'Return' to work

This edition’s feature article is about safe steps to return to work. That’s the correct terminology for some, while for others it’s about returning to your historically normal workplace after many weeks living what once might have been the dream of working from home – and which for some has been something of a nightmare.

Now at the end of phase one – locking down to flatten the curve – we now begin to enter phase two – living with COVID-19, seeking a sustainable balance between functional industry and the management of virus outbreaks. This second phase may last a year or it may never end, but either way, the profession must adapt, acquire new learnings and share them quickly, and take a lead role in achieving the sustainable management of COVID-19 that we are all seeking.

Workplaces WILL be sources of outbreaks. Profit motive WILL be as strong- or stronger - than ever. Your roles WILL matter more than ever, and now, your voice will potentially be heard more clearly than ever. So, being excellent at the work of health and safety has never mattered more. Make sure you’re connected to others, and have your ears open, listening and learning what you need to in order to get your job done well. Speak up an out when you need to.

Also, have a great week.

David Clarke

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INDUSTRY NEWS
What steps are organisations taking to return to work safely?

Safely returning to the workplace after the coronavirus pandemic and monitoring the ongoing health and safety of employees requires collecting an unprecedented amount of employee data, particularly employee health information, according to Gartner.

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Safe Work Australia issues new COVID-19 WHS industry guidance

Safe Work Australia has released a new range of WHS guidance and tools that Australian workplaces can use to help manage health and safety risks posed by COVID-19.

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How OHS professionals can use influence tactics to get what they need?

There has been much debate recently about what OHS professionals should do to best improve OHS outcomes given the constraints of the organisational structures they work in, according to The University of Queensland.

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How Aroona Alliance increased productivity and decreased its TRIFR by 79%

West Australian water utility company Aroona Alliance has been through a significant organisational transformation which has streamlined costs, improved safety outcomes and increased productivity.

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Safety alert issued over alcohol-based hand sanitiser fire hazards

A safety alert has been issued about the risks associated with highly flammable substances being used to meet the increased demand for hand sanitiser.

Changes to medical examinations and health monitoring due to COVID-19

WorkSafe Victoria recently issued a safety alert regarding changes to the availability of spirometry testing which may impact health monitoring for those working with hazardous substances (such as crystalline silica and isocyanates) and medical examinations in the asbestos removal industry.
Safety alert issued over fake P2 disposable respirators

SafeWork NSW recently issued a safety alert regarding fake respiratory protective equipment (RPE) entering the Australian market.

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Safety warning issued over fibreglass ladder failure

Workplace Health & Safety Queensland (WHSQ) recently issued a safety alert highlighting the potential for degradation of fibreglass ladders that can lead to a structural failure.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Join us from Monday 1 June - 5 June 2020 for the inaugural Australian Workplace Health & Safety Awards. During this week-long celebration of excellence, the awards will provide national recognition to organisations and individuals who are demonstrating excellence and innovation in the field of Workplace Health & Safety. The awards are being presented virtually and attendance free.

Learn More
Inghams Enterprises enters into $499,000 enforceable undertaking

Inghams Enterprises recently entered into a $499,000 enforceable undertaking over a 2016 incident in which a worker was injured at its Prestons site in NSW.

Alice Springs fuel company fined $140,000 for employee’s death

Fuel company Indervon Pty Ltd was recently convicted and fined $140,000 over failing to provide adequate training, instruction and supervision, which lead to the death of one of its drivers.

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Orora Limited Enters Into $340,540 Enforceable Undertaking

Orora Limited (parent company of Orora Packaging Solutions) recently entered into an enforceable undertaking with a total expenditure of $340,540 following a 2015 incident in which a worker was injured while operating a bale press.

QLD business and its director fined $42,500 for unsafe electrical practices

A Queensland concreting business and its sole director have been fined $42,500 for unsafe electrical practices, exposing people to risk of serious injury or death.