October 23, 2008

One in five Australians aged 16–85 years had a mental disorder in 2007, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Anxiety disorders - such as panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder - were the most common, affecting 14% of people. Affective disorders - such as depression - affected 6%, while substance use disorders affected 5%.

The most commonly experienced anxiety disorders were post-traumatic stress disorder (6%) and social phobia (5%). Depression was the most common affective disorder (4%), and the harmful use of alcohol the most common substance use disorder (3%).

Women were more likely to experience mental disorders (22%) than men (18%), with a higher rate of anxiety disorders (18% compared to 11% for men) and affective disorders (7% and 5%). However, men had more than twice the rate of substance use disorders (7%) compared to women (3%).

Younger people were more likely to have a mental disorder than older people. Just over a quarter (26%) of people aged 16–24 had a disorder compared to 6% of people aged 75–85.

Substance use disorders were more common for younger people (13%) than other age groups, while anxiety disorders were more common in people aged 35–44 (18%). Just over a third (34%) of people living in one parent families had a mental disorder compared with 19% of people in couple families with children.

Over half (54%) the people who had ever been homeless had a disorder, nearly three times the rate of people who had not.

Mental disorders were also more common in unemployed people (29%) and in people who had ever been incarcerated (41%).

1.9 million people accessed services for mental health problems in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
and describes it as “… the (least) researched epidemic of the 20th Century”. In this country typically, injuries account for almost 10 per cent of both deaths and hospital admissions and impact disproportionately on the young. In terms of years of potential life lost (up to age 75) injury outweighs cancer and heart disease (combined) by a factor of more than two.

“Successful injury prevention demands a robust evidence base. This in turn demands scientific investigation and thus research and enquiry. However, there are very small amounts of money available for independent research in the area of health and safety. The amounts of prevention-focused funding do not even approach a small percentage of that for treatment of ill-health,” Dr Dell said.

Independent research funding enables the development of solutions to safety problems that are recognised by health and safety professionals and academics. However, all too often the funding is linked to the objectives of the state-based funding agencies and precludes researcher-driven and truly independent research. Dr Dell said, ‘‘The Australian Research Council (ARC) does offer some avenues through, for example, programs that support partnerships between academic institutions and industry. However the timeframes for these programs are generally mis-matched with the needs of industry for immediate solutions to problems, given that the application process alone is often greater than 12 months.’’

The Safe Work Australia Bill 2008 was introduced to the House of Representatives on the 4th September 2008. ‘‘Safe Work Australia has replaced the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) but the bill makes no reference to research in the list of proposed functions for this new federal government organisation.’’

Dr Dell said, ‘‘It is time that OHS agencies in Australia started to take research seriously. Without a solid evidence-base built by independent research, important decisions about the health and safety of people at work and at leisure will continue to be made on the basis of gut-feel, or ‘what seems like a good idea at the time’. During Safe Work Australia Week 2008 it is timely to reflect on what will drive the science of safety forward and what role our government agencies can play in responsibly supporting independent scientific enquiry and solution development. It is time for real leadership by Government and all Industry Sectors.’’

source: Safety Institute of Australia

Safe workplaces mean getting rid of the smoke

Employee and health groups have urged all Australian governments to end smokefree workplace loopholes to protect thousands of Australians exposed to toxic tobacco smoke in their workplaces.

During Safe Work Australia Week (October 19-25), the SmokeFree Australia coalition has asked Federal, State and Territory governments to strengthen protection against secondhand smoke exposure in Occupational Health and Safety and smokefree places legislation.

Said coalition co-ordinator Stafford Sanders: ‘‘Exposure to tobacco smoke remains a major OHS issue. Only Queensland has satisfactory legislation guaranteeing that no-one is required to work in areas where smoking is permitted.”
SIA Fellow Questions

This week’s contributor is Glyn Williams

What sparked your interest in safety management?

As a newly appointed Safety & Security Superintendent at the then Lysaght Steel Mill at Westernport, Victoria in the mid-70s having been a Production Manager, I went along to a seminar conducted by the Safety Institute of Australia and heard Eric Wigglesworth and Harold Greenwood-Thomas speak — they convinced me that the management of safety could follow the same principles as those in production management and that safety should not be an added on "extra" but should be fully integrated into the whole "business enterprise".

Why did you join the Safety Institute of Australia?

For the reasons above but also it would be an opportunity to network and gain more knowledge on how to deal with issues of safety in the workplace.

What is the easiest action a person can do to make their own workplaces safer?

Get into the habit of when a hazard is identified, try to take some immediate temporary action and then report the matter to the supervisor/manager.

How important is a tertiary education in occupational safety?

Having been involved, in a minor way, as I was President of the Victoria Division at the time, with the setting up of the Ballarat Grad Dip course, I have the strong belief that recognition of the profession can only be achieved when practitioners have tertiary qualifications that put them on a par with tertiary qualified persons from other disciplines.

Have you ever been involved with a “near miss”?

Yes, whilst in the Steel Industry a 25 tonne coil of steel sheet “fell” some 8 metres from a “C” hook on an overhead travelling crane and landed...
SafetyWeek

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approximately 3 metres from where I was standing with others.

