Certifying OHS for success
“This is without a doubt the best course I have attended in my time.

The facilitator was one of the best I have come across.”

MARCUS RADER
Department of Mines and Petroleum

SAI GLOBAL is Australia's leading provider of Work Health & Safety (WHS) management systems training. Our qualifications such as the BSB60612 Advanced Diploma of WHS & BSB51607 Diploma of Quality Auditing are nationally recognised and can help to accelerate your career, and create health and safety management systems that are best-practice.

“The facilitator was absolutely fantastic.

His knowledge and expertise in the Health & Safety realm, by far extended any other Subject Matter Expert I have encountered.

His ability to engage the classroom, maintaining focus & interaction during the training was uncanny. Top class!”

JOSHUA GRUBB
AMS

www.saiglobal.com/ohs 1300 727 444
Certified for success:
The project for certification of generalist OHS professionals and practitioners represents a landmark for the recognition of safety professionals.
Advancing the cause of OHS

There are a number of important developments both nationally and internationally for the OHS profession, however, more work is needed in firmly establishing the value proposition of both OHS practitioners and the profession which they comprise.

Historically, OHS professionals have often fallen into roles involving workplace safety by accident or circumstance, rather than design. However, in today’s modern organisation, health and safety is no longer something “just anyone” can do, and OHS professionals occupy very senior roles in business.

The practice of OHS has evolved significantly in recent years, and workplaces rely on qualified and experienced people to help them understand their obligations and implement systems which will add value to their business as well as ensure worker safety. With this in mind, the cover story for this issue (page 18) explores the project for certification of generalist OHS professionals and practitioners, which represents a landmark for the recognition of safety professionals. As Martin Ralph, former managing director Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention (IFAP) observes in this article, medical practitioners, nurses, lawyers and Chartered Accountants are deemed as professionals and are recognised as such by society at large. If the OHS community wishes to be recognised as a profession, then certification is a non-negotiable.

Also in this issue, we feature a special report on education and training (page 24), which plays a critical role in compliance and improving safety outcomes within organisations. However, as SAI Global observes in this piece, time and cost are two of the most obvious challenges facing companies when it comes to OHS training and education. In response, safety practitioners need to develop and/or source training that is learner centred and of clear and immediate use in the workplace. Safety professionals also need to be L&D professionals and help deliver training programs that maximise the value for money for their organisation, and which are pitched at the right level for those involved.

Similarly, the news report (page 8) delves into a new international research report prepared on behalf of the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO). SIA College of Fellows chair Phil Lovelock observes that this report indicates that while there is evidence that the OHS professional does have an important role to play in reducing fatality and injury rates, evidence of the role it plays in reducing the rates of disease and ill health needs to be stronger and addressed by further research.

The OHS Professional editorial board

Craig Donaldson, editor, OHS Professional

ANGELICA VECCHIO-SADUS
HSE leader, CSIRO Process Science and Engineering

SIDNEY DEKKER
Professor at Griffith University’s school of humanities

SARAH BINSTEAD
Health, safety & environment leader for GE

PATRICK MURPHY
Chair, Board of Directors, SIA

JOHN GREEN
Health, safety & environment director for Laing O’Rourke’s operations in Australasia

ROD MAULE
Director safety, quality and risk, Transdev Australasia

PAUL CUTRONE
Partner and national head of safety for Sparke Helmore Lawyers

MARTIN SMITH
Group general manager of safety, quality and environment for Tenix

DAVID BOND
Group manager health & safety at Thiess

MICHAEL TOOMA
Head of occupational health, safety and security – Asia Pacific for Norton Rose Fulbright
Would you like to become a Corporate Partner or Corporate Member of the SIA? Please contact SIA on 03 8336 1995 to discuss the many options available.
After a lengthy search, it gives me great pleasure to announce on behalf of the Board that David Clarke has been appointed to the position of CEO for the Safety Institute of Australia. His appointment as Chief Executive, which is pivotal to our efforts to improve the standing of our Institute and taking the SIA to new levels of achievement on all strategic fronts, follows a rigorous process coordinated by a Board subcommittee.

David comes to our Institute with a proven track record of leading not-for-profit member-based organisations, and the skills needed to drive a better SIA. For the past six-and-a-half years David has served as the CEO for Parks Forum Inc, the peak body for park management agencies in Australia and New Zealand, with a number of international members. Between 1997 and 2006, David was the CEO, Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria. Prior to this, David served as the CEO for the Disability Employment Action Centre. He has also worked as a consultant to a number of not-for-profit boards, with a focus on strategic planning and governance. With a Bachelor Degree in Education, David has recently completed both a Graduate Diploma and Masters in Business Administration.

David has a strong commitment to the community, having served in various roles within the local community, including sitting on numerous boards of not-for-profit agencies. He is based in Melbourne and married with two children. Over the coming days, weeks and months David will be listening to and engaging with many members and stakeholders as he settles into the role, which commenced on 1 September. The Board and I look forward to constructively working with David and the SIA staff team to achieve the outstanding potential of the SIA as Australia’s peak OHS professional body.

Please join me in welcoming David to the SIA.

The Board has also devoted substantial time to the matter of certification and conveyed a number of key messages and positions for our representative, Phil Lovelock, to feed into this project. The Board are very mindful of the cross section of views across the profession and practice and are seeking to ensure we represent and advocate for and on behalf of the best interests of our members. The Certification Project has the potential to improve the standing of our profession and practice, and as this evolutionary milestone is upon us we need to ensure it is done in the right way, for the right reasons, with the right level of commitment and support, both financial and non-financial. For the latest on the project please see page 18 of this issue.

The Board are strengthening our relationships with partners, sponsors and members. One such example of this involves the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention (IFAP) where we have started to explore opportunities for collaboration between the two organisations. This continued in June, with a joint session of the IFAP & SIA Boards.

Over the past months I have had a number of conversations with members about the future direction of the Institute. These are valued conversations and are important to understand the aspirations of our members. The Board are very keen to ensure that what has been done well in the past is not lost but in fact modernised and rejuvenated, and to ensure that learnings are applied along the way and where necessary new initiatives are prosecuted. We do this in the interests of making our Institute a better place that delivers on its objectives.

Patrick Murphy CFSIA chair – Board of Directors

Patrick Murphy, chair, Board of Directors, SIA

“David comes to our Institute with a proven track record of leading not-for-profit member-based organisations, and the skills needed to drive a better SIA”
Four seasons in 10 days

New chief executive David Clarke shares his first experiences of the SIA as the picture comes together

David Clarke, chief executive officer, SIA

For those of you who read our E-News you will have already seen an introductory letter from me. After my first two weeks on the job, I thought I would share some of my experiences and what I think these experiences mean for the SIA.

