Workplace bullying
The impact of Brodie’s Law

Sun protection
Covering up to reduce cancer

Profile
Safe Work Australia’s CEO Rex Hoy

News • Letters • Events • Q&A
20

Sun protection
Australia has one of the world’s highest rates of skin cancer, but OHS professionals can make a difference in the workplace

16

Cover story
The recent introduction of Brodie’s Law in Victoria has put the spotlight on workplace bullying in Australia

26

Height safety report
Working at heights, particularly when relying on harness-based methods, is rarely as simple as it seems

12

Profile
Rex Hoy, CEO of Safe Work Australia, talks about his greatest professional achievements, challenges and goals

Features

Regulars
4 Editorial note
8 Letters to the editor
10 News
14 Q&A
30 Book review

contents
Addressing the big issues

Workplace bullying has recently received increased attention, not least as a result of changes to legislation. However, prosecutions and the sad consequences of some bullying cases have attracted significant levels of publicity and focussed the professional if not the public interest.

Our member Paul Breslin (see page 14) has been following the development of workplace bullying as an issue with interest and reports that in Australia 3.5 per cent of the working population is bullied, and the average cost of serious bullying is $20,000 per employee. When all costs including absenteeism, labour turnover, loss of productivity and legal costs are included the true bill could be between $6 billion and $36 billion a year. Of course it is probable that there is a high degree of under-reporting and this makes estimation of the size of the problem difficult.

Workplace bullying and other issues that have recently drawn an increasing focus were not front-of-mind at the time of writing the first National OHS Strategy published in 2002. In the last 10 years our understanding of such issues and the relationship between work and our non-work lives has increased and our ability to apply appropriate risk controls strategies have developed.

However, the necessary blurring of the lines means that ownership of the issues is less clear and we must hone our skills at influencing and collaborating with our HR colleagues who may believe that they have sole ownership. That is not to say that that we have not always had to possess the skills necessary to influence other professionals and workplace parties; after all, the very nature of a transdisciplinary profession demands this. We do however, need to adapt.

In the last edition of OHS Professional Peta Miller outlined the processes that are being employed in the development of the next National Strategy. Naturally this very important work is currently overshadowed by the more pressing demands of the harmonised legislation, but the two are very closely linked of course; each influencing the other. Therefore we should not ignore or forget the national strategy work and opportunities to participate in workshops around the country are currently open.

I would like to think that while the next strategy will embrace emerging issues and contemporary approaches to risk management, we will not lose sight of issues previously identified in the strategy. I often hear people commenting on the extent to which we have moved forward in health and safety and moved beyond “traditional hazards”. If this was the case I wonder why we continue to see fatal crushing in machinery, tractor roll-overs and horrific amputations and maiming. In my hygiene work I get an even stronger sense that the control of airborne contaminants has not progressed nearly as far as it should and we remain focussed on acute injury to the expense of chronic hazardous-substance related disease.

As we attend the workshops or otherwise contribute to the development of the national strategy our challenge is to embrace the new and forward thinking needed while not losing any momentum we have in built in “traditional areas”.

Dr Steve Cowley, FSIA, SIA National Publications, Editor

For more member information, visit www.sia.org.au
Workplace bullying has recently received increased attention, not least as a result of changes to legislation. However, prosecutions and the sad consequences of some bullying cases have attracted significant levels of publicity and focussed the professional if not the public interest.

Our member Paul Breslin (see page 14) has been following the development of workplace bullying as an issue with interest and reports that in Australia 3.5 per cent of the working population is bullied, and the average cost of serious bullying is $20,000 per employee. When all costs including absenteeism, labour turnover, loss of productivity and legal costs are included the true bill could be between $6 billion and $36 billion a year. Of course it is probable that there is a high degree of under-reporting and this makes estimation of the size of the problem difficult.

Workplace bullying and other issues that have recently drawn an increasing focus were not front-of-mind at the time of writing the first National OHS Strategy published in 2002. In the last 10 years our understanding of such issues and the relationship between work and our non-work lives has increased and our ability to apply appropriate risk controls strategies have developed.

However, the necessary blurring of the lines means that ownership of the issues is less clear and we must hone our skills at influencing and collaborating with our HR colleagues who may believe that they have sole ownership. That is not to say that that we have not always had to possess the skills necessary to influence other professionals and workplace parties; after all, the very nature of a transdisciplinary profession demands this. We do however, need to adapt.

In the last edition of OHS Professional Peta Miller outlined the processes that are being employed in the development of the next National Strategy. Naturally this very important work is currently overshadowed by the more pressing demands of the harmonised legislation, but the two are very closely linked of course; each influencing the other. Therefore we should not ignore or forget the national strategy work and opportunities to participate in workshops around the country are currently open.

I would like to think that while the next strategy will embrace emerging issues and contemporary approaches to risk management, we will not lose sight of issues previously identified in the strategy. I often hear people commenting on the extent to which we have moved forward in health and safety and moved beyond "traditional hazards". If this was the case I wonder why we continue to see fatal crushing in machinery, tractor roll-overs and horrific amputations and maiming. In my hygiene work I get an even stronger sense that the control of airborne contaminants has not progressed nearly as far as it should and we remain focussed on acute injury to the expense of chronic hazardous-substance related disease.

As we attend the workshops or otherwise contribute to the development of the national strategy our challenge is to embrace the new and forward thinking needed while not losing any momentum we have in built in "traditional areas".

Dr Steve Cowley, FSIA, SIA National Publications, Editor
Boosting the voice of safety and health professionals

In the last edition of *OHS Professional*, I provided advice on the welcomed formation of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board as one of the major outcomes from the HaSPA-supported OHS Body of Knowledge Project. The SIA was pleased to host the inaugural meeting of this Board at our National Office on 18 August. The other major outcomes from the OHS Body of Knowledge Project will be the OHS Body of Knowledge itself, and its impact on OHS Professional Certification.

On the international scene, a most exciting global collaborative effort by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), resulted in the launch, on 13 June 2011, of the Centre for Safety and Health Sustainability, during the ASSE’s Safety 2011 Professional Development Conference in Chicago.

Tony Mitchell CPMSIA, Deputy Chair SIA Ltd Board, represented the institute at this launch and confirmed the SIA’s commitment to assist and support, wherever possible, this much needed global initiative.

This centre is an organisational stakeholder of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), a network-based organisation that pioneered the world’s most widely-used sustainability reporting framework. GRI’s vast experience in sustainability reporting and its existing network of stakeholders will allow the centre to work towards a standardised framework for measurement and reporting safety and health sustainability/CSR performance.

The case for safety and health as an integral part of sustainability is compelling. Every year more than 2 million people die from occupational accidents or work-related diseases, and there are several million more cases of non-fatal occupational accidents and diseases.

The Centre for Safety and Health Sustainability was developed in response, and will provide safety and health professionals with a stronger voice in shaping sustainability policies – both in business and public policy.