Should the safety discipline differentiate between workplace safety and non-workplace safety?

No – In my time at Lysaght I promoted the concept that “Safety is a Way of Life”, meaning that safety needs to be considered not only at work but also while we are on the road, at home and at our leisure pursuits. In my current position I am still promoting this concept and produce a quarterly newsletter that is titled “Safety is a Way of Life”

What safety lesson did you learn at work that you applied at home?

Never cut your lawn in bare feet – always wear safety boots – a colleague of mine at the steelworks cut his lawn in bare feet – the result – he lost a toe! Wear protective equipment when undertaking any hazardous work at home.

What do you think will be the most significant workplace hazard in 2018?

Stress and fatigue possibly and also exposure to chemicals.

What is the biggest impediment in a workplace to the improvement of safety standards?

The failure of some managers to recognise that safety needs to be integrated in to the total business enterprise and not treated as something of an “extra” – within my current organisation, for example, we do not have “Safe Operating Procedures” – we have “Standard Operating Procedures” this is based on the fact that if procedures are properly developed they should be intrinsically safe!

What safety advice would you provide to a young person who is about to begin their first real job?

When unsure ask the question!

Have you ever been injured at work? If so, how?

Yes – Prior to coming to Australia I was a Shift Manager in a steelworks in the UK – following a spate of hand injuries – not uncommon in the industry – I gathered the whole shift together prior to starting work and in no uncertain terms informed them that if I saw any of them not

Continued from page 3

Senate Inquiry and has yet to be implemented,” Ms Hines said.

“Until then we can have no confidence that justice will be done for our service men and women and their families.”

Private David Hayward, 20, of Cobram, Victoria, took his own life after being absent without leave for more than 2 months in March 2004. In breach of its own protocol, the Army took no action to advise his family that he was missing.

Gunner John Satatas, 19, of Rye, Victoria, was found hanged at Holsworthy in April 2003. John had complained of mistreatment, including bullying and racial abuse. The Army described it as horseplay.

Lance Corporal Nicholas Shiels, 27, of Adelaide, SA, took his own life in 1996 four years after a live fire accident in which he accidentally shot and killed a fellow soldier. The Army was found to have breached 24 occupational health and safety duties in regard to the accident.

Private Jeremy Williams, 20, whose family now live in WA, took his life in February 2003 after suffering intimidation and abuse from servicemen and trainees at the Singleton School of Infantry.

Source: Slater & Gordon

Defence Attitude Survey Findings

The Department of Defence today released a summary of the latest Defence Attitude Survey findings. The 2007 Summary of Results reflects the views and opinions of a 30 per cent sample of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and Defence civilian employees surveyed late last year.

The voluntary survey gives Defence personnel an opportunity to comment candidly on a range of employment-related matters that includes leadership, conditions of service and remuneration, career intentions, wellbeing and family issues. Survey findings highlight perceptions of the positive aspects of working in Defence, as well as areas that may require more attention.

A key factor in conducting the Defence Attitude Survey annually is to assess emerging trends in opinions from one year to the next. The 2007 survey findings broadly improve upon those of previous years or are generally consistent with the 2006 results.

Confidence with, and satisfaction in, immediate supervisors remains very positive, as does pride in service, while confidence in senior Defence leadership has increased noticeably since 2001 (Navy by 17 per cent, Army by 23 per cent, Air Force by 32 per cent and civilians by 19 per cent).

Since 1999, the data also shows an increasing proportion of personnel who believe that unacceptable behaviour is well managed.

Another benefit of trend data is that it helps to identify areas that may require further development, and evaluate the effects of policy and program implementation.

Satisfaction with current salaries has improved since the 2006 survey, but more work is needed in this area. The proportion of ADF personnel indicating they are adequately recognised and rewarded for their work by awards, honours and medals has increased (Navy by 11 per cent, Army by 19 per cent and Air Force by 21 per cent), but requires further attention, as does perceptions about work-life balance and individual performance appraisals.

Defence has a number of recruitment and retention initiatives underway for ADF members and is currently reforming its strategic human resources framework to attract, develop, engage, retain and transition its people. These long-term programs may take some time before they are reflected favourably in future survey findings.

Defence also offers its people a range of financial and non-financial benefits as part of their remuneration package and recognises that a ‘total rewards’ approach is required to communicate the salary, benefits, career opportunities and family support available.
This approach will enhance Defence's position in the employment marketplace and give its people a better understanding of their total benefits package.

The survey results are used as a reference along with other information such as demographic data obtained from the four-yearly Defence Census. This assists Defence in the development of personnel policies and programs to support its military and civilian workforce.


Source: Dept of Defence

**Update On Fatality At Sea**

31 October 2008

SafeWork SA will consider the dual factors of equipment failure and work procedures as it investigates today's death of a 28 year old man at sea in the Great Australian Bight.

A senior inspector from SafeWork SA’s Port Lincoln office is in Ceduna and has ascertained that the deceased man was the skipper of the prawn trawler, Lincoln Lady.

