Mobbing the entrance of the Safety In Action Conference, an estimated 200 protestors clad in helmets and safety vests heard CFMEU and AMWU leaders condemn the appearance of John Holland chairman, Janet Holmes à Court.

CFMEU Construction Division national secretary, Dave Noonan, said Ms Holmes à Court's keynote Safety In Action Conference address, Leading Workplace Safety, was inappropriate.

The construction giant has faced court action over a workplace death last year and a second, Wayne Moore, was killed two weeks before the conference at the BHP Mt Whaleback Hub project. “It is an outrage that a company with a dismal safety record is the keynote speaker at a major safety conference,” Mr Noonan said. “John Holland needs to stop talking about safety and start working with the unions to make their work sites safe.”

Safety Institute of Australia national president, Barry Silburn, defended Ms Holmes à Court’s inclusion in the conference program. “We share the same goal as the unions – to bring safety failures into the public arena and work towards preventing more deaths – so we wholeheartedly support their efforts and were pleased to see them at the conference today,” Mr Silburn said. “We certainly don’t condone the systems failures at John Holland. Janet Holmes a Court’s presentation was an opportunity to hear what’s gone wrong and of her plans to improve those systems. She acknowledged that John Holland had made mistakes and gave delegates the opportunity to learn from them.”

Source: Safety Institute of Australia – Victoria Division

31 March 2009

WORKSAFE is warning employers and workers to ensure safety standards were maintained in tough economic times or face the horrors of dozens of preventable workplace deaths each year.

Delivering the keynote address at the Safety in Action conference in Melbourne this morning, WorkSafe’s Executive Director, John Merritt said the shift in attitudes to workplace health and safety over the past decade could be threatened in the quest to cut costs.

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“WorkSafe will be quite hard and ensuring that workplaces are adapting to the changing environment that we find ourselves in.

“Our work is to ensure those economic forces are balanced by the regulatory force of our organisation. We have a long way to go and we intend to get on with it and do it properly.”

While WorkSafe would continue to provide considerable support to small and medium sized business via free safety audits by independent consultants, Mr Merritt said high risk industries and those making claims beyond industry norms would be targeted.

“We’re going to work much more closely and smarter with these organisations. We’ll be benchmarking them against their competitors and trying to get that interface between senior management, their workforce and safety systems working.”

Death and injury rates have dropped progressively for many years.

Fatalities have dropped from a high of 45 in 1998-99 to a low of 16 in 2007-08. Last financial year 16 people died. Since the start of July 2008 there have been 20 traumatic Victorian workplace fatalities and nine since 1 January – three in the past week.

Hesaidemployershadtotakeallreasonablypracticablestepstoensurethehealthandsafetyofworkers,andthemselves,wasmaintainedandthatthosemanagingworkplacehealthandsafetysystems,butwhooftenhaddotherdutiestohavetobeproperlyresourced.

“We’ve surveyed a lot of these ‘jugglers’ in the past 12 months and we find that for most of them, managing health and safety is less than 10% of their work.

“Only a third of them are trained in what they do and the majority feel that in their workplace, there isn’t the support needed to do that safety management work.

“Professionalising them, giving them access to services and consultants that they can trust is an important step forward. There are a lot of people who mean well and try their best, but the quality is patchy.”

Pointing to last year’s graphic advertising campaign which showed employees receiving shocking injuries in a bakery, restaurant and building site, Mr Merritt said they told only part of the story.

“No matter what ads we make. No matter how graphic it looks, it is not a patch on the reality of what we see and deal with. It does not even come close to the revolting reality of what happens out there.”

Source: WorkSafe Victoria

Western Australia Iron Ore’s Safety Plans

The President of BHP Billiton Iron Ore, Ian Ashby, has acknowledged that the recent safety performance within Western Australia Iron Ore was unacceptable to the business and has had an enormous impact on many lives. There have been five fatalities at the company’s operations in the Pilbara since July 2008.

“We apologise to all those affected by the events that have taken place,” Mr Ashby said. “We are deeply saddened by the deaths within our Western Australia Iron Ore business and we are doing everything we can to identify the causes and take action to prevent further tragedies.”

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Electric Shock

Paramedics attended to a 19-year-old male who suffered an electric shock around 10.15am. They were called to the scene on the Bunya Highway, Memerambi where they stabilised the patient and transported him to Kingaroy Hospital.

Source: Q’ld Dept of Emergency Services

Women in Health and Safety Network

Date: 12th May 2009
Time: 7:15am - 9:00am
Location: Eureka Tower, Level 89 7 Riverside Quay, Southbank

Following the success of the Women’s networking event in 2008 the first for 2009 has now been scheduled.

Speakers: Edie Hester – Communication Coach - “What if you could learn to let go... Unpacking the skill of professional detachment”
Sue Pennicuik - Former OHS Coordinator ACTU, Victorian Greens spokesperson for Industrial Relations - “OHS – Keeping it on the Agenda”


Speed Networking Gippsland

Date: 22nd April 2009
Time: 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Location: International Power Mitsui Loy Yang B training Rooms, Barton’s Lane Traralgon South

Guest Speaker: Ben Angel, founder of Nationwide Networking

Ben has extensive background working heavily with businesses in Melbourne delivering speed network session for the past 4 years.