To find out more about this Centre and its Vision and Goals, visit www.centershs.org.

Gary Lawson-Smith, CEO, Safety Institute of Australia

CEO message

“The case for safety and health as an integral part of sustainability is compelling”

WORK, HEALTH & SAFETY

New national Work, Health and Safety laws are here from 1 January 2012

Are you ready for the changes?

Do you know what it means for you?

Of if you want to OHS-proof your organisation…

we can tailor the right training and program for you.

FutureSkills

Call 1300 817 545

www.futureskills.asn.au
In the last edition of OHS Professional, I provided advice on the welcomed formation of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board as one of the major outcomes from the HaSPA-supported OHS Body of Knowledge Project. The SIA was pleased to host the inaugural meeting of this Board at our National Office on 18 August. The other major outcomes from the OHS Body of Knowledge Project will be the OHS Body of Knowledge itself; and its impact on OHS Professional Certification.

On the international scene, a most exciting global collaborative effort by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), resulted in the launch, on 13 June 2011, of the Centre for Safety and Health Sustainability, during the ASSE's Safety 2011 Professional Development Conference in Chicago.

Tony Mitchell CPMSIA, Deputy Chair SIA Ltd Board, represented the institute at this launch and confirmed the SIA's commitment to assist and support, wherever possible, this much needed global initiative.

Boosting the voice of safety and health professionals

CEO message

"The case for safety and health as an integral part of sustainability is compelling"
Knowledge versus common sense

Bary Sherriff has responded to Warren Mills (letters, March 2011) with respect to an interpretation of the meaning of “common sense” versus reasonably practicable and therefore I shall not comment further on the subject in general. However, I feel I must respond to the specific comment on panel shop operators used to exemplify the concept of “common knowledge” in Warren Mills’ letter in the June edition of OHS Professional.

Warren suggests that among panel shop owners the harmful effects of isocyanates is “common knowledge”. I do not agree with this assertion and believe it is a great example of why “common sense” is not a useful concept to be discussing in contemporary OHS.

A few years ago I had an opportunity to undertake a survey of Motor Vehicle Repair (MVR) shop operators in Victoria. My specific interest was in the knowledge of and attitudes towards the risks associated with exposure of their employees to airborne isocyanates during spray painting.

I undertook a telephone survey of 50 MVR operators and visited 14 repair shops in Melbourne and a non-metropolitan city. The semi-structured interviews undertaken revealed much about risk perception and risk management, including spray booth and airline supplied respiratory protection usage. Critically, while spraying paints in the open repair shop results in a high risk of exposure, only 80 per cent reported that their spray painters always used a spray booth when spraying isocyanate paints (several did not even possess a booth). Only 73 per cent reported that their spray painters always use respiratory protection when spraying. Only 70 per cent of the sample made airline supplied respiratory protection available of which only 40 per cent reported that their painters always used it. 60 per cent of the sample did not agree with the assertion that air supplied respiratory protection was necessary.

While only 60 per cent agreed that isocyanates can cause lung damage, more concerning is that only 45 per cent appeared to know that isocyanates cause asthma. This last finding is extremely important; when combined with other responses to questions posed during the interviews it suggests that while many MVR operators are concerned about the chronic effects of chemical exposure less than half are aware of the acute effects i.e. asthma.

In small businesses such as these the operators are generally very concerned about the health of their employees but business survival is paramount. When I educated the MVR operators about the nature of asthma and sensitisation the perception of risk changed; exposure to isocyanates can result in sensitisation and asthmatic response on subsequent exposure to very low concentrations of the material. A sensitised painter will be unable to continue work in the industry i.e. to the business operator, sensitisation means loss of the spray painter and consequently there is a risk to the survival of the business.

My entire sample was drawn from the membership of the relevant industry association and, given that one would expect this group to be better supplied with information than non-members, the implications are significant.

Thus, I believe the example of MVR operators’ knowledge of the risk associated with exposure to isocyanate serves as an excellent illustration of the difference between common sense and common knowledge. There is not “profound knowledge” in these workplaces or within the industry; an understanding of the aetiology of isocyanate-induced asthma and the significance to the business of the acute risk versus the mis-perceived chronic risk and thus the importance of 100 per cent usage of spray booths and air-supplied RPE is quite understandably beyond what one might expect MVR operators to know.

As professionals we must not assume that people understand risk implicitly and know how to manage that risk. We need to determine the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes and respond to those with information and messages that will sell the good practice to the audience.

Steve Cowley FSIA

Putting sense into zero harm

In response to Rod Kison’s letter, Standing up for zero harm (letters, March 2011), I agree that all employers should seek to do the least harm to its employees as possible. However, organisations that take this philosophy and entrench it into sets of measures and expectations within a business create more risk than benefit. The issues that sit around safety today are the development of capability at all levels of the chain of command, the integrity of the safety system and the movement away from lag indicator measures to lead indicator measures built upon competency.

Where zero harm becomes a goal built upon the false assumption that all injuries are preventable – it will not be believed by employees, it will not deliver safety, it will disengage the workers from the organisation and will fall, like so many other fashionable mantras, into the category of myth and be lost. Legislation acknowledges that all injuries are not preventable by proposing a test of reasonable practicability.

I applaud your and other safety professional’s desire to reduce the number of injuries and illnesses in a workplace to zero. It is both commendable and a wonderful vision. However, safety needs capability, systems, appropriate measuring and dedicated resources. It needs to be built upon the precept that all injuries can’t be prevented. Like you, I want all employers to strive for zero harm – I just don’t want them building meaningless infrastructure and hyperbole upon the concept.

Andrew Douglas, Principal, MacPherson+Kelley Lawyers
Knowledge versus common sense

A recent letter in the June edition of OHS Professional, highlighted that modern OHS professionals are moving away from lag indicator measures and focusing more on lead indicators to be proactive in OHS management. This movement towards proactive care and safety among employees now requires process improvement and the involvement of employees in their own safety. At the same time, constant exposure to risk can contribute to both short- and long-term effects on health, which is particularly concerning in the workplace. In the manufacturing industry, in particular, the impacts of workplace injuries are not just an issue for the company but can also have significant consequences for the employees involved.

One area of particular interest is workplace exposures to hazardous substances, in particular, chemicals and isocyanates. The acute effects of isocyanates on the human body can be severe, with respiratory tract irritation being a common concern. However, the long-term effects of exposure to isocyanates, including lung damage, are also concerning. The challenge is to balance the potential risks associated with exposure to isocyanates with the benefits of using these substances in workplaces.

The semi-structured interviews undertaken revealed much about the risks associated with exposure of their employees to airborne isocyanates during spray painting. The results showed that while 60 per cent of the sample reported that isocyanates can cause lung damage, only 45 per cent appeared to understand the protection was necessary. Moreover, 60 per cent of the sample reported that their painters always used it. Only 70 per cent of the sample made airline supplied spraying. Only 73 per cent reported that their spray painters always used a spray booth when spraying isocyanate paints. Exposing employees to isocyanates and not providing adequate protection can have severe consequences for their health and safety.