As we all know, when we start in a new role, we can be filled with uncertainty, expectation and anticipation. After my first fortnight, I can honestly say that these first two weeks on the job have been as busy and eventful as any working fortnight in my memory. I’ve experienced four seasons in 10 days.

Shall I have a sedate, steady beginning where I test my chair, make some calls to key people, do some reading up on corporate history, shoot the breeze with the staff team, get acquainted with the nuances of the coffee machine? Not to be – it’s already high summer and the heat is there – staff hard on the job, passion from the membership, deadlines to meet, AGM, Annual Report, Audit, issues to resolve, challenges to take up, and very high fire danger. The breeze is hot from the north and I’m perspiring already.

Day three – a short trip to Sydney for the day, where I have the opportunity to meet a number of members of the NSW Branch, and get my first look at our conferences. Here I find my first taste of the vibrant colour and richness of the SIA – its membership. It must be autumn. I have lunch with NSW Branch chair Melissa Pollock and a diverse and friendly group of people who share the common interest of giving their time and energy to the

SIA. It seems to me they’re exchanging this contribution for a mix of reasons – comradeship, professional development, testing their ideas by discussing and debating health and safety, to express the opportunity to lead, to create business opportunities possibly, and of course have an enjoyable time. I sit next to Roger Fairfax, a Chartered Professional of the Institute and member since 8 October 1991 – before the birthdate of our youngest member (no offence Roger) – whose genuine warmth sets me at ease, and whose observations about the needs of the Branches I find myself still thinking about as I fly back to Melbourne.

But winter sets in, storm clouds appear and the wind is biting. A raft of challenges are emerging. I have too many calls to make already. I can’t get through my e-mails after four days on the job. Am I making mistakes? Have I made a big mistake? I am full of doubt.

Over the weekend, with time to reflect, I remind myself that there are always two things at work when it comes to stormy weather – the storm itself, and the way I relate to it. My daughter enjoys walking in the rain. I surf, and the waves are often bigger and better in winter – as long as you’re riding them and not being crushed by them.

Throughout my second week, I find myself becoming accustomed (as Melbourne people do) to the uncertainty of the weather, which means it’s definitely spring. The staff and I have had a few tough days but we are now sharing a laugh. They decided unilaterally to work over the weekend, and as a result we have got on top of a number of urgent matters. A great gesture. I’m starting to see the sun peek through the clouds. I love spring.

When leading an industry body, it’s not unusual to deal with four seasons in 10 days. Having the capacity to remain still and eventful as any working fortnight in my memory. I’ve experienced four seasons in 10 days.

I invite any and all of our members who want to lead, to create business opportunities, to express the opportunity to lead, to create business opportunities possibly, and of course have an enjoyable time.

The task of leadership at the SIA as we go about our work in the seasons ahead is to work hard for the membership. As we do that we will:

• honour the contributions of the people who have built the SIA
• acknowledge the work of those who are making it what it is today
• listen to and take into account the diversity of views and ideas that come from our members
• communicate better
• continue to advance the profession and the skills of our members, and improve the ways we do that
• improve the quality and range of services available to the membership, including networks and professional exchange
• build a stronger voice for the profession.

We won’t achieve this all at once. Along the way, we will make mistakes, but we will continue to have high expectations of ourselves, and each other.

I don’t intend to subject you to many more metaphors in the year ahead, but I will use my short honeymoon period to express just one more: in a game of tennis, there are people in the stands watching the game being played and commenting, and there are people on the court playing the game. I invite any and all of our members who want to help the SIA grow and develop, to get on the court. Involvement in our Branches is a great way to start. It’s an exciting game and I the other leaders throughout the Branches have the task of working hard to make the court big enough to include you.

David Clarke
CEO – Safety Institute of Australia
State of the OHS profession

A new international research report sheds important light on the state of the OHS profession, writes SIA College of Fellows chair Phil Lovelock

In July, a new research report The Value Proposition for the Occupational Safety and Health Professional – A Review of the Literature, prepared on behalf of the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO), was provided to INSHPO by the author.

The report is of particular interest to the SIA and its members as the SIA has for many years been an active member and supporter of INSHPO, and the author of this work – prominent Australian academic and researcher David Borys – is an active member of the SIA.

This research was funded by members of INSHPO and is another example of the excellent work being undertaken by the network, which, in addition to the SIA, also includes the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE), the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) UK, the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM) and many others including organisations from Korea, Singapore, Mauritius and Italy and the accreditation bodies the BCSP, BCRSP and NEBOSH.

Framing the research

The report is a contribution to the activities being undertaken by INSHPO to strengthen the international standing and acceptance of occupational safety and health as a profession. The aim of the research was to answer three important questions about our profession:

1. What is the evidence that the occupational safety and health professional improves the occupational health and safety performance of an organisation?
2. What knowledge, skills and attributes of the occupational safety and health professional might be linked with the effectiveness of the occupational safety and health professional?
3. Does the impact of the occupational safety and health professional vary depending on industry and organisational size?

To map the findings of the literature review and to illustrate the relationship between the occupational safety and health professional and business value, a conceptual framework – a value pyramid – was developed. In essence, the pyramid is broken into three sections – at the bottom is the Body of Knowledge (BoK), and the middle section represents the occupational safety and health professional and their qualifications, experience, professional certification (recognition), roles and tasks, and personal attributes. The top section represents the business value of the occupational safety and health professional and is built upon the basis that the bottom two sections are fully effective.

Key findings

The research indicates that while there is evidence that the occupational safety and health professional does have an important role to play in reducing fatality and injury rates, David Borys found that evidence of the role it plays in reducing the rates of disease and ill health was missing and needs to be addressed by further research. Another concern raised by the report is the lack of evidence for the value proposition for the occupational safety and health professional in high-risk industries other than construction.

The report contains recommendations for continuing this research to systematically build upon the existing evidence and demonstrate the value proposition for the occupational safety and health professional.

Work is underway to not only publish this important research report in journals such as the SIA’s Journal of Health and Safety Research and Practice but to also develop short articles for publishing in Professional Safety, so look out for these over the next few months.
Furthering and funding safety

The SIA has established a new research and development fund to research and develop health and safety procedures and practices

As a new initiative, members of the SIA are being offered the opportunity to make a donation to a new research and development fund. The donations will be placed into the newly created SIA “Research and Development Fund” bank account; it is proposed the funds in this account must be used for research and development purposes only. This is to further progress one of the objectives of the Safety Institute of Australia which is “to research and develop health and safety procedures and practices”. It is proposed that grants for safety-related research will be issued from this fund.

