairlift that includes chapters on procedures to ensure compliance with Z98-3.36.3, Z98-3.36.4, Z98-11.23 & Z98-11.26.

3. Ensure that all return sheaves fitted to the Chairlift comply with Z98-3.21.6.1.

4. Conduct field tests at each tower sheave assembly to ensure that all cable derailment devices fitted to the Chairlift comply with Z98-3.29.7.

5. Conduct a load test on the Chairlift in compliance with Z98-11.25.1, Z98-5.6.1 and Z98 Appendix J, and provide WorkSafe with a written copy of the results of the test.

6. Give WorkSafe not less than 2 weeks notice of the conduct of any compliance test on the Chairlift and must allow a representative of WorkSafe to observe the conduct of the test should WorkSafe require.

7. Add Belleville springs to the grip tightening bolts.

8. Ensure that the grips comply with Z98-3.28. 

**TransLink Bus Driver Saves Child’s Life**

17 October 2008

A TransLink bus driver has saved a six-year-old girl from choking on a dollar coin during her school trip home.

Being a mother of five and grandmother, Ms Smith said maternal instinct took over when Abbie was choking.

She said she began working as a bus driver six months ago and loved her job.
In Brief

Killarney – farming incident  
A woman in her 30s was flown to the Royal Brisbane Hospital by the Emergency Management Queensland Rescue Helicopter in a serious condition this afternoon following a farming incident. Paramedics from Warwick and QAS First Responders from Killarney were called to the Ivy Street property after a woman was reportedly trapped by her arms in an auger about 11.30am. Fire crews including a technical rescue team also responded and worked for about 30 minutes to free the patient from the machine. The woman’s injuries included partial amputations to her right arm, and multiple fractures and lacerations to both.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

East Barron – farming incident  
A woman was treated for a possible broken foot after she reportedly caught it in a potato harvester this afternoon. Paramedics and firefighters were called to an East Barron property on East Barron Road about 3pm. Early information suggests the woman was able to free her foot from the machine but was assisted by firefighters. She was taken to Atherton Hospital.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Slacks Creek – fatal industrial incident  
Emergency crews were called to a wrecking business at Moss Street, Slacks Creek just before 11.30am after reports a man was trapped under a car. The man was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Lytton – chemical spill  
Firefighters and paramedics are at the scene of a chemical spill aboard a ship at Patricks Wharf at Lytton. About 2.45pm emergency services were alerted to the spill at Port Drive, believed to be a leaking container, aboard the Bucks Link.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Report into level crossing fatality tabled  
The State Government has released a rail safety report into a level crossing fatality near Dalby earlier this year.

On June 5 this year a six-year-old boy died following a collision between a school bus and a coal train in fog just off the Warrego Highway.

Minister for Transport John Mickel said the report found that all members of the train crew were qualified to operate the train and there were no mechanical faults found in the train or the school bus that contributed to the accident.

Mr Mickel said in accordance with its rail safety role, Queensland Transport commenced an enquiry into the occurrence appointing an independent person to chair the investigation panel.

The rail safety report, tabled in parliament today, made a number of recommendations for Queensland Transport, QR and local governments.
The report found the boy, who was wearing a seatbelt, was the only passenger on the 25-seat vehicle which had just started its school run. It found that the bus had turned off the Warrego Highway into the Pirrihuan-Apunyal Road to pick up more students when it attempted to cross a railway level crossing protected by a give way sign and collided with a Brisbane-bound coal train about 7.50am.

“My deepest sympathies are with the family and friends of this young boy and all those touched by the events of that day,” Mr Mickel said.

“Queensland Transport and QR will now begin assessing the recommendations made.”

Recommendations from the report:

• That Queensland Transport reviews the operation of school buses at level crossings and considers the implementation of a requirement that school buses must be stopped at all rail level crossings protected by Give Way signs and for the driver to take those steps necessary to look and listen for trains to ensure it is safe before entering the crossing.