The risks associated with exposure to isocyanates are significant, and it is important to ensure that employees are aware of the potential health effects and are provided with adequate protective measures. Employers must prioritize the health and safety of their employees and implement strategies to minimize exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace. This includes providing regular training and education on the risks associated with chemical exposure, ensuring that employees understand the importance of protective equipment, and implementing policies to monitor and control workplace exposure.

As professionals, we must not assume that people understand the risks associated with isocyanates. We need to determine the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes and understand risk implicitly and know how to manage that risk. The leading discussion forums on each of the above qualifications and we enrol many thousands of Learners each year. We have 4 assessment centres to assist our Learners through the complex and demanding qualifications we offer. If you would like to chat about what we do, call our national call centre or simply order an information pack direct from our website.
Corporate leaders fail to learn from OHS disasters

While the past two years have been marred by some of the worst safety disasters in industrial history, there is little evidence to suggest that lessons from these disasters are being translated into constructive, concrete initiatives, according to a leading OHS lawyer. Fukushima, Pike River, Deepwater Horizon, West Virginia and Montara all share the dubious honour of being the worst disasters in their categories, yet despite their geographical dispersion, they have a great deal in common, said Norton Rose partner Michael Tooma. “Corporate leaders may be overlooking more basic lessons from these disasters that are a pre-requisite to implementing the leadership learnings,” he said.

Lessons from the Montara well blowout

A prevailing attitude of “forging ahead regardless” combined with a poor understanding and management of the hazards inherent in the drilling process were key contributors to the blowout of the Montara H1 well in the Timor Sea in 2009, a recent paper has found. There were significant management and system deficiencies in understanding of the need for multiple barriers, management and technical supervision, integrity assurance and the use of risk assessments in the drilling process, the paper said.

Written by Dr Jan Hayes, senior research fellow in the school of sociology at The Australian National University, the paper said these deficiencies could be put down to both those operating the well onsite as well as those in onshore technical and management positions.

Housing industry calls for moratorium on OHS harmonisation

The Housing Industry Association (HIA) recently called for a moratorium on draft national model occupational health and safety laws. “State and Territory Governments need to consider the impact of the new occupational health and safety laws on the residential building industry before rushing to adopt and implement the changes,” said HIA chief executive, Graham Wolfe. He said the model Work Health and Safety laws would overly complicate work procedures, scheduling, onsite coordination and off site administration, and add extra costs for both the design and construction of new homes.

Poor safety costs shareholder profits

Companies lose up to 10 per cent of their annual turnover as a result of poor occupational health, safety and environment (OHSE) performance, according to a leading safety academic. “It can happen pretty darn quickly,” said Professor Patrick Hudson, based at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. “If you lose 3 per cent on payroll, 3 per cent on underutilised plant and equipment, 3 per cent on lost production, and factor in 1 per cent for luck, this is how it would typically add up.” Hudson said poor safety cultures are destroying shareholder value because an extra 10 per cent is typically what shareholders might expect in profits.

Victoria: Anti-bullying laws come into force

Employers in Victoria should review their bullying and harassment policies and processes following the passing of The Crimes Amendment (Bullying)
Bill 2011 – also known as Brodies’ Law, according to law firm Norton Rose. Employers should also provide refresher training to staff on bullying and appropriate workplace behavior and ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place to deal with bullying complaints, said Norton Rose partners Sarah Ralph and Mike Hammond. The amendments brought in with the passing of the Bill are significant because they “extend the circumstances of stalking to include, what we euphemistically and often confusingly term, ‘bullying’,” said Ralph and Hammond in a legal update on the issue. See page 24 of this issue for our cover story on workplace bullying.

Mental stress claims on the rise

There has been a 54 per cent increase in mental stress claims, as a proportion of total accepted claims, since 2006-07, according to Comcare research. While injury claims have fallen over the same period, Comcare said it was concerned about the growing number of mental stress claims. Poor health caused by job stress is fast becoming one of the biggest threats to health and safety in the workplace, said Comcare’s work health and safety general manager, Neil Quarmby. “Clearly this trend could have serious consequences for employees and employers through serious health issues and a significant loss in productivity,” he said. “I am keen that employers get the message that health and safety at work is not only a physical issue but also increasingly involves mental health as well.”

Put safety first. Keep in touch. Up to 10km.

Now you can keep your team in touch wherever they are in the workplace and have the benefit of instant communication in the event of an emergency. With a range of up to 10 km, EnGenius, from Aristel is Australia’s longest range cordless phone system. An Engenius system can operate any number of portable handsets from 1 to 90, and can be expanded as needs arise. EnGenius connects to your PBX system, so calls can be directed to individuals, not desks. Rugged and durable EnGenius offers handset-to-handset calling, SMS, caller ID and much more. There’s even a one-touch Broadcast function for instant contact with all handsets should an emergency arise.

Contact Aristel today for more information. Freecall 1800 00 21 33 or www.aristel.com.au
Safe work: leading from the top

Craig Donaldson speaks with Rex Hoy, CEO of Safe Work Australia, about his greatest professional achievements, challenges and goals

What would you say are your drivers in contributing to the OHS profession?
I believe that workplace health and safety is one of the most important issues facing the Australian workforce today. One of my key drivers both professionally and personally is to help make a significant and real difference in the working lives of all Australians, through the improvement of health and safety in the workplace.

One of the ways in which we are achieving real improvement is through the harmonisation of work health and safety laws across the country. All Australian workers should be entitled to the same work health and safety standards, no matter which state or territory they work in. Now, for the first time, governments in each state and territory and the Commonwealth have formally committed to the harmonisation of work health and safety laws. Our goal is to see the same work health and safety protections provided to all Australian workers.

What is your greatest professional achievement in OHS?
I have been very fortunate to be involved in several projects which have helped to provide real progress in workplace health and safety in Australia. I would see some of my key achievements as establishing Safe Work Australia as a statutory agency, and leading the development of the harmonisation of work health and safety laws across the nation.

What is your greatest professional challenge in the OHS field?
Perhaps one of the greatest challenges I see in our role as educators in workplace health and safety is getting CEOs and other heads of business to step back from their core function and look closely at health and safety within their businesses.

What is your greatest professional experience?
I was very fortunate to work for several years in Papua New Guinea as a Deputy Secretary assigned to the PNG Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council. This opportunity came about under the PNG-Australia Enhanced Cooperation Program and provided me with a fascinating insight into PNG and the inner workings of the country’s political and parliamentary process and the national public service. Living in another country for an extended period of time and seeing the work health and safety standards employed there also gave me more appreciation for our Australian system, both the areas that we do well and those that we could do better on.

