With Christmas around the corner it might seem a strange time for WorkSafe Victoria to release a new television commercial. The new TV commercial to be screened from last night builds on the award-winning success of the previous Homecomings commercials. The campaign will also run on radio, be shown on outdoor billboards and in cinemas from Boxing Day.

The television advertisement shows a mother and two children watching television when a news-flash advises of a disaster at a construction site. “Wasn’t that where dad was working?” asks the daughter.

WorkSafe’s Executive Director John Merritt said the campaign reinforced the ‘moral right’ of workers to return home safely every day.

“At this time of year when many Victorian Christmas dinners will be missing someone, this campaign is a reminder that workplace injuries don’t take holidays. Victorian workplaces are at their busiest right now. Retail and warehousing environments are obviously exceptionally busy, but in many offices, construction and manufacturing businesses, people are rushing to get work finished before an extended break.

“Employers at this time of year need to take exceptional care to ensure their people are properly trained, supervised and working in a safe way.

“This is particularly true of industries where there are many people taking jobs straight from school or university.

“With the working environment to become more frantic in the next couple of weeks, now is the time to ensure every workplace has the systems and procedures in place to minimise risk.

“People need to concentrate on what they’re doing, not what they might be doing tonight, at the weekend or on their well-deserved break.

“You’ve got to make sure you’re in a position to enjoy the fruits of your labour,” Mr Merritt said. “There are signs of major improvement this year on many fronts including a decline in the number of workplace fatalities, but as Thursday’s tragedy at Ballarat shows,...
the whole community suffers each time a life is lost or someone is badly hurt in the workplace.

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Organisations:
- Victoria Government
- SafeWork SA
- WorkSafe Victoria
- Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA)

Reported workplace injuries and deaths by financial year

Calendar year fatalities

- Fluor Australia
  - HSE Advisor Role
- Gippsland Ports
  - EH & S Manager

**Advertisement**

The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA) presents

**Workplace Ergonomics**
- **Vision in the Workplace**
- **Keyboard Overuse Injuries to the Neck & Shoulders**

A full-day seminar for Ergonomists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Rehabilitation Providers, Human Factors practitioners, Occupational Health and Safety professionals and other interested health practitioners

**PRESENTERS**
- Jennifer Long, Certified Professional Ergonomist and Occupational Optometry Specialist
- Susie Riddoch, fellow member of the Australian Physiotherapy Association and Clinical Occupational Physiotherapist

**WHERE & WHEN**
Launceston Thursday 19th February 2009 from 9:00am - 5:00pm
Taitrace Centre (see attached map & directions)
Corner of Elisea Street and Waterfront Drive, Riverside

**COST**
- Members: $245.00
- Non-members: $295.00
- Students (full-time): $105.00

**FURTHER INFORMATION**
- Coffee & registration from 8:30am
- Lunch provided
- Cancellation fees will apply if you are unable to attend at short notice

To register complete the attached form and e-mail or fax to the HFESA Secretariat by 15th January 2009

Places Limited - Register Early!

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Second Office www.secondatline.com.au
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**Danger Season Ahead At South Australian Workplaces**

SafeWork SA warns that the approaching holiday season will also be a time of heightened risk at workplaces across the state. The agency’s Executive Director, Michele Patterson, says that certain industries are particularly busy at this time of the year, which may raise the safety risks to workers.

“We know that hospitality, warehouses, road transport, retail businesses and farms are very active in the weeks before Christmas, while manufacturers and the building trades are trying to finish work before the extended break.

“There’s extra pressure to meet deadlines, but sometimes a holiday mindset starts too soon,” Ms Patterson says. “Both of these factors can encourage businesses to take shortcuts and reduce the priority placed on safety, which in turn can result in a workplace death or injury occurring at what should be a festive time of the year.”

Approaching Christmas, SafeWork SA also warns employers, supervisors and workers to be aware of the dangers of using alcohol and other drugs at work, and to not take shortcuts that jeopardise the health and safety of workers.