Initial investigations indicate that at about 6.30am, the vessel was using a capstan winch and associated rope and pulley system to retract a stabiliser, while at anchor off Franklin Island.

Preliminary findings are that during this process, the pulley mounting point apparently failed and the rope struck the skipper knocking him into the handrail and steel rigging, resulting in fatal injuries.

SafeWork SA is continuing its investigation, and warns all employers and workers at sea to ensure that their equipment is well-maintained and their safety procedures are properly reviewed and enforced.

Source: SafeWork SA

**Longford and Piper Alpha Anniversaries Highlight Need For Safe Work**

3 November 2008

The head of the SafeWork SA Advisory Committee, Tom Phillips, says the anniversaries of two major workplace disasters highlight the need to make occupational health and safety a 24/7 priority for the community.

Mr. Phillips, a former senior executive with Mitsubishi and Toyota, will make the call as part of the opening of the metropolitan programme of Safe Work Month on Monday in Adelaide.

Twenty years ago, in July 1988, the world’s worst offshore oil industry disaster occurred in the North Sea, when an explosion and fire destroyed the Piper Alpha oil rig. One hundred and sixty seven workers perished.

Ten years later in September 1998, at Longford in Victoria, an Esso gas processing plant exploded in flames. Two workers died and eight were injured.

“Both of these incidents are extreme examples of the worst that can happen when safety systems fail or are neglected;” Mr. Phillips says. “We must reflect on these painful events, and not forget them. “However, we must use events like Safe Work Month to teach the lessons learnt from such incidents, and make sure that they are never repeated.”

Source: SafeWork SA

**Fines Over Student Injury**

31 October 2008

The duty of care to the health and safety of school students has been highlighted in a decision today by the SA Industrial Relations Court.

Industrial Magistrate Michael Ardlie has fined the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) and a teacher over an incident that left a young female student with serious leg injuries.

The incident occurred at Flagstaff Hill Primary School on the last day of term in September 2005.

A football landed on the roof of a sports shed. The closest access point was a first...
A three-year-old girl has died in a tractor incident on a property near Ayr this afternoon. Paramedics were called to the scene shortly after 2pm and transported the girl to Ayr Hospital where she died. Paramedics immediately attended the scene and transported the girl to Ayr Hospital where she died. Emergency Services were called to the scene following a tractor incident on a property near Ayr this afternoon. About 1.15pm the incident happened at the mine on Acland-Muldu Rd, about 20km north-west of Ayr. It is understood because of the precarious position in which the large bulldozer landed, an excavator was used to stabilise the vehicle from above while the rescue took place. Firefighters, using vertical rescue equipment, scaled down to the cab of the bulldozer and retrieved the driver who had been in contact with rescuers via radio throughout the 90 minute ordeal. He was treated at the scene for heat exhaustion. He sustained no other injuries. Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

**Near Miss – truck snared in power lines**

23 October 2008

Emergency Services were called when a tip truck’s bucket became caught on power lines on River Rd, Redbank, just before 9am. The driver was advised to stay in the cab of the truck to wait for Energex to arrive and isolate the power. The cable was put back in position and the truck able to drive away. No-one was injured. Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

**Tractor Fatality**

1 November 2008

A three-year-old girl has died following a tractor incident on a property near Ayr this afternoon. Paramedics were called to the scene shortly after 2pm and transported the girl to Ayr Hospital where she died. No further details surrounding the incident are known at this time.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

**Morningside – ammonia leak**

31 October 2008

Around 3.30pm paramedics and fire crews attended the scene of an ammonia leak at the Toll Refrigerated building on Lytton Road in Morningside. Initial reports were that an ammonia leak occurred inside the building. Firefighters evacuated the immediate area.
Onsite technicians located and shut down the valve, stopping the leak, and fire crews are monitoring the air quality. Firefighters are currently flushing 350m of storm water pipe with water to dilute the ammonia and reduce the gas readings in the air. Five people were affected by fumes, one was transported to the Princess Alexandra hospital, one has been released and three others are being monitored by paramedics. The immediate area will remain evacuated until QFRS Scientific Unit gives the all clear.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

**Australian Rail Safety Occurrence Data, 1 January 2001 to 30 June 2008**

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has released its report of rail safety occurrence data by State and Territory between 1 January 2001 and 30 June 2008.


**Tarragindi – school evacuation**

A Tarragindi school was evacuated this morning as a precaution when several children reported feeling ill, after one of their classmates suffered a medical condition suspected to be a seizure around 9am. The girl was taken to the Mater Children's Hospital very soon after, while 30 other students were treated by paramedics in an isolated area of the Weller's Hill State Primary School.

Eight of these students were taken via the Queensland Ambulance Service’s Patient Transport Service to the Mater Children's Hospital with complaints of nausea and upset stomachs. The remaining 22 students were examined at the school by a doctor from the Princess Alexandra Hospital before being allowed to return to class. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service scientific officers conducted thorough tests at the school which came back clear.

**More time for Hendra submissions**

The date for submissions into the Hendra review has been extended to Friday, November 7, 2008.

Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin announced last month that leading veterinary epidemiologist, Dr Nigel Perkins, would conduct an independent review into DPI&F’s response to this year’s Hendra virus cases.

Dr Mulherin said anyone wishing to put in a written submission or talk directly with Dr Perkins should contact the DPI&F Business Information Centre on 13 25 23.

“Dr Perkins has already met with a diverse group of stakeholders to gain their feedback on the department’s response to this year’s Hendra virus cases,” Mr Mulherin said.

“Input into the review process has been provided by the Communicable Diseases Unit of Queensland Health, horse owners, private vets and other interested people.

“Dr Perkins has also interviewed a large number of departmental officers, including those involved in the on-ground response at Proserpine and Redlands, as well as managers, communication officers and laboratory staff.

“The deadline for the review has been extended into November to ensure all relevant parties can be interviewed and to allow time for several expected written submissions from key stakeholder groups.”

Dr Nigel Perkins is a director of AusVet Animal Health Services and a coordinator of the disease surveillance program for the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre for Emerging Infectious Disease.

“Dr Perkins has extensive experience as a veterinary epidemiologist and expertise in disease control,” Mr Mulherin said.

“Clearly he is well qualified to conduct this independent review of the cases at Redlands and Proserpine and pinpoint any improvements that may be required in the handling of cases of this concerning disease.

“I am confident Dr Perkins will conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the department's responses to these recent biosecurity cases.

“I am advised that DPI&F is carrying out an after-action review as part of their normal continuous improvement processes after a biosecurity event.

“I’ve already committed to table this report in the Parliament and Dr Perkins has been asked to complete his work by 17 November 2008.”

**Man jailed for WorkSafe fraud**

A Birregurra man was sentenced to three months in jail yesterday for fraudulently obtaining more than $7,600 in workers compensation payments and for providing false information.

The Geelong Magistrates Court heard that in 2000 Luke Voskresensky injured his lower back while working as a labourer with a meat packing company. He submitted a workers compensation claim which was accepted.

Mr Voskresensky's injury required him to travel to a chemist in Camperdown to collect his medication. As he lived in Birregurra he claimed travel expenses to and from the chemist.

Evidence revealed, however, that Mr Voskresensky claimed for travel expenses on days which he did not attend the chemist. He also claimed for travel expenses on days when he was in jail serving a sentence for another matter.

A total of 82 invoices which contained false and misleading information were submitted for reimbursement.

Mr Voskresensky pleaded guilty to one count of fraudulently obtaining payments and one count of providing false information under the Accident Compensation Act 1985. He was convicted and sentenced to three months jail. He was also ordered to repay...
the $7,621 he had obtained fraudulently.

WorkSafe Executive Director, Len Boehm, said one of the important reasons the WorkSafe scheme existed was to protect workers who suffered a workplace injury. “This sort of fraudulent behaviour attempts to take advantage of a system that is set up to provide support for people who are unable to work due to a workplace injury,” said Mr Boehm. “Mr Voskeresnky submitted 82 false invoices, which shows he knew exactly what he was doing.” “We will identify and prosecute those who deceive the system, in order to protect honest workers, employers, and service providers. Source: WorkSafe Victoria

New Benefits for Families of asbestos sufferers 29 October 2008

Families of workers suffering work-related latent onset diseases, such as mesothelioma, will benefit from changes to workers’ compensation entitlements announced today by the Queensland Government. Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations John Mickel said legislative changes introduced into Parliament today would provide benefits sooner to the families of workers who die. Mr Mickel said where a deceased worker had already received a payment of lump sum compensation or damages for a latent onset injury, new family entitlements were:

• A one-off lump sum of approximately $63,920; and
• Reasonable funeral expenses of approximately $8,526.

“Families of sufferers of latent onset disease are under huge stresses and strains, often for many years, and I am very pleased to give this extra helping hand to them,” Mr Mickel said. “Benefits for sufferers of latent onset illnesses in Queensland have increased to arguably the most generous in Australia and now we are doing more to assist their families,” he said. Latent onset diseases are insidious conditions, many of which are terminal. The improved compensation measures for dependent family members were developed after consultation with the Queensland Asbestos Related Disease Support Society, unions and WorkCover Queensland. Mr Mickel said where a sufferer died before claiming their full lump sum entitlement, dependent family members currently received full death benefits. “However, this is not the case for dependants of sufferers who have been paid their full lump sum entitlement,” he said. “This can cause financial hardship for the surviving spouse when it comes to paying funeral expenses, or simply moving on with life after caring for a sick partner for many years.” The changes are contained in an amendment to the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003. For more information visit www.workcoverqld.com.au Source: Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations

Asbestos issue needs broad approach 22 October 2008

The issue of dealing with the problem of asbestos extended beyond the workplace, Planning and Workplace Relations Minister, Allison Ritchie said today. The Minister said that WorkCover Tasmania, through its Asbestos Advisory Committee, was already working on the issue and earlier issues raised by Unions Tasmania had been directed to it. “I’m now looking forwarding to seeing what came out of today’s forum so that too can be considered.”