The SIA Research Fund: key facts

The Board will manage the fund and in the course of its management shall:

1. approve the allocation of funds to research and development projects approved by the Board,
2. maintain appropriate records of the fund and specifically of funds received, projects approved and the outcome of projects supported from the fund,
3. publish procedures set by the Board which deal, amongst other things, with the following:
   • receiving of money into the fund
   • criteria to be met by applicants for funding
   • procedure for assessing and approving applications for funding
   • procedure for payments (including amounts and frequency) from the fund
   • reporting to members on the activity of the fund and which, after initial approval by the Board, may only be amended by resolution passed by 75 per cent majority of the directors voting on the resolution, and
4. report the activities of the fund to members at each annual general meeting and in the Institute’s annual report.

Furthering and funding safety

The SIA has established a new research and development fund to research and develop health and safety procedures and practices

Is your workplace ready for summer?

Book a SunSmart education session today.

Australia has one of the world’s highest rates of skin cancer.

Outdoor workers have a higher risk of skin cancer due to the long periods of time they spend outside in the sun year round.

In Victoria you can book a SunSmart education session today.

Contact SunSmart on sunsmartworkplace@cancervic.org.au or (03) 9514 6419 for further information.

Visit cancer.org.au or sunsmart.com.au for more information about UV services provided by your Cancer Council.
Dear Editor

I enjoyed reading Michael Tooma’s contribution to the OHS: Building resilience through adversity discussion in the June edition of OHS Professional magazine (page 10). I was particularly interested by his comment regarding our delayed embracing of safety by design. Despite Michael’s optimistic note that “we have adapted to it eagerly”, recent research I have conducted indicates a continuing reluctance due to a lack of understanding of the design process and thus an inability to prevent potential hazards occurring in designed products, processes and procedures.

Sidney Dekker, in his contribution to the same discussion, said: “The profession may want to understand the many different ways in which people create safety” so they can be “bolder and more innovative in thinking differently about safety”. And to help them become bolder and more innovative, they need training and accessible information streams regarding the design process.

Safety by design is a grand catchphrase but its meaning is unclear. To understand what it really means, we need to delve into the design process to find out what happens there and what steps can be taken to ensure the products of design are safe for workers and the general public.

Design is all around us. It includes the design of houses and buildings, the design of computers, ICT systems and new technologies, the design of bridges and cars, the design of household equipment and utensils, the design of work practices, and the design of business processes and procedures. The tools we use, the clothes we wear, the toys we play with, the roads and footpaths and playing fields we drive and walk and run on, have all been designed. Everything around us at work, at play and at rest has been designed.

No matter what the product of design, the design process that created it was very similar. And the steps within that design process are where errors can be made and unsafe outcomes built in. So to understand the term safety by design, we need to investigate the steps within the design process.

In simple terms, any design is the result of a need. Far too often this need results from an accident or an incident so that tools, systems or processes have to be reworked or replaced with a new design. Once the need has been determined, a design concept is formulated. From that concept, someone records the concept in specifications that will become the blueprint. The blueprint is followed to create a new system, process, tool or technology. Once created, the new design needs to be tested before implementation. Hopefully, training is conducted to familiarise workers with the new design, but far too often this stage is ignored. Once installed, well-managed design implementations go through a maintenance stage where feedback from users guides designers in making modifications to tailor the design object to the needs of the workplace.

Nothing too daunting so far, but mistakes can be made at every one of those stages. Let’s take the very first step – design concept formation. Three-quarters of the designers I surveyed in Australia, USA and the UK did not discuss the new design with the end users; thus, they lacked a clear understanding of the operational requirements. This classic mistake was seen in the Queensland Health payroll fiasco where the KPMG Stage 2 report stated: “the business requirements for the new system did not appear to be clearly understood by all stakeholders and thus the functional design of the new system was flawed.”

If the design concept is flawed, then the specifications describing that concept must necessarily be flawed, the translating of those blueprints into a design object must also be flawed, and the testing which tests the design against those blueprints is similarly flawed. So, a flawed concept begins knocking over the following dominoes, or to use James Reason’s Swiss cheese analogy – holes line up so you can drive a truck through them.

A flawed concept begins knocking over the following dominoes, or to use James Reason’s Swiss cheese analogy – holes line up so you can drive a truck through them.”

Ron Day, lead consultant, Safety Design Solutions
First Aid Friday

Think First Aid on the first Friday of every month to reduce your workplace risk & improve your safety.

Take our test. See how safe your workplace is.

firstaidfridays.com
**WA gets ready for OHS harmonisation**

The Government of Western Australia is supporting the introduction of new legislation which will harmonise the state’s mine safety regulation with other jurisdictions across Australia, according to the state’s Mines and Petroleum Minister Bill Marmion. The new Resources Safety Bill will replace the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994 and initially cover mines safety, while the potential for incorporating safety legislation for petroleum and major hazard facilities will be investigated towards the end of 2014, through a formal regulatory impact statement consultation process. “The new mines safety legislation will incorporate the best elements of the nationally developed model work health and safety legislation and the national mine safety framework,” said the state’s Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) resources safety division executive director Simon Ridge. “However, it is also important to recognise that some aspects that work in other jurisdictions may not apply to WA.”

**Excessive sitting against safe work regulations**

Sedentary working conditions are likely to contribute substantially to increasing rates of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers, according to Curtin University researchers. Changes in the physical demands of work and increased use of computers over the last few decades, has led to more workers sitting and being employed in sedentary jobs, said professor Leon Straker from Curtin’s school of physiotherapy and exercise science. “This has likely had a detrimental effect on their health,” he said. Curtin’s study examined how much of the work day is spent in sedentary positions and found, on average, 75 per cent of the office workday is spent sitting, much of which is accumulated in unbroken bouts of a least 30 minutes. “Occupational health and safety laws in Australia require employers to provide a ‘safe system of working’, however, given the available evidence, it appears that modern offices may be failing to provide a safe system of work,” Straker said.

**First prosecution of an officer under WHS laws**

The first prosecution of an officer under harmonised WHS laws commenced in the ACT, following an incident in which a truck driver died as a result of electric shock injuries sustained at work. Kenoss Contractors Pty Ltd and one of its officers have been charged with breaches of their respective duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT), following the 2012 death of the 48-year-old worker. This fatality was one of the four fatalities (three of which occurred in the ACT construction industry) in a seven-month period which led to the Getting Home Safely Report being commissioned by the ACT Government, according to Norton Rose Fulbright. In a legal update on the issue, lawyers Alena Titterton and Alice Winter-Irving also noted that the fatality occurred prior to the appointment of liquidators and receivers to various companies and assets in the Kenoss group. The officer pleaded not guilty to both charges under sections 27 and 32 of the WHS Act and the hearing of his case has been scheduled for late December 2014.

**Psychological resilience in Army personnel under spotlight**

Army personnel job performance can be enhanced by improving psychological resilience, however, the key to facilitating this is effective supervision, according to Southern Cross Business School researchers. “In the past two decades, Australian Army personnel have been engaged in combat-intensive environments in numerous locations including Afghanistan and Iraq,” said professor Yvonne Brunetto from Southern Cross Business School, which is investigating the psychological resilience of non-commissioned officers in the Australian Army. Research conducted internationally has indicated that one in 10 returning military personnel will experience sustained long-term negative post-deployment health and employment outcomes including post-traumatic stress syndrome.

