The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) Chairman, Mr Bill Scales AO, today announced the release of the National Hazard Exposure Worker Surveillance (NHEWS) survey – 2008 Results and the accompanying National Hazard Exposure Worker Surveillance (NHEWS) survey – Survey Handbook.

“The NHEWS survey is the first national survey on exposure to occupational disease causing hazards in Australia,” Mr Scales said.

“The more effective prevention of occupational diseases is a priority area in the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012. The ASCC has recognised that for a range of reasons, national data on occupational diseases is not adequate to inform prevention activities. The NHEWS data will provide information on the current nature and extent of Australian workers’ exposure to selected occupational disease causing hazards as well as the controls used to manage these. This will help the ASCC and others decide priorities for prevention and measure the success of these programs to help reduce the hazards to which Australian workers are exposed at work. Over time, these programs will reduce the health and economic burden of occupational diseases to Australian workers, their families, the community and business.

“I am pleased to report the NHEWS survey shows that most workers in Australia who are exposed to an occupational disease causing hazard are provided with some form of control to reduce risk.

“This is a very encouraging finding and shows we are making progress to reduce work-related illness, disease and death. Further to this, findings showed workers surveyed were able to report a variety of controls were being provided by employers to reduce risk on the job.

“Although these are positive findings, it is concerning that some workers who are exposed to hazards are reporting that no controls for risks are provided at all. For example, around one in every five workers reported that their employer did nothing to prevent health problems caused by exposure to direct sunlight or sunburn. Around the same number of employees reported that their employer did nothing to prevent their hearing from being damaged or to prevent problems caused by using a range of vibrating tools.

“This is not acceptable. It is everybody’s right to be safe and healthy at work and all employers need to review their approach to these important issues,” Mr Scales said.

Participants in the NHEWS survey were engaged through telephone interviews. A sample of 1900 workers were surveyed for the first part of the study, which targeted workers from the five priority industries as identified under the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012. These are transport and storage, health and community services, construction, manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

A second sample of 2600 workers was drawn from both priority and non-priority industries.
SIA News

SIA Creating A Brand Identity Project – Online Member Survey

On page 19 of the October 2008 (issue 3) of the Institute’s Australian Safety & Health Matters (ASHM) details were provided on the National Board of Management (NBOM) approved “Creating a Brand Identity Project”. As outlined in this article, Stage 1 – “Discovery”, involves an initial scoping study, branding workshops, review of branding and business intelligence and research interviews with members and partners.

This major project is also examining what place the SIA currently holds in the minds of its key stakeholders and their experience, perceptions and beliefs about the organisation in terms of its role, future directions, its values and how well it currently delivers on our members’ needs.

To complete Stage 1, the Project Steering Group has approved an online member survey to encourage as much input as possible from all of our 3,118 financial members (as at today). The good news is that our membership numbers are continuing to grow with an average of 60 new members per month (mainly OHS professionals) joining online via the website.

As the article in ASHM indicated “In 2009, the SIA will not only celebrate its 60th anniversary and its many achievements over that period, but also, subject to NBOM approval, launch a new brand identity and communication plan to support the SIA’s strategic plan and position the SIA as the leading authority on OHS issues within Australian and internationally.

The survey is now available to all logged-in members via the following link: http://www.sia.org.au/surveys/survey.asp?ContainerID=brand_identity_survey. Responses are requested please by COB Monday 20 December.

On behalf of the NBOM, the Project Steering Group and Branding Consultants Jennifer Dixon and Peter Campbell, your input on this critical future directions NBOM initiative is strongly encouraged.

Gary Lawson-Smith, CEO

Continued from page 1

Some key findings of the NHEWS survey include:

- Most of the 1538 respondents who worked in direct sunlight were provided with sunscreen, hats or protective clothing to prevent problems caused by exposure to direct sunlight or sunburn. One in five (21 per cent) who worked in direct sunlight undertook their work outside of peak UV hours to reduce sun exposure. Close to 17 per cent of workers reported that they or their employer did nothing to prevent health problems caused by exposure to direct sunlight or sunburn.