• That Queensland Transport reviews the travel by students in school buses with a view to giving advice to school bus conveyance committees on the recommended method of securing students in buses in which seat belts are fitted.

• Queensland Transport’s Rail Safety Unit monitors the action taken in addressing the recommendations contained in this report until all recommendations are completed.

• That QR considers the inclusion of instructions for train drivers operating in reduced visibility when approaching level crossings with the aim of improving the opportunity for a road vehicle driver to be made aware of the approach of a train.

• That Dalby Regional Council review their maintenance program in respect to level crossing signage and road line markings to ensure that they are inspected and maintained at an appropriate interval to remain effective.

• That the LGAQ transmit a circular to member councils to advise them of the circumstances of this occurrence and recommend that councils review their maintenance procedure in respect to level crossing signage and road line markings to ensure that they are inspected and maintained at an appropriate interval to remain effective.

Source: Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations

Winners Of Safe Work ACT Awards Announced

October 16, 2008

Winners of the Safe Work ACT awards 2008 have been announced today at an awards ceremony (pictured below) in Canberra, Attorney-General Simon Corbell said.

“The annual OHS awards provide recognition for the achievements of business, unions

Continued from page 8
and individuals in the ACT in finding solutions to improve workplace safety and injury management”, Mr Corbell said. “A record thirty-two entries were received across seven award categories, ranging from small and large, private and public workplaces, and from industries including construction, health and not-for profit.

“The awards are the highlight of Safe Work ACT Month, a month long safety awareness campaign coordinated by the Office of the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Commissioner.

“Entries have included complex OHS management systems, creative and innovative design solutions, outstanding individual contributions and excellent health and wellbeing programs.

“Regardless of whether they have received an award, all of this year’s entries contribute to making workplaces healthier and safer.

Mr Corbell presented the Safe Work ACT GIO Excellence Award for 2008 to the ACT Health Injury Prevention and Management Unit. The ACT Health team beat a strong field of private sector companies vying for the award. The Excellence Award is the premier category and is chosen from the category winners in this year’s OHS awards in recognition of outstanding achievement.

Two new television commercials were launched at the event and will run for one week from next Sunday, October 19, during National Safe Work week. The commercials, set in a small office and a nursery, target small business owners and highlight that smart OHS management is not necessarily complex or expensive.

“I congratulate all entrants and winners, and encourage all ACT businesses to look at this year’s entries to see how specific workplace health and safety issues are being addressed, and discover how readily practical and effective solutions can be implemented,” Mr Corbell said. Source: Simon Corbell, MLA

VOID Founder Named Safety Ambassador 16 October 2008

The founder of the support and lobby group, Voice of Industrial Death (VOID), Andrea Madeley, has been named an ambassador for the international Passport to Safety programme.

Following the loss of her son Daniel, 18, to a workplace incident in 2004, Ms. Madeley set up VOID to support and advocate for families affected by workplace fatalities.

Ms. Madeley is also a strong supporter of the Passport to Safety programme, a web-based learning and test programme that provides a basic level of workplace health, safety and welfare awareness for students about to enter the workforce.

Today Ms. Madeley was officially recognised as an ambassador of the programme by Canadian, Paul Kells, who initiated Passport to Safety as part of his own community-based movement to improve safety across Canada.

Mr. Kells lost his son, Sean (then aged 19), in a workplace explosion in 1994. Mr. Kells is in Adelaide to launch the new Passport to Safety website, and to celebrate 200,000 young people having completed the program across Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

“When I was told about Andrea’s efforts to make workplaces safer, including her talks to many school students and young workers, I knew she would make an excellent ambassador for Passport to Safety,” Mr. Kells said.

“We have a growing international movement, and having the support of Andrea can only make us stronger.

Ms. Madeley said to be named an ambassador for such a dedicated cause was a great honour.

“I know all too well what’s at stake here, and it is a matter of life and death for the ones we hold most dear to us. I’ve been keen to meet Paul Kells for many years and to tap into his vast knowledge and experience.”