**Advances in mining health safety**

The Bligh Government has set up a special health surveillance unit to keep abreast of worker health hazards in the mining industry.
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

A look at Recommendations 3 and 37-39 in the First Report on National Model OHS Legislation (available online) tells us that the OHS profession would not be recognised or enabled in a positive sense as HSRs and OHS committees are now. The original Robens concept was one of enablement. Instead the profession has been recognised in a negative sense by recommending that OHS service providers, in-house or external, be subject to criminal sanctions for breach of the duty of care. So the Report fails to put OHS services in the context of ILO Convention 161 on occupational health services.

Note that professional indemnity insurance does not cover prosecution.

Even though an OHS professional may only be an adviser, the Report Panel recommends no delegability of the duty, that is the OHS adviser at all times would share the duty with management. Officers of an organisation would be excused from the primary duty of care, although they would have a duty to exercise due diligence in ensuring compliance by the working entity, but seemingly the officers who are OHS officers are not to be so excused. Unfortunately though, the Panel rejected the notion of specifically mentioning the concept of the degree of control over events in the definition of reasonable practicability, but instead said that the criteria for reasonable practicability should be in a code or guidance note.

Is an OHS professional going to need to document all advice, so that she/he can show that the advice was, was not or was partially implemented? Is a court going to regard an OHS professional titled “OHS manager” differently from one titled “OHS adviser”?

In Recommendation 38, the Panel recommends that a “relevant service” and “service provider” are to be defined in the Act in relation to the objectives of the duty of care. It is not clear from Recommendation 39 if it is the actual act of providing the service, and “service provider” are to be though, the Panel rejected the notion of the primary duty of care, although the Report Panel said the mining industry was undergoing constant change and it was important to keep pace with those changes. “My Department established this unit to collect and collate information from the industry and to work with the Mines Inspectorate to ensure all bases were covered.”

The Minister said the effects of exposure to some of the solvents, paints and resins new to the mining industry had to be carefully monitored.

Mr Wilson said the staff of the new unit had all been actively involved in industry health and safety.

The unit’s manager Gerard Tiernan, an occupational hygienist, has more than 20 years experience including working with Mount Isa Mines and the State Government’s peak safety and research centre, Simitars.

“His team includes an occupational physician, an occupational hygienist, statisticians and three administrators of the Coal Workers’ Health Scheme,” Mr Wilson said.

Teen dies at Ballarat mine

WorkSafe is investigating the death of a 17-year-old Ballarat worker who was run over by a truck at Ballarat’s Lihir gold mine today. Although WorkSafe’s investigation is at an early stage, it is understood the young man was hit by a truck from which he had just alighted after a break.

The young worker, who was from Ballarat, was employed by a company contracted to do earthworks at the mine.

The incident happened just after 10am.

WorkSafe’s Executive Director John Merritt, said the death of the first-year apprentice should send a message to all employers and workers about the need to ensure workplaces were as safe possible. Source: WorkSafe Victoria.

[More on this issue can be found in the latest copy of SafetyWeek PLUS]

Warning on stacking practices

11 December, 2008

WorkSafe has issued a reminder on safe systems of work when stacking goods following the deaths of four WA workers over the past 20 months in incidents involving stacking procedures. A 17-year-old labourer was killed on November 24 when a bundle of timber sheets fell on him, and a 22-year-old apprentice died in March after also being crushed under a stack of wooden sheets.