**Hold-up victims require more support from employers**

Employers with workplaces at risk of armed hold-up need to ensure staff are adequately prepared to cope with the potential psychological stress arising from such incidents, according to law firm Trilby Misso. Under national OHS guidelines, employers have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for their workers and protect them from potential harm, said Trilby Misso principal lawyer Viktoria Stachek. “This duty of care includes taking all reasonable steps to minimise the likelihood of an armed hold-up, particularly in workplaces where cash is kept on the premises, as well as addressing any trauma that may result from such an incident,” said Stachelek, who noted that thousands of Australians are victims of armed robbery each year, with the Australian Institute of Criminology reporting that one-fifth of these robberies occurred in retail businesses.
At work we have a focus on safe work environment and practices. There are specialised staff enforcement, policies, procedures and meetings. When we turn the key in the door to our homes, do we continue our safe practices? Have we ensured our home is a safe environment – for us and, most importantly – for our children? If not – why not?

It is important to identify the hazards in and around our homes and conduct a risk benefit analysis. Sound familiar? Mum or dad or the adult in the house should don their workplace health and safety hat and audit their child’s environment. Identify the hazards and decide whether or not the hazard should be removed or take steps to prevent serious injury from that hazard. A simple example is a two-story house with a set of stairs linking bedrooms to living area. A child gate at the top and bottom of the stairs will prevent falls which can lead to serious head injury. A hand rail to steady both the young, pregnant and elderly when using the stairs is a simple but effective measure to reduce the likelihood of injury.

Eighteen per cent of all burns in children are due to scalds from hot liquids – usually easily accessed too close to the edge of benchtops and tables. Simply pushing all cups of tea, coffee and soups to the rear of the bench and table tops will prevent a huge number of these third-degree burns. The most common form of poisoning in children is from household cleaning products – often found under the kitchen sink. Placing a baby gate on the kitchen doorway and/or installing child resistant locks on cupboards and drawers in the kitchen, laundry and bathroom will provide an effective barrier to curious children, but many poisonings occur when a product is in use and left within reach. Adult supervision is an obvious key to prevention of injury in children. When the baby becomes mobile consider closing the door to rooms where they can into mischief away from your eyes. By placing an empty one-litre soft drink bottle over a round door knob, small children cannot grip and squeeze to turn the knob and access outside or the garage or laundry without an adult.

We want our children to explore their surroundings and to be adventurous. We should not “wrap them in cotton wool” as they will never learn to identify a hazard and understand when they are taking risks. We want them to understand and learn that there are consequences to certain risky behaviours. So we encourage them to explore and test their skills but in a safe environment and under our supervision. Bumps and scratches and bruises are normal, but concussion, brain injury and compound fractures should never be a “rite of passage” from childhood.

Some 37 per cent of deaths among 1- to 14-year-old children are due to injury. This is almost one child killed each day from injury. Thirteen per cent of all injury hospitalisations involve children aged 0 to 14 years – which is about 160 per day, every day. For children under six years, most injuries occur in their own home. The most common injury in the home is from a fall.

Every $1 spent on prevention saves well over $10 on healthcare. But the real cost of injury is children who are injured, disabled or killed. Think of children in pain; families shattered and grieving. Think of a community horrified, saddened and in shock – particularly those involved in the immediate aftermath: family, neighbours, friends and emergency services. Siblings are traumatised. Often there is finger pointing and blame, self-loathing, and relationships broken.

The average daily cost of an injury patient in an ICU is $700 per day excluding surgery, ward and substantial rehab costs. Burns patients have additional staffing, surgical and post-operative wound dressing and physiotherapy costs. Then there is the loss to our workforce of the parent turned carer, and the child; the cost of the breakdown in relationships and depression and the long-term impact of injury – which are immeasurable.

“Have we ensured our home is a safe environment – for us and, most importantly – for our children? If not – why not?”

Susan Teerds, CEO of Kidsafe Queensland, explains why it is important to continue safe practices in the home for the sake of children.
Leading OHS in the EU

Craig Donaldson speaks with Christa Sedlatschek, director of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), about her greatest professional achievements, challenges and goals

How did you get into OHS?
I studied medicine, and recognised that during my studies, we never asked patients for their professional background and the potential risks for health this could pose.

What are your greatest professional achievement(s)?
My first achievement was of course to become an occupational specialist, and then, after completing my studies, I started working in the Austrian Labour Inspectorate and moved to the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs in 1993, taking over the function as deputy head of the Department for Occupational Medicine.

After being employed at EU-OSHA for several years, I moved to Berlin in 2003 and started working in the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Bundesanamt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin, or BAuA), where I became director of the national Initiative New Quality of Work (INQA) in 2004.

Since 2011 I have served as director at EU-OSHA, promoting safety and health in Europe’s workplaces.

What has been your greatest professional challenge?
One of the biggest challenges for me is working in a multicultural environment.

What are the most interesting professional experiences?
Before my studies I was sitting in an ivory tower, but afterwards it was hard for me to see people working in bad conditions.

You need a good scientific background and evidence-based research understanding before implementing measures in a sustainable and well-accepted way at company level.

“Money spent on improving OHS is more than repaid in increased productivity and costs avoided”

OHS also doesn’t sell easily and all we have to do is to promote, communicate and lobby for OHS. We have to prove by strong figures that investing in OHS pays off, especially in these difficult economic times.

We need to make the business case for good OHS management, particularly to smaller enterprises. Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are a vital part of Europe’s economy and they often perceive themselves as lacking in the resources to implement safety and health measures. There is growing evidence, however, that money spent on improving OHS is more than repaid.
Protecting workers from safety and health risks is not just a duty, but an investment.

**What is your view on the state of OHS, and how does Australia compare?**

In general, the European Union and the United States have high standards in occupational health and safety. Australia also compares well. Concerning Europe only, there is of course room for improvement, especially in developing countries and candidate countries. EU-OSHA supports and funds these countries through different programmes.

Our European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) programme, for example, is a first step in engaging with countries bordering Europe in the East and South (such as Belarus and Egypt), identifying existing structures, actors and processes, and building networks at a national level that can interact with EU structures. This model has been used and demonstrated effectively in pre-accession states.

**How can OHS practitioners take the profession to the next level?**

It is important to cooperate closely with stakeholders at company level and also with social partners. OHS professionals should support the transfer of evidence-based research into practice and should also assist in the establishment of holistic OHS management at company level, including proper risk assessment.
National Rugby League (NRL) players are in the news and all too often for the wrong reasons. With a number of well-publicised incidents involving players and alcohol, NRL clubs, their management and players have often come under fire over such incidents, while the NRL has been criticised for not doing enough to clamp down on a culture of alcohol abuse among rank-and-file players.