How would you evaluate the state of the OHS profession in Australia?
Work health and safety has made significant progress during the past decade and we have made a great deal of progress in achieving a real and lasting difference to the working conditions of Australians. However, there is still a long way to go. The harmonisation of work health and safety laws will make a real difference to work health and safety in this country and will enable work health and safety professionals to work nationally with a consistent set of laws. This is probably the most significant change to work health and safety in the past 30 years and work health and safety professionals wanting to take their profession to the next level should be committing to this process and actively working to implement these laws in their workplace.

The other real difference work health and safety professionals can make is to get involved in the development of the new national strategy for work health and safety. This document will shape workplace safety in Australia in the coming years – it’s a rare opportunity to help develop health and safety policy from its very inception.
HIGH RISK OHS SUMMIT 2012

The latest developments in legislation & best practice initiatives

13th-15th February II Hilton on the Park Melbourne

REGISTER NOW

T: +61 2 8908 8555

GET a comprehensive update on WHS legislation - where it is now and where it is going

UPDATE your knowledge of health, safety and psychological risk prevention and management

NETWORK with industry peers from across Australia

HEAR from experts in their field, OHS practitioners and government representatives

BENEFIT from post conference workshops focusing on the WHS Act and managing psychological & communication issues

EXHIBITION & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES contact

PETER SPANOS
T: +61 2 8908 8515
E: peter@acevents.com.au

REGISTER NOW

T: +61 2 8908 8555

Julia Collins
Director,
Model Legislation Branch
Safe Work Australia

Prof. Niki Ellis
CEO
The Institute of Safety,
Compensation & Recovery Research

Kitchie Green
Head of OHSR
The Reed Group

Dr. Peta Miller
Director of Research
Safe Work Australia

Skip Fulton
Safety & Quality Advisor
Virgin Australia Safety Systems

Teri Lillington
Manager,
Shell Health Oceania
The Shell Company of Australia

Organised by

EXHIBITION & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES contact

PETER SPANOS
T: +61 2 8908 8515
E: peter@acevents.com.au

Register by 30th September & SAVE up to $400

Register by 30th September & SAVE up to $400

Register by 30th September & SAVE up to $400

Register by 30th September & SAVE up to $400
What to do about workplace bullying?

PAUL BRESLIN, regional OHSE manager
Victoria/South Australia, Brookfield
Multiplex Constructions

Q: Do you think that the recent publicity and changes to the legislation will make a difference to the perceptions around bullying?
A: There is absolutely no doubt that the recent publicity and changes to the Victorian legislation will make a difference to the perceptions around bullying.

Bullying and occupational violence are now recognised as occupational health and safety hazards in the Australian workplace. The impact of workplace bullying and harassment can have a serious effect on the victim, possibly resulting in psychological health effects or physical injury.

There has been a significant rise in the number of reports of workplace bullying since the beginning of the 1990s. This could be due to either an increase in bullying behaviour or that workers are now aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour and are willing to report it.

The perpetrators that carry out workplace bullying should stop and think about how they would feel if a member of their own family was to suffer this terrible abuse.

Q: Is bullying something that has registered with people as an OHS issue in your workplace?
A: Is imperative that employers consult with their employees, workplace health and safety representatives, health and safety officers, the safety committees and unions when developing strategies for preventing and dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Senior management should lead by example and clearly demonstrate to their employees that they are serious about preventing and eliminating workplace bullying. They should implement strategies for creating awareness, intervention and prevention of workplace bullying.

Moving a bully from one team to another is not a solution, as the bully will eventually find a new victim in the new surroundings. Employers should provide coaching, offer counselling, issue written warnings, and eventually if there’s no improvement, terminate the bully’s employment before other employees offer their resignations.

JOSH BORNSTEIN, principal employment and industrial law, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

Q: Do you think that the recent publicity and changes to the legislation will make a difference to the perceptions around bullying?
A: Cases of workplace bullying are generating more attention as workers are now becoming better informed about their rights to go to work and do their job without fear and harassment.

Brodie’s Law is well intentioned but flawed. Whilst I agree that criminalising bullying sends a strong signal to the community, criminal laws will only be invoked in the most extreme cases. There simply aren’t enough police resources to deal with most cases of workplace bullying.

Secondly, a criminal prosecution will invariably occur well after the damage has been done. This is not good enough. Employees should be given quick and ready access to a tribunal or court that can pre-empt or stop workplace bullying before it causes damage to a person’s health. Victims of bullying need access to a user friendly court process that allows them to stop bullying before real damage is done.

Q: Is bullying something that has registered with people as an OHS issue in your workplace?
A: Yes. As more employees are empowered to act against bullying the workplace, we are seeing more and more cases of people standing up to protect themselves.

While there is a major personal cost to the victim of bullying, employers may be faced with significant legal action and other costs of retraining or recruiting new staff in the event that a worker leaves their employment.

One of my current cases involves a woman who was continually bullied and harassed while working as an air traffic controller. This is the type of job one would expect that employers would ensure that employees are content at work. Air traffic controllers work in a stressful and high pressure field and they need to be focused on the task in front of them, not contending with taunts and abuse from their boss.
The world's most complete FR layering system.

*Polartec® Thermal FR® over Polartec® Power Dry® FR vs FR cotton sweatshirt over FR cotton shirt.

Thanks to 50 years of R&D experience developing high performance layering systems for the top brands in the outdoor industry and the U.S. military, Polartec® can offer the most sophisticated flame resistant fabrics on the market today. See for yourself at Booth 2453.

17 FR patents and counting
45% more breathable*
38% lighter*
4X more stretch*
4X warmer*

*Polartec® Thermal FR® over Polartec® Power Dry® FR vs FR cotton sweatshirt over FR cotton shirt

Polartec® is a registered trademark of Polartec, LLC. ©Polartec 2011

POLARTEC.COM

Proudly and exclusively distributed in Australia and New Zealand by Charles Parsons Pty Ltd.
www.charlesparsons.com.au

Call Australia: 1300 147 887
New Zealand: 0508 874 664

CHARLES PARSONS
Technical
Est. 1915
$36 billion: Bullying costs the Australian economy up to $36 billion annually.

“Organisational climate is the leading indicator of bullying levels in organisations and can affect how much of an impact bullying has on workers when it does occur.”

Michelle Tuckey, senior lecturer, University of South Australia
Workplace bullying has been called the cancer of the workplace. Figures published in 2010 by the Productivity Commission indicate that bullying costs the Australian economy up to $36 billion annually. Nearly all workers will have to deal with bullying behaviour directed towards them at some time in their working lives.

Workplace bullying has emerged as a serious issue for Australian employers, with greater media attention on incidents of workplace bullying as more victims start to come forward, according to Maurice Baroni, partner, and Millen Lo, senior associate, in the national Clayton Utz Workplace Relations and Safety practice. The introduction of Brodie’s Law in Victoria, for example, following a tragic case of workplace bullying involving a teenage girl, underlines the heightened focus on bullying as a serious workplace issue. In Victoria, for example, they note that reports of workplace bullying are on the rise. “Last year, WorkSafe reported receiving around 30 phone calls a day relating to workplace bullying,” according to Baroni and Lo.