In January, a 37-year-old man died when he was struck by steel that fell when racking collapsed, and in March 2007 a 43-year-old labourer was...
crushed between two large sheets of stone. WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that although WorkSafe was still investigating these incidents and could not comment on the specifics of the cases, it was important to issue a reminder on safe systems of work when stacking goods. “It is crucial that stacked goods are secured in position and do not exceed their capacity to remain in place because the outcome may be tragic,” Ms Lyhne said. “In two of the incidents, it seems at this early stage that timber sheets were stacked vertically on the floor leaning up against a wall. “Although it is still to be confirmed, it appears the employees involved in handling the sheets were crushed when the sheets tipped past the vertical and fell, crushing them. “If racking is being used, it is also extremely important to ensure it is not overloaded to the point of collapse. “The fact that four workers have died in the past 20 months also lead to the question of how many near-misses and injuries might have taken place in similar circumstances. “Employers whose workplaces include areas where goods are stacked need to ensure the risk of injury is minimised by using a system for securely racking and/or strapping the goods. “The risk of manual handling injuries needs to be minimised, and workers engaged in the storage, movement and handling of heavy materials need to be adequately trained to undertake the tasks safely. “I strongly urge employers to ensure that safe systems of work are in place and implemented at all times to minimise the risk of any further deaths or serious injuries which may involve the stacking of goods.” Further information on safe systems of work and manual handling can be obtained at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Warning on loading tankers after two men die in explosion

11 December, 2008

WorkSafe has issued a warning on safe loading and unloading of tankers following the death of two women in an explosion at Broome last week.

At this stage it appears that the two men had been unloading under pressure a tanker containing barite (barium nitrate - a powdered substance used in the offshore drilling industry) at a yard near the Broome docks on December 1. The tanker, which was mounted on the rear of a truck, exploded and fatally injured the two workers.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that, although the WorkSafe investigation had not been completed, some issues needed to be raised. “WorkSafe inspectors are still working on the investigation into this tragic incident, but we feel it is important to issue a reminder on having safe systems of work in place when loading and unloading this type of tanker,” Ms Lyhne said. “It is crucial that the procedures recommended by the designer and/or manufacturer of the tanker be followed to the letter. “It is also vitally important that the air being
used to pressurise a tanker is properly and adequately regulated, and that it is of a suitable quality for the safe operation of the tanker.

“Last but by no means least, safety devices such as pressure safety valves must be set at or below the design pressure of the tanker, and must be capable of relieving the pressure in the tanker without leaving an accumulation of compressed air.

“Some pressure vessels must be registered with WorkSafe, so employers should check to ensure they are meeting their legal obligations in regard to the registration of their pressure vessels.

“Whatever the outcome of the investigation into the two deaths in Broome last week, I would like to remind all workplaces with pressure vessels to ensure that stringent safety measures are in place at all times when performing tasks involving high air pressure and potentially volatile substances.”

Source: DOCEP

Road And Rail Unite To Promote Level Crossing Safety

11 December 2008

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) and the Australian Trucking Association (ATA) will join forces to promote safety at level crossings, ATA Chairman, Trevor Martyn and ARA CEO, Bryan Nye said today.

The ARA has contributed $65,000 to fund a display that will educate industry and communities about safety on railway level crossings. The display will form part of the ATA’s travelling exhibition trailer, the Road Ahead.

The Road Ahead is a state-of-the-art semitrailer filled with interactive displays about road safety and the trucking industry. The trailer was launched in May 2008 and since then it has attracted 18,000 visitors from schools and communities all over Australia.

Mr Martyn said the ATA and ARA see the promotion of level crossing safety as a crucial message that needs to be heard by all road users and pedestrians. “We will be working together to make sure that truck drivers, motorists, pedestrians and schoolchildren all understand the importance of level crossing safety as the exhibition trailer continues to tour throughout 2009 and beyond,” Mr Martyn said.

“The display will highlight the simple rules that motorists and truck drivers can follow to protect their safety at level crossings. In particular, motorists must:

- never enter a level crossing if the red lights are flashing or the boom gates are down
- never queue across train or tram tracks
- remember that most level crossings do not have red lights or boom gates. At these crossings, always follow the traffic signs and signals before driving on
- remember that a train can weigh more than 5000 tonnes and cannot stop quickly.”