In response, the NRL undertook a significant model for change program about five years ago with the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF), and the NRL has experienced improvements on a number of fronts, according to Phillip Collins, head of workplace services for the ADF. “It was crucial that the NRL understood the issue was at an organisational level and not just a player level,” he said.

“If they were going to achieve real attitudinal change towards alcohol, it was vital that the strategy, vision and mission were really owned by the members of the organisation and communicated in their own language and in ways relevant to them. “A program of this magnitude required buy-in from the CEOs of each club within the competition and a commitment of resources to implement the recommendations. Importantly, the NRL wanted to have a program that would not be dependent on outside experts such as the ADF, therefore their strategy incorporated ‘internal capacity building’ components.”

Effecting change
To effect this behaviour change successfully, Collins said it requires not only changes to policy and procedures around the management of alcohol but also changes that are visible to all employees. “Some of the more noticeable developments to support the responsible use of alcohol across the NRL include alcohol policies for all clubs, alcohol management standards used during events, and all NRL players and staff attending alcohol and drug education sessions,” he said.

“Communicating the changes and initiatives your organisation has implemented is crucial for the success of any initiative. What value is having a policy or education around alcohol if no one knows about it? Each NRL club has actively been involved in the development of many of the initiatives introduced, which increases buy-in and support from players and staff at all levels.” As a result, Collins said the NRL saw a 75 per cent reduction in alcohol-related incidents reported in the media during season 2012 compared to season 2009.

“Ultimately, any workplace alcohol and drug program, including the one we’ve been working with the NRL on, is about mitigating the risk to the people who make up your organisation and those who interact with you. A successful workplace alcohol and drug program will also help protect your organisation’s reputation, reduce risk liabilities and improve productivity of your workforce,” he said.

A model for change
Collins said there are three components to an effective “model for change” approach: (1) case for change – see it; (2) commitment – own it; and (3) action – do it. “For any change program, the identification of the issue needs to be articulated by the key stakeholders and a long-term objective needs to be set. With the objective it needs to be owned by the entire organisation and communicated throughout with measurements assigned to the tasks so change can be monitored,” he said.

Education, training and access to counselling services are also key elements to any successful workplace strategy.
and Collins said there are many forms of education and training, including online learning and more substantial awareness sessions. "Web-based training in particular has been identified as a really valuable way to educate employees coming into the industry. As an employer, you can use web-training to inform employees of your company's policies about alcohol and other drugs in the workplace, and educate them on the harms they can cause," he said.

Other strategies include health promotion, early interventions, peer support programs and drug testing. "If the organisation is conducting workplace drug testing, it needs to understand the steps involved as well as the purpose. Drug testing isn't the only solution and simply will not work when delivered in isolation. All businesses need a formal workplace policy in conjunction with education, training and support programs."

Collins recommended OHS professionals take several steps to help address alcohol and drug use in the workplace:

- consult with key stakeholders and seek opinions
- develop robust policies and link them to employee agreements
- implement meaningful training and education
- run regular toolbox sessions
- record incidents
- develop evaluation measures

"The first step should be a formal workplace policy that provides an outline of the organisation's position with a set of guidelines for dealing with all aspects of alcohol- and drug-related issues within the workplace," said Collins.

**The high cost of drugs & alcohol**

When talking about alcohol and drugs in the workplace, lots of people think it's not a problem in their workplace because they've really just thinking about people who use them during work hours, said Phillip Collins, head of workplace services for the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF). In some industries, boozy lunches still exist, but for the majority of workplaces he said the impact of alcohol and other drugs on the workplace is more indirect. "It's the days people come to work hung over or coming down from a big night, it's the sick days of those people suffering illnesses caused by drinking, and it's the days when someone else needs to cover a colleague's work because they've taken a sickie, been injured or are just having problems concentrating," he said.

"There are a number of workplace evaluations that look at how alcohol affects motor skills in assembly line studies and how dramatically decision making is impaired at relatively low blood alcohol levels, which are often experienced the morning after a night of alcohol consumption. When we look at the loss of productivity, absenteeism and workplace injuries, accidents and deaths due to alcohol use, the Australian Institute of Criminology estimates it to be about $6 billion a year."
To date there has been no process to formally recognise many people working in the field of OHS. Craig Donaldson speaks with a number of experts about the evolution of OHS and why the project for certification of generalist OHS professionals and practitioners represents a landmark for the recognition of safety professionals.
HS professionals occupy very senior roles within today’s organisations and are relied upon to help workplaces meet significant legal obligations. Health and safety is no longer seen as something “just anyone” can do, and workplaces are looking for qualified and experienced people to help them understand their obligations and implement systems which will add value to their business as well as ensure worker safety.

Nigel McNair, health and safety operations manager for the CSIRO, says the capabilities and competencies required to be successful as an OHS professional continue to evolve and expand, and competence in traditional areas such as risk management, training, investigation and audit continues to be fundamentally important. “OHS professionals are having to apply their skills across an increasingly broad array of topics. “As we gain a better understanding of familiar risks and become more successful at controlling

“The background of OHS professionals is extremely broad, and there is little consistency in their training or skill base”
those, other risks gain prominence requiring different strategies and techniques,” he says. "The increasing impacts from psychosocial risks in recent years are a classic example. In response, many OHS professionals have had to develop a deeper understanding of mental health issues and a new vocabulary to work effectively with mental health professionals.”

Successfully applying traditional OHS competencies within these less tangible disciplines is increasingly dependent upon the ability to influence the values and beliefs of others, says McNair. “It is far easier to convince someone to wear respiratory protection to avoid exposure to a hazardous chemical than it is to convince the same person to adjust their language and demeanour when dealing with a co-worker who exhibits certain psychological sensitivities. It's no longer enough to provide a safe working environment and systems of work. OHS professionals are becoming increasingly capable at influencing behaviours and beliefs in areas that have never before been our domain.”

Peter Attwood, CEO of specialist HSE consultancy HAZCON, adds that the current state of the OHS profession is a reflection of the increase in the demands for companies and organisations to manage OHS in an effective way. In the 1980s, there were limited training opportunities and in Victoria, the demand for OHS professionals outstripped supply. “In the early 1980s and 1990s, many of the safety professionals came out of the larger corporations such as the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, gas and fuel, large mining companies such as Rio Tinto and BHP, and the oil and gas industry. Many of these companies had an OHS group with some very experienced staff who provided mentoring and supervision for inexperienced staff,” he says.

In the early 1990s, there were Acts, regulations and codes of practice being published very rapidly and demand for good OHS practitioners was significant. A large number of people were attracted to the field, including those coming from the shop floor as well as undertaking training specifically to enter the field, says Attwood. “The background of OHS professionals is extremely broad, and there is little consistency in their training or skill base,” he says.