Michelle Tuckey, senior lecturer in the school of psychology, social work and social policy at the University of South Australia, notes that up to 10 per cent of workers at any one time report being the target of severe levels of bullying – daily or weekly for more than six months.

“Our recent work at the University of South Australia reveals that organisational climate is the leading indicator of bullying levels in organisations and can affect how much of an impact bullying has on workers when it does occur,” she says. “When workers feel that their mental and emotional wellbeing is a priority for the organisation – and not just production goals or core business – then bullying levels in the organisation are much lower and the negative effects, such as traumatic stress symptoms, emotional distress and emotional exhaustion, are less severe.”

The impact of Brodie’s Law

This amendment to the criminal offence of stalking in Victoria has attracted public attention to inappropriate conduct in the workplace – which is a good outcome, according to Siobhan Flores-Walsh, special counsel in the occupational health, safety and security group at Norton Rose.

However, she notes that Brodie’s Law has also added a further level of complication to dealing with bullying in a workplace environment. “Brodie’s Law is a mainstream criminal law, which means that the police will need to lay charges for the offence in the first place. Convicting a person for this offence requires the criminal standard of proof to be met,” she says.

“Accordingly, Brodie’s Law may not be the most effective way to tackle inappropriate workplace behaviour, particularly when the behaviour would need to be quite extreme to come within the ambit of this law. It may be that pursuing a civil remedy, requiring a lower standard of proof and not entailing a criminal penalty against the alleged perpetrator, would offer a more satisfactory result.”

Josh Bomstein, principal at Maurice Blackburn, believes that the legislation is well intentioned, but flawed. “Whilst I agree that criminalising bullying sends a strong signal to the community, criminal laws will only be invoked in the most extreme cases. There simply aren’t enough police resources to deal with most cases of workplace bullying,” he observes.

Secondly, a criminal prosecution will invariably occur well after the damage has been done. “This is not good enough. Employees should be given quick and ready access to a tribunal or court that can pre-empt or stop workplace bullying before it causes damage to a person’s health,” says Bomstein, who affirms that victims of bullying need access to a user-friendly court process that allows them to stop bullying before real damage is done.

Tackling bullying in the workplace

Initially, Brodie’s Law may have some deterrent effect, although Flores-Walsh says it is questionable whether the legislation will actually deter workplace bullying. “It might be that the publicity associated with the legislation will make some people pause; however, the legislation simply extends the definition of stalking and has been drafted to capture fairly extreme conduct, not the more common types of bullying,” she says.

“It’s doubtful that these types of laws making bullying and
“Brodie’s Law may not be the most effective way to tackle inappropriate workplace behaviour”

Siobhan Flores-Walsh, special counsel in the OHSS group at Norton Rose

harassment a serious offence will have a long-term deterrent effect if they are not enforced consistently. We may see a cultural adjustment within the wider community in terms of the type of behaviour that is deemed to be unacceptable.”

The University of South Australia’s Tuckey believes that addressing bullying at work needs to start by building a culture that values mental and emotional health at work and then implementing policies, procedures and especially workplace practices/behaviours that reflect this value.

“Brodie’s Law may serve as an impetus for supporting such culture change in organisations,” she says. “For example, more organisations may take bullying more seriously as a result of this legislation, and send a clear message that bullying is not tolerated – in organisational policy but especially in terms of the actions taken by the organisation to deal with bullying and, more broadly, to value mental and emotional wellbeing and build a culture of respectful behaviour.”

While the new laws allow victims of bullying in serious cases to seek intervention orders, Bornstein observes that it is likely that there will be a number of practical difficulties posed if such intervention orders are granted “For a start, such an order can’t be made against an employer. Indeed the employer may be unaware of the process until one employee turns up to work brandishing an intervention order against a co-worker,” he says.

Bornstein believes that employees would benefit more if bullying was tackled at the national level by including it in the Fair Work Act. “If you are an employee who is misled about workplace bargaining, if you are subjected to racial vilification or sexual harassment, or if you make a complaint to your employer about an issue in the workplace and are punished or sacked for doing so, you can immediately have your matter heard in a tribunal or court,” he says.

“A similar approach should apply for victims suffering from workplace bullying.”

Implications for OHS professionals

Brodie’s Law raises a number of potential issues for employers. It is important that all employers review their existing OHS policies to reflect legal developments in this area, according to Clayton Utz’s Baroni and Lo.

“Workplace policies need to reflect the fact that workplace bullying may take many forms, and the relevant policy must be equipped to deal with this. The rights and responsibilities of employers and employees alike must be made clear and there must be a transparent process for dealing with employee complaints,” they say.

Similarly, employees who are responsible for administering the company’s OHS policies must be properly trained in the
new laws and how to respond to any allegations of bullying.

Bornstein says OHS professionals should ensure that there are strict HR policies regarding bullying or harassment and offer employees the opportunity to raise any concerns in a safe and confidential process to eradicate any bullying behaviour.

"While there is a major personal cost to the victim of bullying, employers may be faced with significant legal action and other costs of retraining or recruiting new staff in the event that a worker leaves their employment," he says.

The real power of Brodie’s Law lies in its value in making bullying and other types of harassment a bottom line issue for employers – that is, an issue that has serious financial and reputational consequences for a brand and business, according to Flores-Walsh. "In order to address that risk, employers must implement comprehensive policies and complaint and investigation procedures," says Flores-Walsh, who adds that these processes shape the workplace culture and provide mechanisms to process complaints.

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING WORKPLACE BULLYING**

OHS professionals should ensure that workplace policies cover the full range of bullying, harassing and discriminatory behaviour. For the purpose of education and training, these types of conduct should be defined and illustrated with examples, so that businesses, employees and others have a good understanding of what behaviour is not acceptable, and also what behaviour employers, managers and supervisors should be looking out for.

Internal complaint and investigation procedures are fundamental to ensuring that workplace policy is enforced, and that employees feel they are able to come forward with complaints, which will be taken seriously and handled competently.

Workplace behaviour policy will not be effective unless it is modeled from the top of the business down – role modeling is everything in ensuring that harmful discriminatory or inappropriate conduct is not culturally acceptable in any workplace. Employers should make the following clear to management and workers (however engaged, including employees, contractors and secondees): a description of prohibited behaviours; and guidance about how an employee can obtain confidential assistance to deal with possible harassment/discrimination including referral to external providers and internal grievance officers as well as a clear description of the informal and formal complaint processes.

Employers should also ensure that their procedures provide for: appropriate contact people; grievance officers; and mechanisms and processes to deal with difficult preliminary issues such as: when to refer a complaint to the police; how to determine the boundary between on-duty and off-duty conduct (and therefore when there is an obligation to intervene); the employer’s duty to investigate a “risk” even when the complainant will not consent to being identified; the need to take care about referring a complaint to alternate dispute processes; and how to deal with confidentiality and protecting against retaliation and victimisation.