Continued from page 9

New Injury Hotspots

• Young Workers in Construction Injury Hotspots
• Young Workers in Hospitality Injury Hotspots
• Young Workers in Manufacturing Injury Hotspots
• Young Workers in Retail Injury Hotspots

This recognition and our meeting will be a great boost for VOID, and our cause,” Ms. Madeley said.

Tomorrow, Mr. Kells will discuss Passport to Safety and its benefits to the community at a special business forum jointly hosted by SafeWork SA, Business SA, SA Unions, and the Self Insurers of South Australia.

Later, he will attend a special session with VOID and Adelaide Safe Community.

Source: SafeWork SA

Leading Edge Technology At Woonona 15th October 2008

One of the world's most advanced mines' rescue training facilities will be officially opened in Wollongong’s northern suburbs today.

The Chairman of the NSW Minerals Council, Mr Colin Bloomfield, will open the $15 million Coal Services Pty Ltd (CSPL) southern headquarters, Princes Highway, in Woonona at 1.30 pm.

CSPL Executive Director Mr Ron Land said two of the outstanding features of the new facility were the virtual reality training complex and a simulated mine.

“It is the most advanced real world simulator of its kind, providing a panoramic cinematic environment, using 12 video projectors, six computers and a massive 120 square metre circular screen that completely surrounds and immerses the audience,” he said.

“The key benefits of this virtual reality training system is that it provides accurate realistic and virtual mine simulations in a safe and controlled environment.

“Workers can achieve a high level of competence before they enter the real world environment.”

Mines Rescue, which also provides training for police, ambulance and fire fighters, relocated earlier this year from its former centre in Russell Vale, which had been home to the service for more than 80 years.

As well as mines rescue, the new complex will also house Coal Services Health, which provides medical, rehabilitation, nursing and injury prevention services for the mining industry, and Coal Mines Insurance, which provides workers compensation services to the coal industry.

Mr Bloomfield, who is also President, Illawarra Coal, said the rescue facility provided a vital training facility and had taken a vision into the future.

He said the NSW Minerals Council, as a 50 per cent shareholder of CSPL, was very proud of the new Woonona facility which had brought training to a new level.

“Life, and the preservation of it, is exactly what this type of investment and innovation is all about. Our industry is hazardous, and it is the responsibility of every single person in the industry to work together to manage those risks, to achieve the goal of zero harm.”

“The NSW minerals industry is committed to its workplaces being free of fatalities,
Continued from page 11

of fire fighters working on bushfire suppression,” Ms O’Byrne said. TFS Acting Chief Officer Mike Brown said with our 5000 fire fighters across the State, it was important that such areas as fitness requirements and fatigue management are monitored and considered.

“This area of research is just one of the benefits that the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre program is providing for Tasmania’s fire fighting agencies.”

The fuel reduction burn at Ansons Bay is a cooperative effort between the Parks and Wildlife Service, the Tasmania Fire Service and Forestry Tasmania.

Parks and Wildlife Service fire operations manager Adrian Pyrke said about 40 personnel, including the researchers, would be involved in the burn.

The burn at Ansons Bay is being undertaken for strategic wildfire control and to provide asset protection.

About 170 hectares of coastal heath and dry sclerophyll forest will be burnt to the west of the Ansons Bay township.

Roger Kahler singles out four myths and projections associated with common workplace incidents:

• Back damage from lifting task - “You weren’t lifting correctly”
• Fall while descending fixed or mobile plant - “Were you using three points of contact?”
• Fall involving a slip - “Why don’t you watch where you are walking?”
• Spinal damage from jolting while driving - “You weren’t driving to the conditions”

Kahler says the prevailing safety culture of Australian workplaces tends to reinforce the myths. Describing a poster with a toddler squatting beside a box and the headline “Back damage from lifting task - ‘You weren’t lifting correctly’,” Kahler says the prevailing safety culture of Australian workplaces tends to reinforce the myths. Describing a poster with a toddler squatting beside a box and the headline “Back damage from lifting task - ‘You weren’t lifting correctly’,” Kahler says the prevailing safety culture of Australian workplaces tends to reinforce the myths. Describing a poster with a toddler squatting beside a box and the headline “Back damage from lifting task - ‘You weren’t lifting correctly’,” Kahler says the prevailing safety culture of Australian workplaces tends to reinforce the myths. 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personal sustainability projects, along with corporate sponsorships and challenges.