Mr Martyn said that in addition to driver education, the road and rail sectors would continue to press governments to upgrade thousands of levels crossings.

“Upgrades could include the installation of rumble strips and reducing signage clutter so the key safety warnings stand out, improving lines of sight by removing trees and other obstacles and installing active protections like flashing lights and boom gates on high risk crossings,” Mr Martyn said.

Chief Executive Officer of the ARA, Bryan Nye, thanked the ATA for the opportunity to work collaboratively on improving level crossing education.

“Level crossing safety is the rail industry’s highest safety priority. I believe this opportunity with the ATA is a positive step forward that will have wide-reaching benefits,” Mr Nye said.

“Whilst we may disagree on some transport issues, improving level crossing safety throughout Australia is a common goal for the rail and trucking industries.

“I look forward to working with the ATA to boost level crossing safety around Australia and seeing this level crossing project come to life,” Mr Nye concluded.

Continued from page 4
IN BRIEF

Update – Oil refinery incident 12 December 2008

Firefighters were called to an incident at an oil refinery in South Street at Lytton just after 2pm. Reports were received that there was a fire at the site.

Five Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) pumps, three support vehicles and two senior officers attended the incident. The plant had been shut down prior to QFRS arrival and the situation had been brought under control.

About 700 to 800 people were evacuated from the refinery and everyone has been accounted. No injuries have been reported.

QFRS are monitoring the situation while Caltex engineers examine the damaged area and render it safe.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

New WorkSafe Victoria Publications

12 December 2008

Contracted hearing service provider list
This document contains contact details for the WorkSafe contracted hearing service providers.

Hearing Services - Information for contracted and non-contracted providers
This document contains information for hearing service providers in the provision of hearing services and devices for injured workers.

Hearing Services - Fee Schedule For Contracted Providers
This document contains information and fee schedules for contracted Hearing service providers effective as at 15 December 2008.

Hearing Services - Information for Workers
This document contains information about WorkSafe’s contracted hearing service providers.

Hearing Services - Fee Schedule For Non-Contracted Providers
This document contains information

Continued from page 5

An average of 37 Australians die as a result of collisions with trains at railway crossings each year. This includes pedestrians, vehicle and train occupants.

Source: ATA/ARA

Workplace ‘Grinch’ Can Hit Employers at Christmas After-Parties Too, Say Lawyers 10 December, 2008

Businesses dreaming of trouble-free Christmas parties this year will need to take steps to reduce unsocial behaviour that can not only ruin the evening but lead to legal action and other claims after the event.

A recent survey of employers conducted by leading employment law firm Deacons found that while 97% of respondents believed their usual antidiscrimination and sexual harassment policies applied at the Christmas party, a much smaller number (61%) actually took steps to ensure employees understood what was expected of them at end of year events, with just 65% ensuring a ‘responsible manager’ would be present.

“These results are worrying, particularly given 93% of employers said they serve and pay for alcohol at the event, yet don’t take steps to mitigate the risk of unsocial or unsafe behaviour that may result from its over-use.”

“Companies need to enforce their own workplace policies at the end of year function to ensure they don’t get hit with a post-party law suit,” said Deacons workplace relations partner, David Cross.

Deacons recommends organisations adopt responsible-service-of-alcohol principles at work or work events even though they are not subject to the same legal obligations as the proprietor of a licensed bar or hotel.

“An actively promoted responsible-service-of-alcohol (RSA) policy can protect employers against personal injury claims. Unrestrained service of alcohol, on the other hand, can be determined as an ‘operable cause’ of an incident, exposing employers to litigation,” Mr Cross said.

Most respondents (89%) considered the event part of the workplace but many didn’t appear to understand that the ‘after parties’ need to be clearly separate from the end of year event. One of the more common and risky scenarios can occur when the sponsored party is over but managers attend after parties and arrange or pay for drinks for staff, thus extending the company’s sponsorship and therefore ownership of the event. 48% of respondents do not permit managers to arrange or pay for drinks, 22% do permit executive ‘shouts’ but 30% were unsure.