ONLY $20 FOR MEMBERS

More information will be available this week at http://www.sia.org.au/surveys/survey.asp?ContainerID=speed_networking_gippsland

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www.sia.org.au
**HFESA Workshop**
Ms Stroma Lawson, the HFESA National Professional Development Officer, has organised a workshop titled “CHALLENGES FOR ARCHITECTS & ERGONOMISTS IN DESIGNING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE FUTURE” which will be held in Perth on 7 May 2009, from 1pm – 4.30pm. SIA members can earn ½ a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) point by attending this half-day seminar. For detailed information visit [http://sia.org.au/calendar/event.asp?ContentID=hfesa_challenges_architects_07_may_2009](http://sia.org.au/calendar/event.asp?ContentID=hfesa_challenges_architects_07_may_2009)

**Prosafe**
You are invited to attend PROSAFE – OPTIMISING PROCESS SAFETY PERFORMANCE, which will be conducted by marcus evans conferences, at the Rendezvous Hotel in Melbourne from 25-26 June 2009 inclusive. Dr Geoff Dell CFSIA, SIA Dean College of Fellows, has accepted an invitation to provide the opening address and participate in a case study panel discussion. This conference is supported by the SIA. As such, SIA members will be eligible to receive a 10% discount on registering, as well as earn 1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) point per day.

**New Workplace Standards Tasmania Publications**
**Workplace Issues No 53**
Contents include update from the Minister, national campaign on manual tasks, slips and trips, rescuing at height, WorkCover Advisory service, training for new inspectors, new education strategies, injury management, mine rescue, new dangerous substances legislation, electrical hazards, new licensing. Mar 2009


**Workplace Bee Sting Fatality** 1 April 2009
SafeWork SA is investigating the death of a 58 year old worker yesterday afternoon following a bee sting. The man was employed by NorthEast Civil Pty Ltd, but was on site as a contractor for the City of Burnside Council. Shortly before 3.49 yesterday afternoon, the man had entered a site in the Michael Perry Reserve on Slapes Gully Road, Burnside where work was underway clearing vegetation at Second Creek. The man's work involved removing the fallen trees and branches with heavy moving equipment. Initial inquiries indicate that during the process of moving a fallen tree, a nest of bees inside...
a hollow section was disturbed. The man was then stung and was provided first aid immediately. However he collapsed shortly afterwards and could not be revived, despite the work of SA Ambulance paramedics.

A SafeWork SA inspector arrived at the scene shortly afterwards, and issued a Prohibition Notice closing the site pending a risk assessment to determine the presence of other insect infestations. The inspector will continue inquiries today. SafeWork SA is urging employers and employees involved in outdoor work to always factor in hazards such as snakes, ants, bees and wasps during their job safety analysis and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to properly manage such hazards, such as protective clothing.

Study Results Put The Joy Back Into Staying Healthy

BOSTON—Can you have your health and enjoy yourself, too? A growing body of research suggests you can.

Never has high living looked quite so healthful as it has lately—even if it is high living on a leash. The permission to indulge in some pleasures almost always comes with a reminder about doing everything in moderation, reports the April 2009 issue of the Harvard Health Letter. Here are some not-so-guilty pleasures:

**Alcohol:** Moderate alcohol consumption protects against heart disease and stroke. Drinking increases “good” HDL cholesterol, reduces blood clotting factors, and may make blood vessels less vulnerable to atherosclerosis.

**Chocolate:** Chocolate improves blood flow through the arteries that supply the heart and the brain. There’s also evidence associating consumption of dark chocolate with lower levels of C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation.

**Coffee:** Coffee drinkers may be less likely than coffee abstainers to have heart attacks, suffer strokes, or develop diabetes. Research also suggests that a coffee habit could be good for your brain, lowering your risk of developing Parkinson’s disease, dementia, and Alzheimer’s.

**Sex:** Research has suggested that frequent sexual intercourse (twice a week) is associated with reduced heart attack risk. Sexual activity also revs up metabolism, may help regulate menstrual cycles, and gives the immune system a boost.

**Sleep:** A good night’s sleep is good for health. “Short sleepers” put on more pounds than people who sleep seven to eight hours a night. Subpar slumbering has been linked to diabetes, heart attacks, and even early death. When you stay awake for long stretches, it wreaks hormonal havoc; levels of the stress hormone cortisol go up, and your appetite gets out of whack.

**Social life:** Studies have linked social networks to good health, while social isolation and loneliness are associated with cognitive decline and high blood pressure.

AIOH Event

Ms Kerrie Burton, the AIOH Education Co-ordinator, has provided information on BASIC PRINCIPLES COURSES IN OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE in Melbourne (19-23 May 2009) and in Sydney (6-9 July 2009) SIA members will also be eligible to earn one Continuing Professional Development (CPD) point per day from attendance at these courses. Further information and registration details on these courses can be obtained from the attached brochure or by visiting http://www.aioh.org.au.