**Global comparisons**

The overall skill of Australian OHS professionals is generally of a high standard, although Attwood says it varies enormously from industry to industry and with geographical area. “The remote locations and the heavy industry culture are uniquely Australian and it is difficult to compare internationally, however, some of the professional areas such as rehabilitation, ergonomics, hygiene and some aspects of OHS are really world class,” he says.

“There are increased opportunities for formal qualifications through online learning, and there are very active safety groups operating throughout Australia. Trade shows and seminar series such as Safety in Action have been a great success, and initiatives such as Health and Safety Week and the Safety Ambassador Program have encouraged people to promote and discuss OHS.”

Martin Ralph, principal policy officer at Department of the Premier and Cabinet of WA and former managing director Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention (IFAP), says he has been fortunate enough to witness the unfolding professionalism debate both within Australia and internationally. “Countries such as the United States and Canada had the argument many years ago and have accepted ‘credentialing’ as a normal way of business. Similarly, many in the Australian OHS community would have watched the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in the UK as it moved to certification over the past decade. After a couple of bumpy years, the certification process has now become widely accepted there,” he says.

“Importantly, certified safety professionals are treated as true professionals – and research by the American Society of Safety Engineers indicates that certified safety professionals can command higher salaries..."
than their non-certified counterparts.”

There are many lessons we can learn – especially from the UK experience, according to Ralph, who says consultation, communication and the profession’s willingness to change are essential for the change to be effective. “But the world is also listening to us. The Australian Body of Knowledge has been introduced to the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO) and has become widely accepted as a model for professional practice across international borders … I think that when comparing the competence of Australian professionals against others around the world we hold our own.”

Improving competencies

Nothing compares to the regular application of knowledge and skills in a diverse range of circumstances to build deep understanding and ability, according to McNair. “As OHS professionals, we need to seek opportunities to apply our skills in situations with which we are unfamiliar,” he says.

On a vocational level, Ralph, who also serves as the CEO of a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), says that the current competencies in WHS qualifications in the vocational space are well below par for what the profession needs to flourish in Australia. “But that’s not the major issue – the massive inconsistencies between training providers threaten to damage the brand of this emerging profession … How training providers can offer Certificate IV or Diploma level qualifications in five or six days (in direct contravention of volume of learning requirements) and remain supported by the OHS community is difficult to reconcile. How can employers sort those individuals who have done the hard yards to complete a properly constituted program from a less-than-adequate one?”

However, Ralph says that university level qualifications are becoming more consistent in what they offer, with the OHS Education Accreditation Board winning support from a number of tertiary institutions. “I’m also fully supportive of the profession adopting a continuing education scheme to ensure that professionals maintain their level of professional development, which is well entrenched internationally,” he says.

The role of certification

Certification provides some level of assurance both to the individual and employers that a level of competence has been obtained and is being maintained, according to McNair. “Without certification, there may be little objective evidence to indicate whether an individual has the broad array of skills expected from an OHS professional,” he says.

“More broadly, certification gives the profession much-needed credibility. Anyone can be appointed to an OHS role. Certified safety professionals must have a certain level of qualification from a reputable educational institution, have relevant experience and be committed to the continuous development of their professional skills.”

As the OHS profession matures and the body of knowledge that a competent professional is expected to have is understood, Attwood agrees that there should be some way of confirming that the person providing your organisation with advice is competent to do so. “This is a bridge that has been crossed by many professions ranging from dentists, nurses, teachers to plumbers, electricians and physiotherapists,” he says.

“Certification is the ability to demonstrate to a third party that you, as a professional, can provide services at a known and consistent minimum standard.”

At the Royal Commission into the Home Insulation Program, much was made of a risk assessment that was undertaken into the program. “It was reported through the media that the person undertaking the risk assessment was unaware of the possibility of someone being killed or that deaths were indeed a possibility. The use of a certified safety professional would have identified the risks and established appropriate control strategies,” says Attwood.

‘Just as you are unlikely to go to an unlicensed or unregistered dentist for dental work, it is appropriate that you go to an
There has been quite a bit of discussion about the proposed certification of generalist OHS professionals, according to the certification project manager, Sue Bottrell, who says it is an exciting time for the safety profession to take its rightful place as a capable and credible profession. “Safety is the last profession to require people to have qualifications and experience, and given the responsibility we hold, it is quite amazing it has taken this long,” she says.

Certification ensures that many OHS practitioners and professionals who are not currently recognised will be. “Those who currently have diploma or advanced diploma do not have any way of being recognised at the moment and certification provides that opportunity,” she adds.

The SIA is planning a series of workshops around Australia from mid-November, to engage with its members and other important stakeholders to ensure all members understand the certification process and to plan a comprehensive implementation and communication plan. Answers to frequently asked questions about certification can be found at www.sia.org.au and queries can be sent to info@ohscertification.org.au.

Ralph observes that if the community at large is to have confidence and faith in the safety and health profession, he says it has to be convinced that the profession can uphold certain standards, and that methodologies and practices are founded upon soundly based (if not empirically tested) principles.

“Medical practitioners, nurses, lawyers and Chartered Accountants are deemed as professionals and are recognised as such by society at large. When one enters into one of these professions, one does so in the full knowledge that in order to gain the confidence of society, and of your potential peers, a demonstration against standards of acceptable practice is required,” he says.

“Certification and ongoing professional development is the cornerstone of a vocation being recognised as a profession. Simply put – if the OHS community wishes to be recognised as a profession, then certification is a non-negotiable.”
Skilling safety up

OHS education and training plays a critical role in compliance and improving safety outcomes, and there are a number of steps OHS professionals can take to improve the safety qualifications, skills and capability of employees, writes Craig Donaldson

Like most other busy professionals, OHS practitioners are under pressure to do more with less. From pace of change and technological developments, through to more regulation and tougher business conditions, increasingly complex day-to-day challenges are making things tough for many OHS professionals. Such factors often make it hard for organisations and their executives to take a proactive approach to OHS and build a culture of safety, let alone meeting minimum commitments for legislated work health and safety requirements.

Time and cost are two of the most obvious challenges facing companies when it comes to OHS training and education, according to Isobel Kidd, learning product manager for SAI Global – “particularly when business is doing it tough and there isn’t an obvious return on investment to be made from safety training,” she says. “By that logic, businesses with shrinking profits should also drop their insurance policies and sack their accounting staff, since neither of these add income to the company.”

WHS training is a significant component of a viable and sustainable organisation, and Kidd also says the courts, as a result of the “due diligence” components of the WHS Act, are looking more and more intently at how organisations ensure that they know what they ought to know.