“Since the introduction of the program, Hydro Tasmania has seen high participation rates and staff engagement, and a stable absenteeism rate which is 50 per cent lower than the Tasmanian average.”

Ms Ritchie said all of the award winners demonstrated the wide variety of organisations making safety a priority in their workplaces.

“Winners come from businesses around the State, indicating that safety is a key to running a successful business in the 21st century,” she said.

“Collaboration and consultation between employers and workers were strong elements of all the successful entries in the Awards.”

There were eight categories in this year’s Awards, including five which feed into the national Safe Work Australia Awards.

RESULTS

Best workplace health and safety management system
Winner: Cement Australia—Railton Operations, Railton
Cement Australia is one of Australia’s largest plant and open pit processing for cement manufacturing businesses. It employs 145 people.

In 2007 the organisation identified that while its safety operations were compliant, it was lacking a strong safety culture among workers.

To address this situation, Cement Australia implemented a health and safety management system that included visual safety communication tools, incident/hazard databases, a team leader program, safety audits and incentive and reward programs.

Since the introduction of the safety system, the company’s injury frequency rates have been reduced drastically.

Finalist: Hobart Water, Hobart

Best solution to an identified workplace health and safety issue
Winner: Tasmanian Alkaloids Pty Ltd, Westbury

managed. ‘Man’ is among the most complex of the components involved. And this component is added time and time again and again. And it constantly shows up as a major causal factor in incidents and accidents in any area concerned.”

“Do we really adequately take into consideration the ability of the ‘man’ component to deal with his or her built-in own variability? Process improvements and safety enhancements should be achieved by focusing more on the functionality of the man component under distress.

“The ability to decode, identify and defuse onset of behaviour under stress will help to avoid the escalation from miscommunication to mismanagement and eventually to damage.”

Kahler, Wilson and Kopruch will discuss the role of people in workplace injuries during their October 30 addresses on day three of The Safety Conference.

Work-life balance the number one factor in retaining staff

New research shows that work-life balance is the key factor in attracting and retaining staff and is even more important than salary.

With unemployment in Australia at record lows and skills shortages creating a ‘war on talent’, employees are demanding the implementation of successful work-life balance strategies from their employers.

In his October 29 address to The Safety Conference, Sydney, Converge International CEO Dr Lindsay McMillan will explain how businesses can benefit from increased productivity and reduced turnover with the right work-life balance strategy.

Australians have the dubious honour of working the longest hours of any OECD country, with 20-25% working more than 50 hours each week. Yet recent Converge International research shows that 47% of workers rate work-life balance as very important and another 32% see it as important.

An imbalance between work and life can result in declining quality of life, loss of community, erosion of relationships and resentment.

“If workplaces are to avoid harvesting this kind of negative atmosphere then they really need to take serious consideration of these trends and begin concerning themselves with negotiating and transforming the current pattern of work-life collision into one of work-life balance,” says McMillan.

He lists the five key aspects of work-life balance as: wellbeing; satisfaction; workload; security; and relationships. The hard part is striking the right balance between these aspects. Everyone’s situation is different, so every employee’s idea of work-life balance will also be different and there’s no ‘one-size fits all’ solution.

The Converge International research has highlighted four key mechanisms for incorporating flexibility into an organisation:

• Hours – flexible working hours can include part-time, job sharing, flexible start/finish times or compressed work weeks.

• Leave – Everyone receives annual leave, but more creative options include study leave, bereavement leave, parental leave, unpaid leave and holiday purchase.

• Location – flexible options include working from home or giving an employee the opportunity to transfer to a different work location.