- Of the 1437 respondents who worked with loud noise, around two thirds were provided with ear plugs or ear muffs (60 per cent) to prevent hearing from being damaged. One in five (22 per cent) said noisy equipment was placed in an isolated room, while 36 per cent said quieter machinery was purchased whenever possible. Almost one in five (17 per cent) reported they or their employer had done nothing to prevent hearing from being damaged by loud noise.

- Two thirds (65 per cent) of the 1348 respondents who worked with tools, equipment or in vehicles that vibrate were provided with gloves to prevent any related health problems. A third of respondents said they had been provided with vibration absorbing seats and 31 per cent said they were provided with products with less vibration. One in five (22 per cent) reported that they or their employer had done nothing to prevent problems caused by working with vibrating tools and equipment or in vehicles that vibrate.

“I am pleased to release the NHEWS survey and accompanying handbook to the public and I encourage industry, employees, employers, OHS representatives and practitioners to make use of this resource,” Mr Scales said.

The NHEWS survey handbook describes the purpose of the NHEWS survey, the sources of individual questions in the survey, the rationale behind the questions and the sampling and analysis strategies for the data collected.

The NHEWS survey was produced in collaboration with state and territory WorkSafe and WorkCover authorities and a panel of research experts. Further analysis of the NHEWS survey data is planned for 2009.


Source: ASCC

Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities meet in Melbourne

3 December 2008

Australian and New Zealand Workplace Safety Authorities met in Melbourne last week to discuss the progress of a range of initiatives to further Occupational Health and Safety management across Australian workplaces.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) brings together senior executives from Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory workplace safety authorities, and New Zealand, to progress national consistency, harmonisation and best practice in occupational health and safety.

HWSA Chair, John Watson, said that the group has agreed to conduct follow up targeted audits in 2009, to measure the long term impacts of the manual handling in manufacturing intervention campaign.

“The project team for the Manual Handling & Slips & Trips in Hospitals campaign reported that the campaign has now concluded,” Mr Watson said.

“Two hundred and three audits were undertaken, with approximately 96% of workplaces involved in the project having compliant risk assessment and control processes in place. This indicates improvement since the Design 4 Health campaign, which was performed...
If you have any safety issues to discuss, or concerns about SafetyWeek itself, please consider communicating with the editor at jonesk99@gmail.com.

SafetyWeek PLUS

Please don't forget there is a special members-only edition, SafetyWeek PLUS, available only as a download at the SIA website at [http://sia.org.au/members/members-newsletter/members-safetyweekplus-bulletins.html](http://sia.org.au/members/members-newsletter/members-safetyweekplus-bulletins.html)

The latest edition includes article entitled

- One in ten Aussies say work makes them ill
- MPs should be drug and booze tested like us - rail workers
- National OH&S laws 'wrecked' by oppn, says Gillard
- Ash caused rash at school, tests reveal
- Thousands of lives put at risk by fake Qantas engineer
- Cameras to monitor rail level crossings
- Rudd's staff not overworked, says ex-union official Shorten
- Environment tests clear school in cancer cluster scare
- Chicken crate death widow wins compo battle

Australian Health & Safety Matters

The December edition of the SIA-member magazine, Australian Safety & Health Matters is due for distribution next week. A preview of the cover is on the right.

More information on the magazine is available at [www sia org au](http://www.sia.org.au)
bodies on a farm, and protects children from other potential dangers on the farm.

“The Keep Watch @ the Farm program also promotes covering water storage tanks and wells, filling in unused holes and ensuring workers and visitors to the farm keep a close watch on children when playing around water.

“As we move into the warmer summer months it is essential that we do what we can to raise awareness of the potential hazards present in rural settings.

“I would encourage all members of the Tasmanian rural community to pick up a free Keep Watch @ the Farm brochure and ‘Please Close the Gate’ sign from any Service Tasmania outlet,” Ms O’Byrnes said.

For more information on Keep Watch programs visit <www.keepwatch.com.au>

Source: Tasmanian Minister for Sport & Recreation

Take Extra Care On The Farm
8 December 2008

SafeWork SA is urging the utmost care be taken with farm machinery as farmers and farm workers across South Australia engage in harvesting, cutting hay and reducing fuel loads for firebreaks.