Source: WorkSafe Victoria
Ms Ritchie said the WorkCover Tasmania Board acknowledged that dealing with asbestos involved many levels of the Tasmanian community.

The Asbestos Advisory Committee is developing strategies to promote awareness of asbestos related issues in workplaces; to educate the community in regard to the identification and safe removal of asbestos and to develop and implement compliance and advisory programs in workplaces.

The Board has also supported the establishment of a forum to consult with employers, employees, State and Local government and the general community. It is intended this forum will be arranged in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The forum will attempt to identify opportunities for reform in the areas of:

• Improved data
• Improved disclosure requirements
• Better education and training

Better identification, control and removal processes Workplace Standards inspectors will also undertake additional compliance activity to ensure that employers meet the requirements of the Workplace Health and Safety Act to maintain asbestos registers. WorkCover Tasmania and Workplace Standards Tasmania have also agreed to participate in a major research project with the Australian Workers Union and Cement Australia at Railton to fund the appointment of a project officer. Workplace Standards and WorkCover will also be monitoring the removal of asbestos from the Railton plant.

Asbestos Management And Control Literature Review Released 29 October 2008

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) Chairman, Mr Bill Scales AO, today announced the release of Asbestos management and control: a review of national and international literature.

“The ASCC is committed to improving the information available on asbestos exposure and mesothelioma, and this report contributes to that,” Mr Scales said.

“I am pleased to report that the ASCC will also conduct further research into current work practices in Australian workplaces with in situ asbestos.

“This literature review examines information on current work practices and exposures to asbestos which may be occurring in Australian and overseas workplaces, and policies and practices adopted overseas regarding the management of in situ asbestos and / or its removal.”

Some key findings of the literature review include:

• There has been little research on the current work practices and potential exposures to asbestos in Australia or other countries with similar regulations and prohibitions in place. Only five relevant studies were located, including two Australian studies. The available studies indicate that despite the presence of regulations and guidelines on the safe handling and removal of asbestos, both nationally and internationally, there is a risk that some workers continue to be exposed to airborne asbestos fibres due to a lack of awareness of the appropriate methods required to detect, manage, remove and dispose of asbestos, and possible non-compliance with existing regulations.

• In those countries where the risks to health from exposure to asbestos have been acknowledged and steps have been taken to control, or ban, the use of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) there is a consensus that while the ultimate goal is for all buildings to be free of ACM, in some circumstances, such as where ACM is in good condition and assessment reveals it does not pose...
Most training does not match learning preference finds new CIPD survey

29 October 2008

The third in a series of surveys conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has found that employees favoured method of learning is not being matched to the type of training that they receive. The 2008 Who Learns at Work? report highlights that ‘being shown how to do things and practising them’ is overwhelmingly considered the best method of learning, with 46% citing this as preferred. This preference was also the finding of the two previous reports undertaken in 2005 and 2002. Despite this clear indicator on learning preferences, classroom training is still the most common form of work related training, followed by training on-the-job or at the desk.

The survey findings show that younger respondents (aged 16 - 24) also favoured the ‘being shown how to do things and practising them’ method of learning. They even supported it by a slightly higher percentage than the population at large (50% compared to 46%), which serves to question the widely held assumption that Y generation learning preferences are considerably different from older employees.

Since the first report in 2002 there has been a noticeable shift in training responsibility throughout UK organisations, with a move from training decisions being made by the HR department to line managers. There has been a decrease in respondents stating that the training they received was initiated by the HR and Training department (from 33% in 2005 to 21% in 2008) and an increase in training interventions instigated by the line manager (45% to 49%).

Martyn Sloman, CIPD Adviser says, “As trainers we need to deal with the world as it is, not the world we would wish it to be. Trainers are no longer the sun around which learners revolve. Employees have a significant threat to health, maintenance in situ is a better alternative than removal.

- Current advice both in Australia and overseas is that asbestos should be removed if it is found to pose a significant risk to health or if the opportunity for removal arises due to demolition or refurbishment works in the affected building. In either situation, the appropriate guidelines for asbestos removal or maintenance must be followed.

Asbestos management and control: a review of national and international literature can be downloaded from the ASCC website at http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/AboutUs/Publications/StatReports/Mesothelioma/AsbestosLiteratureReviewSeries.htm

National Codes of Practice on the management and control of asbestos in the workplace and on the safe removal of asbestos were updated in 2005 and are available from the ASCC website at http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/AboutUs/Publications/NationalStandards/IndexofNationalStandardsCodesofPracticeandrelatedGuidanceNote s.htm

Further information and guidance is available from the occupational health and safety authority in each state and territory.

The following related reports are also available from the ASCC website at http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/AboutUs/Publications/StatReports/Mesothelioma/Mesothelioma.htm

- Mesothelioma in Australia, Incidence 1982 to 2004, Deaths 1997 to 2005
- Literature review of Australian and overseas studies on the release of airborne asbestos fibres from building materials as a result of weathering and/or corrosion
- Preparing an estimate of the national pattern of exposure to asbestos in cases of malignant mesothelioma.