• Carer Assistance – at some stage in their life, almost everyone will need to assume a carer’s role. Often this role is temporary and by offering employees flexible options such as carer’s leave, work-life balance of these employees is enhanced.

It’s not enough to just spend the time and effort required to research an appropriate work-life balance strategy, there needs to be a cultural shift within the organisation. Many workplaces fear such practices interrupt the day-to-day running of a business and that employees who take advantage of work-life balance strategies are lacking in

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Tasmanian Alkaloids is a fully integrated manufacturer of medicinal opiates. It employs 174 people and approximately 50 contractors. Tasmanian Alkaloids identified a safety issue during the unloading and spreading of poppy capsules which created potential health issues, including exposure to dust and active ingredients, manual handling tasks, and potential slips and engulfment. An innovative solution based on a Gooseneck was designed, which virtually eliminates the need for operators to enter the sheds in order to unload and spread the poppy capsules. By removing the need for operators to enter the sheds, the risks associated with the exposure to the product and manual handling tasks were reduced and no injuries or sensitisation cases were reported during the 2008 harvest season. Highly Commended: TEMCO, Bell Bay

Finalists: Allstate Explorations NL, Beaconsfield; Cement Australia–Raiton Operations, Raiton; TEMCO, Bell Bay

Best workplace health and safety practice(s) in a small business
Winner: King & Harding Excavation & Seal, Turners Beach

King & Harding Excavation & Seal is a civil contracting and sealing company. It employs 18 people. Following the formation of King & Harding Excavation & Seal in 2006, an integrated management system was developed containing three key areas: safety, quality and environment. The new easy-to-use system ensures all health and safety practices are streamlined, relevant to the industry and personalised to suit the organisation’s requirements. As well as ensuring the health and safety of staff, the new safety system has helped King & Harding Excavation & Seal undertake rapid growth while also meeting all legislative obligations.

Finalists: GJD Civil Pty Ltd, Derwent Park; Longford Sawmill, Longford

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Chronic Disease Keeping Older Australians Out of the Workforce

19 October 2008

Chronic diseases such as diabetes and arthritis may render more than 660,000 older Australians unable to work, a retrospective analysis has found, prompting calls for the government to address workers’ health concerns if it wants to boost the workforce. Director of Research at the Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health, Associate Professor Deborah Schofield and colleagues analysed data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to identify conditions associated with non-participation in the labour force by Australians aged 45-64 years.

Their study, published in the latest issue of The Medical Journal of Australia (MJA), estimated that 663,235 older Australian workers were missing from the labour force because of ill health in 2003, reducing Australia’s gross domestic product by around $14.7 billion per annum.

“Back injuries, arthritis and mental health disorders accounted for approximately half the missing workers,” Dr Schofield said.

Other long-term health conditions associated with being out of the labour force were nervous system diseases, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma.

“In the past, government policy has focused on economic incentives to increase employment of older people,” Dr Schofield said. “For example, an Age Discrimination Bill was passed and the 15 per cent tax on lump sums and pensions from superannuation schemes after the age of 60 years was removed.

“However, these economic measures have not addressed the health conditions associated with much of the low labour force participation of older workers, and are unlikely to have a major impact on the labour force participation of people who are ill.”

Dr Schofield and colleagues suggest the government should actively seek to turn around the rise in Australia of obesity – a risk factor for numerous chronic conditions. Treatment of mental illness, such as depression, is also important.

“With emerging skill shortages and an ageing workforce, Australia needs a more holistic approach to increase labour force participation among older people that considers the interaction of health, illness prevention and labour force priorities.”

Source: MJA

Safe Work Australia - Joint Greens, Coalition & Xenophon release
20th October 2008

The Deputy Prime Minister is walking away from safety consultation at the highest level by refusing to incorporate the Senate amendments in the Safe Work Australia Bill.
Public sector leadership award for injury prevention and management

Winner: Burnie City Council, Burnie

Burnie City Council provides local government services to the City of Burnie. It employs approximately 250 people.