*Source: Siobhan Flores-Walsh, special counsel in the occupational health, safety and security group at Norton Rose*
Sun protection in the workplace

Australia has one of the world’s highest rates of skin cancer. Craig Donaldson looks at this issue in the workplace and examines the implications for employers and OHS professionals.

Between 1999 and 2004, the rate of skin cancer claims (per million employees) compensated by the Australian Health and Safety Compensation Council (now Safe Work Australia) more than doubled. Sun exposure was the most common cause of compensated cancer claims during the three years from 2001 to 2003 (22 per cent), followed by asbestos (21 per cent). Several legal precedents have been set where employers have been found negligent of adequately protecting their staff from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Over the last five years, these claims combined with the introduction of revised OHS guidelines such as the national 2008 update of the Guidance note for protection of workers from ultraviolet radiation in sunlight has contributed to improvements in workplaces when it comes to sun protection.

How Australian workplaces fare

Australian workplaces are improving when it comes to protecting workers from the harmful effects of UV, according to Sue Heward, SunSmart manager at Cancer Council Victoria. “More and more employers are recognising the damaging health effects of UV (sunburn, premature ageing and most significantly skin cancer) and how important it is to protect their employees from the damaging effects from overexposure to the sun in the workplace,” she says.

The SunSmart program in Victoria, for example, has found increased participation in its UV workplace program as more and more workplaces are recognising the importance of putting specific UV protection policies in place.

Although Australian employers are improving, Heward believes there is still a lot of work to do when it comes to unprotected sun exposure at the workplace. Recent research has shown that workers in industries including agriculture, forestry, fishing, construction, transport, and education have high rates of UVR exposure but Heward says these industries can do more to provide sun protection to workers.

“The story for indoor workers is a balancing act that involves...
Cancer Council Sun Protection
Serious Sun Protection for the Workplace

Specially developed for the Cancer Council to help protect people who work in the harsh Australian sun on a regular basis!

Slip Slop Slap Seek Slide

NEW Dry Touch Formulation!

‘Work’ SPF 30+ Sunscreen
- High quality SPF 30+
- UVA/UVB Broad Spectrum protection
- Oil and fragrance free
- Dry touch. Dirt and dust won’t stick
- Non-slip grip on tools or equipment
- 4 hours water/sweat resistant
- Will not affect industrial coated surfaces
- Australian made and owned
- Government (TGA) approved

For a sunscreen that ticks your OHS boxes contact us at: ij@vitalitybrands.com

Seek Shade for your workers!
- UPF 50+ ARPANSA tested.
- Portable & easy to assemble shade.
- Plain or printed canopy.
- 3x3m, 3x4.5 or 3x6m size options.
- Walls available for extra protection.

Special SIA Member Rate
03 9861 7020
www.skinhealth.com.au
Proud Strategic Partner & Official Sun Protection Supplier to SIA

FREE QUOTE, DESIGN* & DELIVERY
1300 721 877
www.staroutdoor.com.au

Sales help fund cancer research, patient support and education.
Sun protection in the workplace – you can’t afford not to

How to protect your employees when the UV is 3+ or if workers are outdoors for extended periods:

- Schedule work, where feasible, to minimise UV exposure
- Provide and use shade
- Provide and use protective clothing (long sleeved, collared shirts, broad brimmed hats and sunglasses)
- Advise and remind outdoor workers to apply broad-spectrum 30+ sunscreen every two hours
- Add the free Sunsmart UV Alert widget to your homepage and put UV on your OH&S radar.

Visit cancer.org.au or sunsmart.com.au for more information about UV services provided by your Cancer Council
The Australian workplace

UV is often forgotten as a workplace risk, especially when it can get lost in a long list of other workplace risks, such as working with machinery and in the heat. The potential danger, however, has been proven time and time again, says Heward.

“Australia remains one of the skin cancer capitals of the world. Outdoor workers receive five to 10 times more UV exposure than indoor workers each year. Workplaces have a crucial and legislated role to play in protecting workers through the provision of protective clothing, equipment and training, reviewing scheduling of work where appropriate and monitoring compliance,” she says.

As with any change process, actions take time, consultation, clear communication between head offices and satellite sites, support and commitment from all levels of the organisation as well as an allocation of resources. Where employees have a low level of awareness of the risks of UV and UV protection policies are not enforced, Heward says this often translates to poor results when trying to reduce workplace UV overexposure.

All workplaces with both outdoor and indoor workers develop a UV protection program to protect workers from the risk of UV radiation, according to Heward – particularly as the Model Work Health and Safety Act will be introduced in January 2012, with workplace facilities and amenities becoming a priority of the National Code of Practice. “Workplaces that have planned and are managing UV as a workplace risk will be well placed to be able to respond to this code of practice,” she says.

Sun protection and the law

With several legal cases settled in favour of workers and their family members and occupational skin cancer and sun exposure recorded as one of the most common causes of compensated cancer claims, sun protection matters when it comes to the workplace, and Heward points to a number of legal precedents.

On 15 August 2003, the Victorian County Court ruled in favour of a skin cancer patient and former employee of Boral. The court found that skin cancer suffered by the truck driver was a “serious injury” and directly related to his work. The man developed multiple skin cancers on his back, neck and shoulders and has had malignant melanomas removed from his back. He worked for three hours a day in direct sunlight, wearing only a singlet and shorts, with no hat. It was claimed that Boral failed to provide sunscreen or information about sun exposure during his 35 years of employment.

In a second landmark case in August 2003, Australia Post agreed to pay legal and medical costs for a postal worker who developed skin cancer. The man had surgery to remove a malignant melanoma from his forehead. He took his employer to the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal when Australia Post refused to compensate him for the two days he took off work to undergo treatment.

More recently, a record six-figure payout by WorkCover Queensland was given to a widow in Queensland in 2010 after her husband died at 43 from skin cancer. The husband, Rohan Crotty, was a carpenter and plasterer by trade and died within two years of being diagnosed with melanoma. Law firm Turner Freeman was able to establish that Crotty’s occupational sun exposure over a period of six years from 1992 materially contributed to his condition.
“As demonstrated by these cases, it is important that employers protect their employees by providing a safe working environment that is free of health risks. This includes taking proper steps to reduce the known health risks associated with exposure to UV for workers who spend all or part of their time working outdoors,” says Heward.

“Employees also have a duty of care to take responsibility for their own health safety and cooperate with employers’ efforts to improve health and safety. To work safely in the sun, employees must follow workplace UV protection policies and procedures, attend training, and follow instructions and advice provided, and use the supplied protective equipment as instructed.”

**Steps for OHS**

Prevention is always better than cure. In consultation with health and safety representatives and employees, Heward advises that employers should identify UV exposure hazards and introduce control measures to reduce exposure.