Source: ASCC

Senate Amendments Create Potential Barrier To Delivery Of Harmonised OHS Laws

Statement by Heather Ridout Chief Executive

“AI Group calls on the Senate to reconsider its amendments to the Bill establishing Safe Work Australia in order to help ensure the delivery of a harmonised set of occupational health and safety laws for Australia,” Australian Industry Group Chief Executive Heather Ridout said today.

“While the Senate will have undoubtedly acted in good faith in proposing the amendments, AI Group is extremely concerned with their potential impact.

“The amendments to the Bill in the Senate are inconsistent with the formal Intergovernmental Agreement between all State and Territory Governments and the Federal Government to deliver a uniform national OHS outcome.

“If the Senate amendments remain it may require a reopening of the already settled Agreement and risk a fracturing of that fragile consensus. Industry had strongly encouraged Governments to reach consensus on a way forward and we have been very supportive of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

“Specifically, the amended legislation changes the mix of members of Safe Work Australia and removes safeguards on important areas of decision-making. The amendments would in effect diminish the contribution of the States and Territories to decision making in the new body.

“The amendments also change the procedures for appointing employer representatives to this important new body. The change is unnecessarily restrictive and could potentially lead to the exclusion of critical parts of the Australian economy where safety is a paramount issue.

“We urge all Senators to pass the Bill in its original form when it is reconsidered after its return to the Senate from the House of Representatives in the next sitting weeks.

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"Companies across many industry sectors who face daily costs and confusion in the regulation of this important area strongly support a single model OHS law. By reducing overregulation and confusion and raising awareness of best practice in safety management, Safe Work Australia will help businesses to more effectively keep their workplaces safe."

Source: AIGroup

Oops!

Statement from Martin Hamilton-Smith MP, South Australian Liberal Opposition Leader WorkCover Minister Paul Caica was embarrassed twice in parliament today when it was revealed the organisation's annual report had wrongly been posted on a Government website – and then withdrawn.

The Corporation's 2008 annual report shows it held an unfunded liability of $984 million – the worst in its history.

The financial statement also shows income from investment funds dropped from $174 million in 2007 to a loss of $61 million in 2008 – a turn around of $234 million last year.

"The report shows the Corporation had developed into a financial disaster under the Rann Government," said Shadow Industrial Relations Minister Duncan McFetridge.

"No doubt the financial position has worsened since June and we need answers from the Treasurer on the latest state of the books," Dr McFetridge said. "No wonder the Government has been so slow to release annual reports and financial statements. This was a basket case."

Government Minister Paul Caica was unaware the report – yet to be tabled in parliament – had been posted on WorkCover's website.

Just thirty minutes later, he was also non-plussed when the Opposition told him the report had mysteriously disappeared in the time since he had been first questioned.

Source: Martin Hamilton-Smith

Safe Work Week timely reminder of human cost of workplace tragedies and need for strong OHS laws

The unacceptably high human cost of workplace death and injury highlights the need for stronger national workplace health and safety laws, the ACTU said today.

As union members around the country hold events to mark Safe Work Week, the ACTU is stepping up its push for new national laws that protect workers and ensure employers cannot escape their duty of care to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

"Safe Work Week serves as a timely reminder of the need for a strong and healthy workplace for all workers – full time, part time, casual or contract workers," said Sharan Burrow, ACTU President.

"The ACTU believes the new laws should allow unions to initiate prosecutions over breaches of workplace safety where other agencies have failed to do so," said Ms Burrow.

A three-person panel is due to complete the first phase of the Review next week and make recommendations to the Federal Government. Government figures show that in 2005-06, 236 Australians died from a traumatic workplace injury or disease and many thousands more are injured or become ill.

But unions are concerned that this official figure grossly underestimates the true figures as it does not include people with asbestos-related disease or other conditions

Continued on page 12
that become apparent years later.

“For every death and injury there are grieving loved ones, workmates and others who are left to pick up the pieces,” said Ms Burrow.

Source: ACTU

Sunshine Coast’s first “bump truck” makes roadworks safer
23 October 2008

A new Main Roads “bump truck” has rolled onto Sunshine Coast roads to increase the visibility of roadwork sites and help improve the safety of workers. Introduced to Queensland roads in the late 1990s, bump trucks are highly visible roadwork trucks with a specially designed attenuator mounted to the rear, which acts like a spring cushion to reduce the impact of rear-end collisions.

Main Roads Minister Warren Pitt said the introduction of a bump truck to the Sunshine Coast was a positive move towards ensuring the safety of workers and motorists.

“Bump trucks are a fantastic safety device used at roadwork sites to help prevent vehicles from entering the lane where roadworkers are working,” Mr Pitt said.

“With a flashing-arrow board on top of the truck, together with flashing amber lights on the tray and rear attenuator, these vehicles are clearly visible to oncoming motorists.”

Mr Pitt said the trucks had proved successful in reducing the number of incidents where vehicles have driven into a roadwork site.

“Bump trucks are commonly used at night on high-speed roads and positioned in a lane at the beginning of a work site to clearly indicate the lane closure ahead.

“The large rear attenuator is then lowered to reduce the impact of any vehicle colliding with it while preventing the road crew ahead from being run over.