“This effectively extends the life--and the liability--of the employer and the vagueness of the response to this question is a concern,” said Deacons workplace relations partner, Stuart Kollmorgen. “There are cases where after parties have been considered an extension of the workplace because managers attended and provided alcohol. Employers should take precautions to limit their legal exposure in the festive season and be aware of their obligations under anti-discrimination and occupational health and safety laws.”

Free guide to remaining calm during stressful times, from Harvard Medical School 10 December 2008

BOSTON-Lately, every day seems to bring a new cause for worry- the mortgage crisis, the struggling economy, rising unemployment. And on top of all that, the holiday season (a recurring source of stress) is about to begin. This constant barrage of disturbing news and emotional hurdles can have a big impact on health.

Although you won’t find the word “stress” anywhere on the list of the 10 leading causes of death in America, many highly-regarded studies link chronic stress to ailments such as heart disease, stroke, and a weakened immune system.

“Stress doesn’t just make you feel tense and edgy, it can actually impair your health,” says Dr. Michael Miller, editor in chief of the Harvard Mental Health Letter. “Thankfully, there’s plenty we can do on our own to reduce stress in our lives.” The Harvard Medical School Portable Guide to Stress Relief, a free guide offered by Harvard Health Publications, provides helpful tips on how to start.

Continued on page 7
of a one litre container of Butyl Acrylate in a science laboratory in one of the buildings. Scientific officers are continuing to conduct air quality testing on level six of the building where the incident occurred. Air quality testing cleared all other levels of the building. Crews are using an extraction system in the laboratory on level six and are continuing to conduct air quality tests. It is not expected the building will reopen this evening.  

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Moore Park Beach (near Bundaberg) – fatality  
15 December 2008

Paramedics and firefighters responded to reports of a tractor rollover on a property on Lindeman’s Road at Moore Park Beach around 8:20am. A man was found deceased at the scene.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Gardens Point – chemical spill update  
9 December 2008

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service officers remain at the QUT Gardens Point campus this afternoon after what is believed to have been a spill of a one litre container of Butyl Acrylate in a science laboratory in one of the buildings. Scientific officers are continuing to conduct air quality testing on level six of the building where the incident occurred. Air quality testing cleared all other levels of the building. Crews are using an extraction system in the laboratory on level six and are continuing to conduct air quality tests. It is not expected the building will reopen this evening.  

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Coal Mine Safety Paper  
9 December 2008

The Discussion Paper on the Review of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002 has been released. NSW DPI is seeking public comment on the review. Public submissions close at 5pm on Tuesday 27 January 2009.


Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries

Training for new fireworks operators  
9 December 2008

Queensland is leading the way in safety training for new fireworks operators, Mines and Energy Minister Geoff Wilson said today.  

Minister Wilson said training courses for new fireworks operators would be held around Queensland in line with demand.  

The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE has been working with officers from the Department of Mines and Energy’s Explosives Inspectorate on a special training package for new operators.  

“The state’s standards for fireworks safety have been rewritten and adopted at a national level,” he said. “Licensed fireworks operators will also have to prove they can meet the new standards by June next year.”  

Mr Wilson said a number of changes had been made to make the industry safer for operators and the public.  

They include:  

• upgraded fireworks safety requirements, including the banning of metal tubes for fireworks, increasing spectator safety distances and limiting the types of
A New Workcover Prosecution Results Summary

15 December 2008

We Fix M Pty Ltd
Summary: Unsafe system of work - Non employee fatality


Source: WorkSafe Victoria

New and Improved Comcare Website

15 December 2008

Today marks the launch of the new feature-filled Comcare website. Information on the new website has been developed with the user in mind and is structured by subject, making it simpler for users to find what they are looking for, even with limited prior knowledge of Comcare.