“Tractors remain the deadliest pieces of equipment on Australian farms, and must be treated with care and respect,” says Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

“A key danger is contact with unguarded power takeoffs (PTOs), which power any plant being trailed.

“These can entangle a person’s loose clothing resulting in serious injury or death.

“As well, people can fall under a tractor or its trailed equipment; someone standing near a tractor can be struck, or a person can be trapped against a fixed object by an operating tractor which may have crept forward after they have dismounted.”

SafeWork SA is also urging that farm workers handle with extreme caution trailed equipment such as haybalers.

“When you inspect any farm machinery such as a haybaler before and during operations, please ensure that the power is isolated from the machine before accessing any moving parts,” Ms. Patterson says.

“In general however, it’s always important to proactively maintain farm plant and equipment to ensure they continue operating safely during this busy time.

“With many farmers working up to 18-hour days during harvesting, fatigue adds to the many risk factors already present.”

“On farms, there is also the factor of isolation, as the time it takes for word to get out and help to arrive at the incident scene could spell the difference between life and death,” Ms. Patterson says.

“Accordingly good communications and an emergency management plan are critical components to any successful safety management plan on a farm.

“It’s sobering to remember that at this time last year, two men lost their lives on South Australian farms in incidents involving a tractor and a haybaler.”

Source: SafeworkSA

Advent
The Australian Government will build more truck rest areas on Australia's major highways, now that Parliament has passed new laws about heavy vehicle charges. The Chairman of the Australian Trucking Association, Trevor Martyn, said the extra rest areas would make Australia's roads safer, as well as better places for truck drivers to work.

"Fatigue is a major cause of truck accidents, but there just aren't enough rest areas for truck drivers to stop and take a break. It is a key safety issue that has united the whole trucking industry," Mr Martyn said.

"The Australian Government has taken decisive action to help build more rest areas. Until this year, the Government was legally prevented from paying for rest areas. It was only able to pay for roads, traffic signs, traffic control equipment, bridges, tunnels and bike paths.

"The Infrastructure Minister, Anthony Albanese, fixed this huge legal roadblock. He also announced the Government would spend $70 million over four years on rest areas and other safety measures under its Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program.

"The funding under the program is now available, because Parliament has passed the Government's new heavy vehicle charges laws. The program will deliver as many as 125 new truck rest areas on major highways. If the states and territories provide matching funding, the figure will double to 250 new rest areas.

"The ATA has already submitted our priority rest area funding list to the Government. We will now be working to make sure the money is spent where it will help truck drivers the most," Mr Martyn said. Source: ATA

The previous operating company of the Port Pirie smelter has been fined $65,000 and convicted of breaching workplace safety laws, following the death of a worker at the facility in 2004. In July, Zinifex Port Pirie Pty Ltd was found guilty at the end of a trial in the SA Industrial Relations Court over the death of 45-year-old employee, Greg Sleep in October 2004. Mr Sleep was struck and fatally injured by a front-end loader as he worked night shift in what was called the Co-Treatment Shed, where ore was being deposited.

The company (now known as Nyrstar) was found to have had breached Section 19(1) of the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986, in that it failed to maintain a safe working environment, through a number of failings in its systems of work.

After hearing submissions on penalty late last week in Port Pirie, Industrial Magistrate Richard Hardy said that he found unacceptable the company's stance that its safety measures at the time were in excess of what was required.

"Further, there is no indication of contrition and acceptance that the defendant has failed to ensure the safety of its employees so far as is reasonably practicable. I therefore treat this matter as a serious breach."

The Magistrate did acknowledge that the company has learned from the incident, "and that the safety processes now in place have had an international effect throughout the defendant's overseas enterprises."

The fine is at the highest end of the scale for penalties meted out for a single workplace death in South Australia.

Source: SafeWork SA
Rail Track Gang Chalks Up 10 Year Injury-Free Safety Record
8 December 2008

QR’s Monto track gang, located west of Bundaberg, has celebrated 10 years with no lost time injuries.

Minister for Transport and Industrial Relations John Mickel today congratulated the rail gang on its impressive safety record.

Minister Mickel met the team, which is responsible for maintaining and repairing rail lines, in Gladstone today to acknowledge the significant milestone.