Phoebe Lahey, general manager of HBA Learning Centres, observes that all companies face different challenges. “Companies in high risk industries are generally very aware of their obligations under the WHS legislation as they tend to have experienced WHS incidents or investigations and usually have implemented some form of WHS measures in the form of training, whether it be reactive or proactive. The most common issue that these companies face is the time to put their employees though training and education,” she says.

Other challenges companies face with OHS training and education needs, on top of time availability, is budget, lack of knowledge of the severity of the fines and jail time that may be issued as a result of poor WHS.

“Therefore, they do not see OHS training and education as a priority, and not being aware of their legal responsibilities, the safety culture of the company/site, management’s attitude to safety and remoteness of a company/site, making it hard to access face-to-face courses or not having reliable internet coverage to complete self-paced work – just to name a few,” she says. “But as I’ve said, each company is different and the challenges and issues they face will differ from company to company, even site to site within the same company.”

Robin Winning, director of Best Practice Managed Solutions, says another challenge facing companies is relentless change and the increase in requirements for evidence-based worker skill comprehension and competency verification. “Most companies fail to develop a post-training action plan to ensure positive integration into everyday work activities of the learned skills of their workforce,” she says.

“They fail to make training continuous. Learning should comprise continuous on-the-job training, and coaching by mentors and managers. Companies that encourage workers to learn what they need, when they need to learn it, and that provide regular feedback, can more easily maintain a workforce with up-to-date skills, ready to adapt as business needs and activities shift.”

Bridging common gaps

One of the most common gaps for companies is their knowledge of the difference between what education is and what training is, according to Sue Reed, course coordinator: postgraduate OHS programs at Edith Cowan University. “In general, management do not understand the differences in Cert IV courses’ outcomes versus university degrees,” she says.

“How does a safety professional convince a board or their accountant to apply precious funds to sometimes substantial safety interventions?”
A training evolution

In December of 2012, IBSA released the newly endorsed work health safety training package, according to Phoebe Lahey, general manager of HBA Learning Centres. This training package superseded the occupational health and safety training package to ensure that OHS/WHS training and education met the legislative requirements of the at the time new harmonisation WHS legislation.

“IBSA, through consultation with industry, developed the new WHS training package making sure it met legislative requirements as well as the current and emerging WHS needs across all industries,” she says.

Along with the change in legislation, higher level qualifications, such as the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Work Health Safety, now have entry requirements, and Lahey says this has seen a huge decrease in entrants to the Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications, as they have not been able to enrol in the higher qualifications because they do not currently possess the skills or knowledge to be participating at that level. “The entry requirements have also seen an increase in entrants in the Cert IV level qualification,” she says.

“I feel the implementation of the entry requirements has combated any gaps that may have previously been seen in the OHS education, as entrants are required to learn/know/have the underpinning knowledge required at the Cert IV level prior to entering the Diploma level.

Changes in legislation have also seen an increase in companies putting through groups of staff members to complete the Cert IV Work Health Safety Qualification. Some companies choose to send individuals; other companies choose to train a group onsite.”

Winning also notes that many companies do not have a starting point for their workforce when it comes to OHS education or training, and this in itself creates a gap. “Competencies should be identified by way of a training needs analysis: identify the base, identify the skill/knowledge gaps, implement training, close the gap, and manage the outcome,” she says.

“The organisation must nominate the tasks a worker will undertake, make a record of previous training and current qualifications to identify training needs...
then manage to completion including a verification of competency (MYVOC) process.”

Understanding this must start at the top, and Reed says one of the most common gaps is the reluctance of senior management to acknowledge their own training needs, responsibilities and more importantly the inconsistencies between what is, as a minimum, legislatively required and their organisation’s ability to meet those requirements.

Lahey says one of the biggest gaps when it comes to OHS training and education and compliance is that every employee does not have OHS training and education. “How can they be aware of their legal obligations if they are not trained in it,” she says.

“I feel that at a bare minimum staff should be trained in the legislation, emergency response, hazard identification and health and wellbeing. Every company and industry is different, varying in risk rating, exposure, employees, et cetera, however, it is imperative that all employees in every company should be aware of the legislative requirements as well as any training related to the highest rated risks or most common hazards of their workplace. Each business should have at least at minimum one person with a Cert IV in work health safety, and if they are higher risk and are developing systems, conducting audits and investigations they should definitely at least have a diploma trained person.”

**Investing in higher level safety**

With increasing financial pressures on organisations, companies are also looking for an increased return on their “safety dollar”, according to Steve Young, program coordinator for the Graduate Diploma in Occupational Hazard Management at the Victorian Institute of Occupational Safety at Federation University.

“Costs seem to be rising, yet measures of safety improvement appear to be decelerating. It is the responsibility of OHS educators to focus students’ attention on the most efficient and productive means of increasing workplace safety,” he says.

“Safety managers usually understand the relative effectiveness of applying the hierarchy of controls to any hazardous situation; yet they generally fail to introduce...
higher level controls into the workplace – either through lethargy by doing what has always been done (and expecting a different result: the definition of madness), or through their inability to influence stakeholders.”

Most safety resources are “invested” in lower order controls, such as rules, signs, and staff training, and while these may be important components in a range of injury prevention measures, Young says corporate managers and safety professionals have been too quick to hide behind the “as far as practicable” clause in statute books and regulations.

“If we keep investing in lower order controls their relative lack of effectiveness will continue to deliver disappointing results,” he says. “Unfortunately, most safety training, signs, rules, procedures and so on amount to no more than a ‘kind wish’. Safety positions are often advertised and filled with people who appear or claim to have the ability to motivate staff to work ever more carefully.

“Of course, employees have a duty of care to work in a safe manner, but it is extremely difficult to ‘be careful’ when an explosion is heading towards them at 10,000 km/h, or a crane-load is falling towards them from a great height.”

The answer to the “quick fix” is to invest in higher levels of safety control: to spend funds on measures such as hazard elimination or isolation (or substitution or engineering in some companies’ hierarchies of control), says Young. “But how does a safety professional convince a board or their accountant to apply precious funds to sometimes substantial safety interventions? This is never easy, but a highly trained safety professional should be able to demonstrate the increased effectiveness of higher order controls over lower and often ineffective or temporary measures. Eliminating or effectively isolating a hazard will always provide a higher return on investment over time when compared to the quick fix.”

A safety professional with a graduate-level qualification should be able to convince his/her stakeholders of the effectiveness of appropriate application of the hierarchy of controls, he says. “They should also be able to convince the employees of their organisation of the same thing. After all, “Businesses with shrinking profits should also drop their insurance policies and sack their accounting staff, since neither of these add income to the company”

“Businesses with shrinking profits should also drop their insurance policies and sack their accounting staff, since neither of these add income to the company”
the employees are usually the experts in their jobs – they generally know how their workplaces can be changed to make them safer – but their knowledge is often discounted or ignored. Safety professionals must be the catalyst whereby employees’ knowledge and stakeholders’ investment are reconciled. Effective safety intervention requires a graduate-level safety professional who understands this process.”