Burnie City Council proactively strives to enhance safety and education in both its workplace and the community. The Council has a dynamic, modern OHS management system which it regularly reviews and improves. The Council considers itself a leader both internally and externally in OHS and risk management initiatives.

This commitment and leadership has lead to a 60 per cent reduction in workers compensation premiums over the past three years.

Best individual contribution to workplace health and safety

Winner: David Nicholls of Tasmanian Alkaloids Pty Ltd, Westbury

Tasmanian Alkaloids is a fully integrated manufacturer of medicinal opiates. It employs 174 people and approximately 50 contractors.

David Nicholls has been part of the Tasmanian Alkaloids community since 1996 and has been instrumental in making the organisation a leader in first aid and emergency response. His contribution to OHS includes introducing site fire wardens, a reporting and treatment system, an emergency response team and ongoing first aid training.

David’s efforts go beyond the normal work duties and demonstrate a major contribution to OHS principles within the organisation and the community.

Highly commended: Paul Cairnduff of QBE Insurance (Australia) Limited, Hobart

Finalists: Terry Clark of Rio Tinto Alcan, Bell Bay; Don Schreuder of TEMCO, Bell Bay

Best return-to-work program

Winner: Cadbury Schweppes, Claremont

Cadbury Schweppes is a chocolate manufacturer. It employs approximately 900 people.

A comprehensive injury management and return-to-work program

An unlikely alliance of the Greens, the Independents and the Coalition says that Julia Gillard is turning her back on workers and industry as well as risking safety outcomes by refusing to accept the Senate amendments.

These amendments are also supported by both the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Australian Council of Trade Unions - representatives of both employer and employee interests.

“The bill in its current form is fundamentally flawed”, said Mr Keenan. “The ACTU, ACCI and Senate are all supporting our amendments but the Minister is choosing to be bloody minded and stubborn.”

“Labor has sold out Australian workers and industry in the interests of placating particular state bureaucracies”, said Mr Keenan.

“Ms Gillard is refusing to accept that a process that does not seek to actively engage employers and workers in a meaningful way will not produce the safety improvements that are necessary for Australian workplaces”, said Senator Siewert.

At this stage the Bill doesn’t even contain a set of safety objectives.

We are broadly supportive of a harmonised OH&S system, but Julia Gillard is holding up this process by being unnecessarily stubborn about sensible amendments from all sides of politics.

“These are all very sensible amendments, designed to facilitate a fairer and more effective move towards a National OH&S system, enhancing engagement from the very people within our community who will be affected by the laws - workers and industry”, said Senator Xenophon.

The amendments improve the Bill by:

• Outlining the objects of the new body
• Restoring effective levels of representation to employer and employee representatives (social partners)
• Introducing a balanced voting process designed to engage and include the very people in our community affected by safety laws - workers and industry
• Ensuring workers and industry are effectively and ably represented by peak representative groups
• Freeing peak representative groups from Ministerial interference when appointing their own representatives
• Freeing the CEO of Safe Work Australia from excessive Ministerial interference in the management of new body
• Establishing an audit committee to examine the finances and expenditure of Safe Work Australia

The Deputy Prime Minister is hiding behind her alleged commitment to the Inter-Governmental Agreement for Safety as the reason for not adopting the Senate amendments.

We are advised that a number of the State governments have no issue with the proposed amendments. At the very least the Deputy Prime Minister should provide the Parliament with statements from each State Government commenting on the individual amendments.

A closer look at the Agreement also reveals the Minister herself has failed to follow the inter-governmental agreement in a number of areas.

The Deputy Prime Minister has failed to include in the legislation a requirement to provide the Parliament with an annual report on the progress and the achievements of her new Authority.

The Deputy Prime Minister is mistaken if she thinks she can use the Senate as a rubber stamp to get through her flawed legislation. She is also mistaken if she thinks her performance in achieving a harmonised system is beyond scrutiny by the Parliament.
Workplace Safety must be a priority

Workplace safety must be a high priority for employers and employees, Planning and Workplace Relations Minister Allison Ritchie said today at the launch of Safe Work Tasmania Week in Hobart.