“Nothing is a higher priority than safety, and we had a terrible reminder of this in the last few weeks with the tragic deaths of two QR staff in the Tilt Train collision in North Queensland,” he said.

“The most important thing about this achievement for the Monto gang is that for the past decade, every member of this team has been able to return home after a hard day’s work unharmed and able to enjoy their life and loved ones.

“Injuries and accidents are preventable. We cannot simply accept they will happen.”

“I applaud this team’s efforts to improve QR’s safety performance and I encourage them to keep up the good work,” Mr Mickel said.

The track gang members, with combined service in QR of over 130 years, are: Aubrey Muller (track maintenance supervisor), Geoffrey Litzow, Brian Ellerton, Wayne Messer (track workers), and Kevin Mitchell (track worker and safety representative).

Aubrey Muller said the gang credited its safety record to the way the team worked together on all jobs.

“Our motto is ‘look out for your mates at work,’” Mr Muller said.

“The secret to our success is that the team has a positive safety attitude, never turns a blind eye to potential risks, always does quality pre-start briefs, puts in good control measures, and talks about safety issues as a group.

“We also receive a lot of support from management and our safety facilitator,” he said.

Safety is QR’s number one priority and has a target of achieving no lost time injuries across the whole organisation.

Mr Mickel said QR had increased its focus on safety in the past year, and had contracted world-recognised consultants DuPont to help the company realise its goal of no lost time injuries.

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

WorkCover warns of grain auger harvest danger
5 December 2008

WorkCover NSW CEO Jon Blackwell today alerted farmers in the crop growing regions of NSW to the risks associated with grain augers, following two recent incidents in which workers were seriously injured.

“The current busy harvest will require the use of machinery, including augers, that may have been unused for some time,” said Mr Blackwell.

“Augers that are inadequately guarded or poorly maintained are a major hazard, and regularly result in farmers, farm workers and even children being seriously injured,” he said.

“It is essential that in order to ensure a safe and productive harvest, farmers take the time to undertake maintenance and repairs, ensuring appropriate guarding and operational systems are in place before use.

“A small investment of time to fit guards or make other repairs could prevent disruptions to your harvest plan or more importantly, tragedy on your farm,” said Mr Blackwell.

On 16 November a Narrimone farm worker suffered a severe electric shock when a raised auger he was operating came into contact with overhead powerlines, and the following day a Girilambone farmer suffered severe leg injuries while trying to clear a jammed auger.

WorkCover has a number of publications and other resources available to assist farmers and employers make their farm safer and productive.

The recently published Industry Safety Standard for Grain Augers identifies the safe
Continued from page 6

**Dysart – roof collapse**  
8 December 2008

About 2pm emergency service crews were called to an incident at a mine site on the Golden Mile Road, about 10kms from Dysart in Central Queensland. Early reports suggest the roof of the mine’s lunchroom collapsed.

Three people were reportedly trapped in the building and had to be rescued. One sustained minor injuries while two others are believed to have possible spinal injuries.

Both have been taken by ambulance to Dysart Hospital. Authorities are yet to determine whether recent storm activity was a contributing factor in the incident.

Source: Qld Dept of Emergency Services

**New Health and Safety Solution**  
8 December 2008


**OHS Harmonisation to Have ‘Better Chance’ If Safe Work Bill Changes Adopted**  
5 December 2008

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The prospect for appropriate harmonisation of Australia’s occupational health and safety (OHS) laws would be enhanced if amendments confirmed by the Senate as recently as yesterday to the Safe Work Bill are adopted.

The Senate amendments will make the tripartite governance structure for the proposed new national advisory body (Safe Work Australia) more effective including providing appropriate levels of industry and trade union representation, and independence.

Decisions about harmonisation will not be easy. They will be more durable if governance arrangements are structured to produce a stronger consensus among governments and the interests the OHS system are intended to serve – employers and employees.

ACCI calls on all members of parliament to adopt the amended proposals, so that a national consensus can be built by governments and peak employer and union councils around these important issues.

Source: ACCI

**Safety Week Issue 174 December 8, 2008 Page 7 ADVERTISING**

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

If you want to advertise to over 3,000 safety professionals in Australia, please contact the SIA Secretariat through natadmin@sia.org.au