Cancer Council Australia recommends that workplaces have a comprehensive UV protection program in place that includes:

- Periodic risk assessments of UV exposure risk for all employees
- The introduction and maintenance of UV protective measures in line with occupational hazard controls.
- Training employees and the provision of information for employees to work safely in the sun.
- Documentation of the program, including control measures, in a written policy that is endorsed by senior management.
- Implementation of a monitoring process to determine the effectiveness of control measures and identify changes that may further reduce exposure.

State and territory Cancer Councils offer a range of information, resource and support on working safely in the sun for workplaces and managers. For example, in Victoria, Heward says the SunSmart program offers workplace education and in-service training for Victorian workplaces.

Workplaces can also access the free Sunsmart UV Alert widget from cancer.org.au and add it to their website homepage. The widget shows the daily weather, temperature and UV level specific to the site’s location including details about the times sun protection is required each day.

“Through a combination of guidelines and policy, education and workplace resources, the risk of skin cancer in the workplace can be substantially reduced,” says Heward.

**Advice and action**

To protect employees from the harmful effects of the sun, check the UV each day and when it is three and above or workers are due to be outdoors for extended periods, Heward says OHS professionals should try to: schedule work, where feasible, to minimise UV exposure; provide and use shade; provide and use protective clothing (long sleeved, collared shirts, broad brimmed hats and sunglasses); and advise and remind outdoor workers to apply broad-spectrum 30+ sunscreen and reapply every two hours.

There are also some common factors or steps required to ensure the development and success of an organisational UV protection program:
• Form a small working group comprising of health and safety representatives and workers from across the organisation.
• Collect information on numbers of employees at risk, compensation claims for sun-related injuries, incidence of sunburn, and what similar organisations and industries are doing in relation to sun protection. Clarify your organisation’s legal obligations.
• Talk with employees through workplace staff meetings, a workplace survey or short interviews to learn more about attitudes, awareness of the issue and current behaviour in regard to UV protection.
• Based on the information gathered, design your UV protection program. Using statements like: why, what, when, how, so what provides a useful structure. Circulate the draft to seek feedback and approval. Visit www.sunsmart.com.au/protecting_others/at_work for more information.
• Establish a budget to develop and implement the program.
• Launch the program so all employees are aware of its existence and promote through organisational newsletters and the company website.
• Monitor the program by keeping a written record of what has been undertaken and the results of all actions. This will provide valuable information for the review of the program at a later date.

UV RADIATION ASSESSMENT

Outdoor workers have a higher risk of skin cancer because they often spend long periods outside in the sun year round, over many years of working life, according to Professor Ian Olver, CEO at Cancer Council Australia. “We recommend that workplaces have comprehensive sun protection strategies,” he says.

This should include an assessment of the UV radiation exposure risk to employees, a written policy and educating employees on sun smart behaviours. It should also cover sun protection measures, including as shade, scheduling outdoor work outside peak UV times and providing protective clothing including hats, sunglasses, protective clothing and SPF30+ sunscreen, Olver says.
Working safely at heights

Working at heights is rarely as simple as it looks. The Australian Rope Access Association’s Peter Ferguson examines the safe use of rope access and harness-based approaches to working at heights

S

o there is work to be carried out at heights, and the automatic way of thinking for many sites is “put your harness on so you at least look safe”. Way too many working at heights situations are made to look safe rather than really doing anything to increase the safety of the worker. In fact, in some cases, additional and unnecessary ropes and lanyards, in poorly trained hands, may promote falls.

Hierarchical approach

There are a range of options for safe work at heights which will be clarified in the new harmonised workplace laws beginning early 2012, but most Australian states currently already have something similar in place at present. When looking at requiring works to be carried out at heights, the designers, managers and supervisors have responsibilities currently covered under most state OHS laws and these are quite specific.

Broadly, a hierarchy of available options should be followed beginning with the best option, don’t work at heights (perhaps by designing out the need to be there or pre-constructing sections of building at ground level for later crane lifts), through passive protection methods (where the workers do not need to do anything to be safe as they are working in an enclosed area), through to active protection systems.

Rope access

This system is just that – an entire system, not just a skill-set. It operates with two independently anchored ropes, one of which is the suspension or work positioning element while the other is a completely redundant backup system, in case something should cause damage to the primary system.

When clients specify that the works are undertaken by a recognised system such as the local Australian Rope Access Association (ARAA) system, New Zealand IRAANZ, UK based IRATA, South African SAIRAA, German FISAT, USA SPRAT or any of the many other recognised systems around the globe, they are ensuring the works will be carried out safely, competently and following the requirements of the soon to be released ISO Rope Access Standard. (At present we also use the Aust/NZ 4488 rope access series of Standards.)
Work positioning

Rope positioning is a form of work positioning, but encapsulates this skill set into an entirely systemised approach.

Many industries use work positioning in extremely safe ways (such as power industry with use of pole straps), and the appeal of work positioning over the final area in the harness-based hierarchy (fall arrest) is that it seeks to prevent a fall from happening. So no fall equals no consequences, bleeding, injury or the need for a rescue – surely a better outcome.

Rope access operators are often seconded in this area to manage a team of persons working in work positioning. A typical example of this was the cladding of the Melbourne Southern Cross Station roof, where carpenters, sheeters and plumbers received basic rope access training to allow them to undertake safe work positioning, while a senior rope access operator looked after the team by setting up anchors and diversions, providing assistance with difficult areas and if necessary, providing rescue skills. This was used on one occasion when a worker lacerated his knee with a power tool and the rope access system was used to move and position the injured worker to a point where they could be quickly extracted from the roof.

Fall arrest

Unfortunately, too many workers are asked to work in harnesses, and are effectively at risk of a fall due to a range of factors relating to the site, workers, equipment and site management. If a fall is allowed to take place, there is the strong possibility of personal injury and even equipment failure (over sharp edges for example) and there is also the need for a prompt rescue.

The word “restraint” gets used a lot in relation to harness-based works. The recently updated series of AS/NZS 1891 Standards have made some careful distinctions in this area. While it is not law to comply with the standard, the contract of the job, company policy etcetera may require compliance. The updated standard requires that all harness-based systems should be designed for fall arrest loads, even if being used for restraint (that is, preventing a person from reaching a fall potential point). It also promotes the technique of restraint as desirable because it is likely to prevent a fall from taking place. However should a fall occur, at least the system is unlikely to fail due to the higher loads.

Working at heights, particularly when relying on harness-based methods, is rarely as simple as it looks. If work must be carried out using harness-based methods, the use of rope access – properly carried out – or work positioning are always the best approaches.

Peter Ferguson is past president and committee member of ARAA and convenor of ISO rope access Standard Committee. peter@firstaccess.com.au.
Health & safety: the next steps

Held from 21 to 23 June at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, the conference brought together a number of nationally recognised OHS experts and speakers.

On day one, the keynote address was presented by director general of the Department of Defence’s OHS branch, Lindsay Kranz, who said that leadership at the highest levels of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was foundational to building a culture of safety across the organisation. Leadership is one of the most important drivers of a positive safety culture, said Kranz, who observed that it is an “intangible extra that will make systems sing”.