“Bump truck drivers have been specially trained to look out for vehicles too close to roadwork sites and will sound a loud horn to warn workers if a vehicle enters the work area.”

Mr Pitt said night works had become a routine activity to help reduce traffic congestion for motorists while providing a safer working environment for roadworkers due to lower traffic volumes.

“However, working at night can expose our crews to safety risks associated with poor visibility for both workers and motorists. For this reason, the bump trucks were introduced.”

Mr Pitt reminded motorists to keep an eye out for crews working on the roads when travelling the Sunshine Coast’s busy roads.

“We ask that all road users follow any directions given by traffic controllers and keep well away from bump trucks for your safety and the safety of roadworkers,” he said.

“Bump trucks certainly help us keep road construction sites safe, but we still rely on motorists to remain alert at all times and drive to the conditions.”

Source: Minister for Main Roads and Local Government

Congratulations to Victoria’s workplace safety heroes
30 October 2008

Eight people and companies with an extraordinary commitment to making workplaces safer were tonight recognised for their achievements at the 20th Annual WorkSafe Victoria Awards. Awards were presented in seven categories in front of around 900 people at a gala event held at Crown Palladium in Melbourne tonight.

There were 134 entries with 25 finalists in this year’s Awards from which the
WorkSafe Victoria's Executive Director (Health and Safety) John Merritt, said this year's Award recipients had made outstanding contributions, not only to improving the safety of their colleagues, but the wider community.

‘The commitment to workplace health and safety we see every year through these Awards gives us a real buzz. It's great to see our messages getting through and being embraced by so many.

‘Each finalist and Award recipient should be extremely proud of their efforts. By making safety an integral part of what they do, in our eyes they’re all winners.

‘Through their innovation, commitment and leadership they’re helping us achieve the important goal of making Victoria a safer place to work,’ Mr Merritt said.

Recipients of 2008 WorkSafe Victoria Awards

• Health and Safety Representative of the Year – joint recipients
  Derek Jones - OTIS Elevator Company, South Melbourne
  William B. Thomson - Department of Human Services, Melbourne Youth Justice Centre, Melbourne

• Health and Safety Committee of the Year - Kmart Supply Chain, Hoppers Crossing

• Best Design for Workplace Safety - Toll Autologistics-Vehicles in partnership with J. Smith & Sons, Laverton North

• Best Health and Safety Initiative for Small Business - Bill Grant Engineering, Bendigo

• Best Solution for Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders - Toll in2store & Layer Tech Pty Ltd, Altona North

• Best Solution to a Health and Safety Risk - Smarter Safer Solutions, Portland

• Best Strategy for Health and Safety Management - Nestle Uncle Tobys, Wahgunyah

Source: WorkSafe Victoria

Defence OHS Champions At 2008 SRCC Safety Awards

28 October 2008

Defence was recognised in two categories during the 2008 Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (SRCC) Safety Awards, announced on 23 October 2008. The SRCC Safety Awards recognise public and private sector agencies and individuals that have achieved excellence in occupational health, safety, rehabilitation and return-to-work practices. This year attracted 46 entries across five categories.

In Category Three: Best Solution to an Identified Workplace Health and Safety Issue, finalist status was awarded to Defence Support Group South Australia for its initiative “Flying the Falcons” - an Alternative Approach to Bird Management on a RAAF Base.

Bird management has been identified as a priority at RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia. As well as causing damage to infrastructure, communication systems and the environment, large flocks of little corellas are a serious risk of aircraft bird-strike.

“Flying the Falcons” is a program of sustained flying over a number of weeks by several peregrine falcons chasing, but not catching, the little corellas and moving them away from the Base environment. This environmentally friendly program can potentially save lives and property, and can be applied at other Defence sites.
In Category Four: Best Individual Contribution to Health and Safety, a High Commendation was awarded to Lieutenant Commander Tracey Elliott of the Royal Australian Navy for her new Physical Training and Injury Management Program for Midshipmen and Cadets at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

The diverse training regime resulted in increased fitness levels for cadets with reduced injuries. The ADFA injury surveillance report showed a 63 per cent reduction in new injuries from 2006 to 2007. Also of great significance is the reduction in the number of days lost to medical restriction, with the 2007 program resulting in a 75 per cent reduction in lost periods over 2006.

The contribution of Defence OHS Champions is highly valued as the dedication of these individuals and groups demonstrates the growing commitment to improving OHS performance within Defence.


Work Safety Award winners lead the way in safety October 27, 2008

The five winners of the prestigious 2008 Work Safety Awards Western Australia were announced on Friday night.

Main Roads Western Australia, Southern Brake and Services Pty Ltd, Department of Agriculture and Food WA, APC Storage Solutions and Suzie Johns from Bunnings Morley are the winners of the five award categories and will now be entered into the national Safe Work Australia Awards.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that the five winners were terrific examples of the many excellent workplace innovations and occupational safety and health systems being developed in WA.

“These awards provide the opportunity for innovative Western Australians to gain national recognition for their achievements,” Ms Lyhne said.