New WorkSafe Victoria Publications

**Application for Approval of Dangerous Goods Packaging Design**

Application form for the lodgement of packaging design approvals as required under Regulations 56 of the Dangerous Goods (Transport by Road and Rail) Regulations 2008 and the performance testing requirements as detailed in the Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods, by road and rail (edition 7).

**Forklifts - Developing a traffic management plan**

This is a solution for developing traffic management in workplaces that use forklifts.

**Cleaning - Floor cleaning machine guards**

This is a solution for preventing injury from floor cleaning machines.

www.sia.org.au
Australian Safety & Health Matters
The latest edition of the Safety Institute's member publication is now available.
An online version of the latest edition is available at http://digital.crowtherblayne.com.au/?xml=crowther_safety.xml

Sydney Safety Conference – Call for Papers
The Sydney Safety Conference attracts health & safety personnel from a wide range of industries. The Conference Committee is currently working on the Speaker Program and is calling for papers from industry leaders who wish to present a session on relevant issues/objectives. Papers can take the form of case studies, research, workshops, time for presentation can vary from 20 to 45 minutes. For further information please go to http://www.sia.org.au/

Food industry - Dough roller entrapment
This is a solution for preventing entrapment in a dough rolling machine.

Preventing and addressing bullying at work
This publication will assist people with duties under occupational health and safety laws (OHS laws) comply with those laws in relation to bullying at work. It provides general advice for employers and employees (including volunteers) in any job or industry.

Hospitality - Preventing cellar beverage gas leaks

WorkHealth Providers
Workhealth has released a tender for health service providers. According to the WorkHealth website:

“Health providers are important partners in the delivery of the WorkHealth initiative and will provide the opportunity to help deliver programs to workplaces throughout Victoria.
Their participation will be guided by standards that ensure consistency and best practice service delivery.
Registrations of interest from potential service providers who seek to become Endorsed Service Providers of worker health checks are now open. Parties interested in participating in this ROI process should:
Go the Victorian Government Tenders website at www.tenders.vic.gov.au Search for Tender no. HC098
Complete and lodge the ROI documentation with WorkSafe before 2.00pm (AEST) on Wednesday 15 April 2009”
Source: WorkHealth

New WorkSafe WA publication
Power Take-Off Guarding
This guide can be downloaded at http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe/PDF/Bulletins/Power_take_off_guarding.pdf

WorkCoverSA Releases Half-year Results
30 March 2009
WorkCoverSA has reported a $51 million improvement in claims management performance, which has been swamped by the impact of the global economic crisis, with a net loss of $313 million for the half-year to 31 December 2008, resulting in the unfunded liability increasing to $1.3 billion.
The figures have been confirmed today with the receipt by the WorkCover Board of the Scheme’s six monthly actuarial report.
The position at December, with the Scheme now 51.7% funded, compares to an unfunded liability of $984 million at 30 June 2008, when the Scheme was 63.4% funded.
WorkCover CEO Julia Davison said the last two actuarial valuations show that claims management performance has contributed to a claims liability reduction of approximately $68m in June 2008 and $51m in December 2008 compared to projections, before adjusting for changes in economic circumstances.
“There is still a way to go, but with the ongoing implementation of the legislative changes and a continued focus on improved claims management and return to work, we are confident we will see further improvement in the future”, Ms Davison said.
Ms Davison said the global crisis is, as expected, taking its toll.
“In the last six months stock markets have declined, investors have experienced significant losses, and interest rates have fallen significantly,” she said
“Like all investors, WorkCover has been hit hard by the global financial downturn experiencing an investment loss of $149m in the six months to December 2008.”
WorkCover’s results are also impacted by changes in interest rates. In the half-year to 31 December 2008, economic factors (primarily changes in interest rates and inflation assumptions) have negatively impacted on the Scheme’s liabilities by $188m.
Letters to the Editor

If you have any safety issues to discuss, or concerns about SafetyWeek itself, please consider communicating with the Editor through natadmin@sia.org.au

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“While interest rate reductions are good news for home buyers, they have the opposite effect on our Scheme as they lead to an increase in our claims liability,” Ms Davison said.

As at 31 December 2008, WorkCover’s levy revenue was on target, however softening economic conditions may have an impact on future revenue.

After extensive consideration of the factors that impact on the financial position of the Scheme, the WorkCover Board has today maintained the average levy rate for 2009-10 at 3.00%.

Ms Davison said this takes into account the significant downturn in world financial markets, coupled with the heavy impact on the Scheme of a reduction in interest rates.

“These factors reflect an economic environment far different from that which existed at the time the Government announced its aim to reduce the levy rate to 2.75%.

“The decision to keep the levy rate at 3.00% was not made lightly. The Board is mindful of the impact on employers. It is the view of the Board, however, that all players in the Scheme – workers, employers and providers – must work together to improve the overall performance of the Scheme”.

Source: WorkCover SA

Financial performance 6 months to 31 December 2008

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While on administrative matters, it is worth reiterating that the publishers have no access to SIA member details. The PDF file is distributed through the SIA Secretariat.