“One workplace injury is one too many and it is the responsibility of all of us in the work force to help ensure that work places remain injury free.

“I urge all Tasmanian workers and employers to get involved in Safe Work Tasmania Week and to use it to refocus on safety in their particular work place.

“Safe Work Tasmania Week presents an opportunity for workers in every size of business to make a specific effort to talk about safety and what is and isn’t working in their workplaces.

“As part of Safe Work Tasmania week, a series of free health and safety events will be held across the State covering a range of issues, as diverse as stress in the workplace and eye safety to healthy heart strategies and driver fatigue.

“Safe Work Tasmania Week runs from 19–25 October 2008 and is part of national Safe Work Australia Week.”

Ms Ritchie said despite the efforts to keep injuries down figures showed that small business still had work to do.

“In 2007 1,492 Tasmanians employed in small businesses were injured.

“This is a slight rise of 74 over the previous year and that is not acceptable.

“It signals that businesses and their staff have to be more alert to potential dangers.

“The most common workplace injuries reported in small business were soft tissue disorders due to trauma, accounting for 395 of the injuries reported, followed by wounds, lacerations and amputations (394 injuries) and fractures, which accounted for 157 of the injuries recorded,” Minister Ritchie said.

“The main causes of these injuries were body stressing with 428 injuries, followed by falls, trips and slips (316 injuries) and being hit by moving objects, accounting for 307 of the total injuries.

“With the majority of businesses in Tasmania defined as small business (around 90 per cent), it’s even more important that they receive the correct advice and guidance when it comes to safety and understand their legal obligations.”

Ms Ritchie said employers were not on their own when it came to improving OHS in the workplace following the introduction of an OHS Advisory Service in 2007 to help small and medium-sized Tasmanian workplaces to manage workplace health and safety.

“The Advisors target high-risk occupations in small to medium-sized businesses and also work with unions and industry associations,” she said.

“These experienced Advisors can help businesses, free-of-charge, to understand how to achieve a safer workplace, understand their legal obligations and identify ways to address safety concerns.

“Advisors visit workplaces and undertake an assessment before providing them with a practical action plan to implement.”

For more information about Safe Work Tasmania Week or to arrange for a WorkCover Advisor to visit your workplace visit www.workcover.tas.gov.au

Source: Planning and Workplace Relations Minister

Partnership to improve safety in motor industry

WorkCover NSW and the Motor Traders’ Association of NSW today forged a partnership to improve occupational health and safety and reduce injuries in the motor vehicle industry.

WorkCover NSW CEO, Jon Blackwell, said the partnership agreement, signed in...
Sydney today, will cover more than 5000 car dealership, mechanical repair, and allied businesses employing around 44,000 workers across New South Wales.

“The agreement promotes the importance of effective workplace consultation to deliver sustainable workplace safety and injury management outcomes,” Mr Blackwell said.

“The partnership demonstrates the commitment of the NSW Motor Traders' Association to assist its members understand their workplace safety obligations.

“This agreement will also build on the major contribution that the Motor Traders Association has made over the past five years to improving safety across the industry.

“Since 2002 the Association has developed five safety-focused workplace education and training initiatives that have been funded through WorkCover's Grants Assist Program,” he said.

Safety improvement initiatives implemented by the Motor Traders Association include:
• the development of small business safety guidelines
• an OHS and workers compensation resource kit
• a bullying and harassment awareness strategy
• an industry induction program and the setting up of an industry safety helpline

“WorkCover and the Motor Traders Association will establish a productive relationship through regular consultation about safety and workers compensation issues,” Mr Blackwell said.

“Under the partnership agreement, the Motor Traders Association has committed to taking a visible leadership role by promoting occupational health and safety and injury management performance improvements across the industry,” he said.

Further information about workplace safety in the Motor Industry is available from the WorkCover website.