“They recognise outstanding occupational safety and health management, solutions and innovation in WA workplaces that reduce the risk of work-related injury and disease.

“Awards such as these are all about encouraging best practice in safety and health, and the winners are leading the way by making a significant contribution to making WA workplaces safer.”

The award for best workplace safety and health management system was won by Main Roads Western Australia.

Employing 1100 people, Main Roads manages a network of more than 17,800km of national highways and State roads and works with local government to create an efficient transport network.

Main Roads has an excellent integrated management system incorporating occupational safety and health, environment and quality, and has achieved a very clear improvement in safety and reduction in injuries.

The award for best workplace safety and health practices in small business was won by Albany small business Southern Brake and Services Pty Ltd.

Employing only 11 people, Southern Brake and Services is a small business incorporating a petrol station, head machining and vehicle servicing and gas conversion.

The company has identified hazards and made the appropriate changes in collaboration with the Motor Trade Association, and has now implemented excellent safety management systems and practices.

The award for best public sector leadership for injury prevention and management was won by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

Employing 1900 people in metropolitan and regional locations, the Department's role is to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture.
The huge diversity of work undertaken by the Department presents a broad range of hazards and risks. Safety and health is integrated into all work activities, and excellent consultation mechanisms have been established throughout the Department.

The award for best solution to an identified workplace safety and health issue was won by APC Storage Solutions.

Employing 130 people, APC Storage Solutions manufactures and installs industrial storage and handling systems, including pallet racking.

The company developed a mechanical aid for the installation of pallet racking frames in response to a recognised manual handling risk when raising frames weighing up to 100kg.

The award for best individual contribution to safety and health was won by Suzie Johns from Bunnings Morley.

Suzie is the Night Fill Team Leader at the store, and her team nominated her because of her caring attitude and emphasis on working safely.

Suzie encourages her staff to spot and report hazards or to make small changes, and they trust her to take their concerns to management. She constantly motivates her staff to work safely, and they describe her as “inspirational”.

Winners of the national Safe Work Australia Awards will be announced early in 2008.

“Each of the category winners of the 2008 Work Safety WA Awards is a very worthy winner, and each now has the opportunity for their achievements to be recognised across Australia,” Ms Lyhne said.

“WA has already established somewhat of a proud tradition at the national level, with two of the three WA entrants in the Safe Work Australia Awards winning their national categories in 2006.

“I heartily congratulate the winners, along with everyone else who nominated for the awards, and encourage businesses of all sizes to nominate for the 2009 Work Safety Awards Western Australia.” Source: DOCEP

Clever Queenslanders Win 2008 Work Safe Awards

23 October 2008

A world-first car transporter that prevents workers falling from heights was today announced as a winner of the 2008 Queensland Work Safe Awards.

Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations John Mickel today congratulated winners for their creativity in making Queensland workplaces safer.

The awards were announced at Parliament House as part of Safe Work Australia Week, which runs from October 19 to 25.

“I would like to thank and congratulate award finalists and winners for their contribution to making their fellow Queenslanders safer,” Mr Mickel said.

“The awards show that Queensland businesses can come up with original and clever ways to improve the health and safety of their staff.

“There are many benefits of having a good health and safety system - it helps protect workers as well as boosts productivity and reduces costs,” he said.

This is the third year that Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) has held the awards.

Winners get a chance for national recognition as they are automatically eligible to enter the Safe Work Australia Awards run by the federal Office of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council.

Entries came from a wide range of sectors including transport, retail, rural, light and heavy industry, as well as from industry groups and Queensland government departments.

A panel of judges representing industry, employer associations, unions, WHSQ, and the
Continued from page 15

Electrical Safety Office chose the winners and finalists.
The winners and highly commended entries are:

1. Best solution to an identified health and safety issue
   Winner: J. Smith and Sons Pty Ltd, Gympie - for the FlatPack, an innovative new type of car carrier designed to eliminate falls from heights. Safety advancements achieved in the FlatPack car carrier are an industry-first both nationally and internationally.

2. Best workplace health and safety practice in small business
   Winner: Bailey Tanks Pty Ltd, Redbank - as a result of a serious workplace injury, Bailey Tanks designed and developed the Tank Mover, a tank trolley designed to eliminate muscular injuries caused while lifting and moving rainwater tanks. The trolley requires very little effort to lift the tank and roll it on and off a vehicle.

3. Best individual contribution to workplace health and safety
   Winner: Noelene Lucjan, Principal Workforce Management Officer, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Brisbane - for her innovative approach in finding solutions to manual handling and ergonomic issues throughout the EPA through extensive consultation with employees and management. Noelene has a passion for ensuring the health and safety of all EPA employees and she has the agency’s “Not One Not Ever” (NONE) strategy in mind at all times.

4. Best solution to identified electrical safety issues
   Highly commended: Electrical and Communications Association (ECA), Fortitude Valley - for SafetyConnect, the ECA’s electrical and workplace safety system to help electrical contractors comply with their obligations under the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995. SafetyConnect provides business owners and managers with the tools to develop a safety culture within the workplace and ensures that safety is supported and fostered by management.

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