One of the great features of the website is the Virtual Office, which offers users an interactive experience, taking them through various office environments to inform them about office hazards and ways to alleviate them.

Martin Dolan, Comcare CEO said, ‘The website’s new features are fantastic and include a redeveloped Virtual Office, a News and features section and a Contact us online enquiry form, which all help our partners provide feedback, ask questions and stay informed about what is happening in the Commonwealth OHS environment’.

‘Our website is one of our partners’ main sources of information on Comcare. As such, we have invested a lot of time into developing a website where people can easily find the information they need’.

‘I’m very excited about the launch of our new site and I’m looking forward to hearing people’s feedback, so we can continue to improve and develop the site to help our partners to achieve Australia’s Safest Workplaces’, said Mr Dolan.


Source: Comcare

Remorseful company director convicted and fined after fatality

15 December 2008

A company director and his firm have each been convicted and fined $100,000 after a worker’s death in August 2006.

It’s the first time a company director has been convicted under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and the highest penalty ever imposed on an individual under the Act.

Judge Liz Gaynor said Manumatic Industries Pty Ltd and its director Stanley Guthrie were “utterly negligent” in failing to have appropriate safety systems in place.

Frank Grima of Watsonia North died from head injuries while working near a machine that bent pipes for vehicle exhaust systems when it was inadvertently started by a co-worker. Mr Guthrie had directed Mr Grima to make several drip trays to put under the machine to catch leaking oil.

Judge Gaynor said Mr Guthrie and the company had a “grave dereliction” in their obligations, and that Mr Grima may not have died if the machine was properly guarded.

The court was told:

• a laser light curtain which would have prevented the machine starting while Mr Grima was near it was not correctly positioned;
• there was no system to ensure the machine could not be started if people were working near it,
• there was no system to warn employees who got near the machine that it might start.

The company and Mr Guthrie each pleaded guilty to workplace health and safety charges (see below). Judge Gaynor said Mr Guthrie was remorseful and that safety improvements were made after Mr Grima’s death.

WorkSafe’s Executive Director, John Merritt, said today’s sentencing reinforced the need for company directors to take active steps to ensure their workplaces were safe.

“This case should send a strong and clear message to the thousands of directors in Victoria who have a day-to-day responsibility for safety in the workplaces and the sites they control.”

Today’s sentencing follows the launch of a new WorkSafe advertising campaign yesterday. Mr Merritt said the campaign reinforced the ‘moral right’ of workers to return home safely every day.

“At this time of year when many Victorian Christmas dinners will be missing someone, this sentence and campaign are reminders that workplace injuries don’t take holidays.

“At any time, but particularly now when many workplaces are at their busiest, every business and worker has to do all they can to ensure high safety standards are applied.
Take care of young Queenslanders starting first jobs

15 December 2008

Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, John Mickel today urged employers to do the right thing with young workers starting their first jobs at this time of year. Mr Mickel said new workers should be properly trained and supervised to minimise the risk of injury or even death and they should not agree to shonky job offers that forced them to work on a trial basis or do unpaid “work experience”.

“Thousands of keen young Queenslanders will begin their first jobs over the next few weeks - some starting work full time and others commencing either part-time or casual jobs,” Mr Mickel said.

He said young people had some of the highest injury rates of any workplace group and needed more supervision than experienced people.

Each year around 50 young Queenslanders a day suffer a compensable work injury, with a young Queenslander permanently impaired every day.

In 2006-07 in Queensland, males aged 15 to 24 had the highest non-fatal injury rates at around 104 accepted workers compensation claims per 1000 workers.

“Because young people are so enthusiastic and keen to please they may jump headlong into jobs employers give them without being properly prepared,” Mr Mickel said.

Work activities that could pose particular risks for young people are: manual tasks, jobs involving noise, chemicals, electrical hazards, industrial equipment and machinery, and work on construction sites.


For advice on young people and work safety visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

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

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

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