However, the biggest challenge to safety leadership is to get the safety message down to the smallest organisational units in the ADF, while he said another common issue with safety leadership is the lack of a feedback loop in the traditional system of command and control. “Command and control is about leveraging the strength of leadership control at centre and action at edges – it’s about a balance between the two,” he said.

Also speaking on the first day was the manager of health and safety strategy for Victoria Police, Debra Maiden, who said that Victoria Police has cut its injury rate by almost 40 per cent and reduced days lost to those injuries by 20 per cent as a result of a revamped OHS strategy.

She said there have also been improvements in employee wellbeing and safety audit scores as well as substantial savings in WorkCover premiums, and these benefits have translated into 2500 less employees injured over the past five years.

Speakers on the second day included Professor Niki Ellis, CEO Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research, Andrew Douglas, Principal, MacPherson-Kelley Lawyers and Aaron Anderson, partner at Norton Rose.

Anderson said that organisations should define who their officers will be under the forthcoming national OHS regime in order to assist with due diligence, compliance and OHS risk management.

Developing such a framework based on the organisational governance structure is a “good idea” because it draws lines of responsibility, he said. “These are linked back to personal KPIs, depending on who you are. The financial controller’s KPIs will look different to the CEO’s and board members.”

Speakers on the third day included Tony Mitchell, directorate of military commitments of army headquarters, Army, Stewart Ralf, national OHSE and compliance manager, FKP Construction, and Nathan J Lester, assistant director of the OHS section in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Lester spoke about OHS and crisis management, and observed that crisis may appear at any time and relate to any of your business. “The most appropriate thing you can do is take five minutes to breathe and evaluate what is occurring,” he said. “This breathing space will give you the perspective to proceed appropriately and effectively. Nothing is so critical that you can’t stop to breathe. Maintaining perspective is imperative to success, never lose sight of the goal.”

On the other end of a crisis, he said to look at what has been learnt and incorporate it into your daily business. “Without learning you will encounter the same issues over again,” he said. “Always look for the system failure and determine a solution for this. Never seek to blame an individual. Above all, remain positive, the issue will end and you will have grown and learnt something new. Don’t let the crisis consume you.”
2011: One small step

This is the theme of the upcoming Safety Conference in Sydney – the largest event of its kind nationally

Held from 25 to 27 October 2011 at the Sydney Showground and Sydney Olympic Park, the Sydney Safety Conference will bring together a unique array of speakers for the benefit of the Australian OHS profession.

On day one, Dr Adam Fraser, of Australia’s leading educators, researchers and thought leaders in the area of human performance, looks at the journey to becoming a high performing safety professional. He will discuss the process of challenging one’s own behaviours, examine their affect in the workplace and look at how to engage oneself and others at work.

“Humans find it hard to move from one interaction to another without dragging the energy, mindset or baggage of the first interaction to the next,” he says. “As safety professionals we are challenged by a constantly changing and reactive environment, always focused on helping others and preventing further damage, it can often be very draining. It’s tough to ‘show up’ all the time with the right mindset and give each interaction our all.”

Also speaking on day one is John Watson, general manager of the WHS division at WorkCover NSW. Watson says the harmonisation of work health and safety legislation across Australia has been a great achievement for all the regulators and their industry partners.

“While the new legislation will generally support current safety management practice, some changes in legislative requirements will require businesses to make adjustments to their safety management system,” he says. For example, one area which will have impact on NSW workplaces will be the introduction of health and safety representatives as the focus for workplace consultation.”

One day two, Professor Andrew Hopkins will discuss the makings of safe behaviour programs. He will provide a critical look at the assumptions which underlie safe behaviour programs and identifies some of their limitations.

“Unsafe behaviour is merely the last link in a causal chain and not necessarily the most effective link to focus on for the purposes of accident prevention,” he says.

“They also miss critically important unsafe behaviour, such as attempts by workers to re-start processes that have been temporarily interrupted. Conventional safe behaviour programs aimed at frontline workers are also of no use in preventing accidents in which the behaviour of frontline workers is not involved.”

Given that it is the behaviour of management which is most critical in creating a culture of safety in any organisation, Hopkins says behavioural safety observations are likely to have their greatest impact if directed upwards, at managers.

On day three, Clive Blunt, NSW and ACT business manager for the Australian Red Cross, will discuss corporate Australia’s “mental health” duty of care. “Mental health in Australia is the emerging issue of our time,” he says.

“While independent agencies and government institutions wrestle with complex legislative issues, it remains for corporate Australia to take action through decision to affect their mental health ‘duty of care’ for employees, contractors and volunteers.”

For more information or to register for The Safety Conference in Sydney, go to www.sia.org.au.
Do something decisive for your career.

David Stewart, Director of Queensland Health’s Central Integrated Regional Cancer Service.

QUT’s Master of Health Management gets straight to the heart of the real issues in public health.

As a heavyweight addition to your CV, the degree is one of the most significant boosts you can give your career. It’s already proving so for David Stewart, Director of Queensland Health’s Central Integrated Regional Cancer Service.

“The course is more relevant and practical than I could’ve hoped for,” he said. “Things such as the intensive lecture weekends, where top health sector leaders candidly detail how they’ve dealt with challenges in the health system, are immensely valuable. It’s certainly not just the textbook view – we deconstruct real world examples and debate the merits of different approaches in change management.”

To find out more about the course – and others within QUT’s respected School of Public Health – go to www.qut.edu.au/do-something-decisive

And equip yourself to lead and manage decisively in an ever-changing sector.
IT’S WHAT’S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

Introducing the new Altair® 5X Multigas Detector with MSA XCell® Sensor Technology

PERFORMANCE BEYOND WHAT YOU SEE

MSA has expanded our advanced technology to create the Altair® 5X Multigas Detector. Exclusive features in technology and design include:

- Industry-first LEL, O₂, CO, H₂S and SO₂ 60 second span calibration and 15-second bump test
- New XCell® exotic SO₂, Cl₂ and NH₃ sensors
- Full three-year warranty and four-year sensor life on LEL, O₂, CO, H₂S, SO₂ and IR sensors
- End-of-sensor-life warning
- Withstands a 10 foot drop

Get inside the Altair® 5X Multigas Detector at www.msa.net.au/altair5x or contact your MSA Customer Service Centre.
Pilz - For One Stop Machinery Safety Solutions

Pilz have been leading the way in machine safety and automation product development for more than 60 years. Our range of machinery safety products, backed by professional safety engineers guarantees integrated safety solutions. For safe automation solutions Pilz will be there as your partner during all phases of the project: from risk assessment and development of safety concepts through to implementation and validation of plant and machinery. As our client you’ll receive one-stop safety engineering solutions backed by access to an extensive range of Pilz products for automation safety, guarding, motion control, sensor and monitoring technology, visualisation and diagnostic systems.

Call our Safety Engineers to discuss your safe automation solutions.

Dedicated to Machinery Safety