**Support for OHS training/education**

Most organisations benefit from having OHS training for their workers, far and above statutory requirements, according to Winning. “The OHS professional should determine the existing ‘level’ of employees and use that knowledge to shape their training courses,” she says.

“They need to accept there is no longer a ‘one fits all’ mentality and ensure they offer practical and affordable training courses and systems, which will address not only mandatory compliance requirements but pave the way for ongoing, worker/industry/organisation specific training, that is, build a relationship and strive for ‘best practice’.”

OHS professionals also need to ensure they have at hand the best tools to enable them to deliver meaningful results. “We have been encouraged by the responsibility shown by many OHS professionals in realising they need to be able to offer more than an old fashioned, out of date, catch all, basic training and/or management packages,” says Winning.

If organisations avoid sending people on necessary WHS training courses for financial reasons, then the next step for safety practitioners is to take the trouble to develop and/or source WHS training that is learner centred and of clear and immediate use in the workplace, says Kidd. “The safety pro needs to be an L&D pro, among all the other things they need to do, and set training programs that maximise the value for money for their organisation, and which are pitched at the right level for those involved,” she says.

“For example, sometimes practical people

| AQF4 – Graduates have the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner. |
| AQF5 – Graduates have specialised knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner. |
| AQF6 – Graduates have broad knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner. |
| AQF7 – Graduates have broad and coherent knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a professional |
| AQF8 – Graduates have advanced knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a professional |
| AQF9 – Graduates have specialised knowledge and skills for research and professional practice to undertake an OHS role as a professional. |

**The right skills?**

It is essential for many employers to understand the differences in the levels of qualifications and ensure that their employees receive the right level of training and/or education to undertake the duties the employer requires them to do, according to Sue Reed, course coordinator: postgraduate OHS programs at Edith Cowan University. “For example, you can’t expect an OHS manager who only has completed a Cert IV to be able to undertake the same duties as a person who has a Master’s degree unless they have a wealth of experience in the field. Also, it is an issue of who to employ as a consultant and understanding what various qualifications mean,” she says.

The following relates to what AQF levels mean in relation to skills of a graduate as an OHS professional:

- **AQF4** – Graduates have the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner.
- **AQF5** – Graduates have specialised knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner.
- **AQF6** – Graduates have broad knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a paraprofessional/practitioner.
- **AQF7** – Graduates have broad and coherent knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a professional.
- **AQF8** – Graduates have advanced knowledge and skills to undertake an OHS role as a professional.
- **AQF9** – Graduates have specialised knowledge and skills for research and professional practice to undertake an OHS role as a professional.
are sent to highly theoretical training courses that don’t assist them with their real world. This isn’t necessarily related to intelligence or educational background; for instance, a busy engineer might just need to know the techniques to be applied in controlling a hazard, but not need to know the history of the Robens review. To put this another way, busy people need to be trained in what they need to know, and not have their time abused by being trained in ‘nice to know’ stuff.”

Courses also need to be tailored to the correct degree, Kidd explains. “Some trainers try to customise an NRT course too much and deprive the learners of understanding the breadth of application of safety principles. The other side of that coin is where trainers stick rigidly to their own particular examples which the learner might not be able to, or be motivated to, relate to their workplace, to their experience. Good safety professionals can identify the right mix of general safety concepts, industry practice and organisation-specific content,” she says.

On a regulatory front, Isobel Kidd, learning product manager for SAI Global, observes that the latest WHS Act and Regulations are well embedded in training curricula, but their continued popularity indicates that safety professionals and managers are still coming to terms with the changes.

Also, she says online training has become a large part of training delivery in diploma and advanced diploma level WHS courses. “One of the many advantages of using online training is that organisations are assured of consistency, with the same information, delivered in the same way to all participants,” according to Kidd, who says many of these latest developments are driven largely by compliance with the law, but also by organisations and their officers trying to avoid that “60 Minutes” moment.

“It is just a bad look to hurt your workers, or even members of the public, and no one wants to have to front the media, let alone the courts, without being able to explain how they did everything right. This isn’t a legal viewpoint, its public relations,” she says. However, there are gaps – particularly in large companies – between management expectations on how specific WHS matters should be dealt with, and the capability of those people tasked to do the dealing, says Kidd.

“There is an often quoted example which really does occur in most places which do morning safety toolboxes or pre-start briefings. The recently promoted team leader is expected to present this morning toolbox, without the benefit of receiving any training on how to facilitate this meeting, nor how to ensure the communication of critical safety information, nor how to involve the workers in a consultative way. This is a lost opportunity to develop cohesion in the workforce and capture their knowledge,” she says.

“This ties in with another major concern for regulators, the courts and therefore PCBUs and officers; that is the organisation’s failure to learn from their own experiences and their tendency to repeat past mistakes. Sometimes PCBUs repeat the same type of near-miss incident over and over again until it is no longer a near miss and someone gets hurt.”
Putting safety into action

The SIA Sydney Safety Conference presented OHS professionals with an opportunity to keep up to date with some of the latest trends and issues in workplace safety

Safety’s role in productivity
One of the presenters was national safety manager at Diona Civil Engineering Contractors, Paul Lyndon, who said that productivity over safety still exists in many industries and the subsequent challenge for safety professionals is to understand productivity drivers, instil safety as the main priority and continue the productivity cycle.

“This can only be achieved by being a part of the process when new works commence,” he said. “Safety must play a leading role in the planning stages of any new works. Implementing proactive safety ideas, contributing to and adding value to the project goes a long way in meeting the challenge for the safety professional.”

Lyndon also said good safety leadership requires a strong set of principles, values and an understanding of the individuals and works to be performed. “Safety leaders must be able to communicate well, listen, demonstrate compliance to the cause and be consistent with their approach. Your own behaviour and actions in the workplace will set the tone for how effective you will be. Listening to others and responding in a proactive, positive manner gains respect, which is a key requirement to motivate and influence others,” he said.

“Knowing your workers’ strengths and weaknesses and delegating tasks to suit ensures buy-in from workers. Open communication, consistency, honesty, integrity, professionalism, time management and the ability to walk with others all contribute to being a successful leader.”

Communicating to your audience and keeping it simple enables others to understand and absorb the message being delivered, said Lyndon. “Workers are pressured to ‘get things done’. Having the ability to remain calm and professional in the heat of the moment is an ability a safety leader requires,” he said.

“Time constraints are a contributor to others’ behaviour in the workplace. Tunnel vision takes control, and the focus shifts from staying safe to getting the job done. A safety leader at this point must be able to acknowledge the pressure the worker is under and be able to provide a positive solution that ensures both outcomes of keeping the worker and others safe and completing the task on time are achieved. This is where the safety leader gains respect from [their] fellow workers.”

Securing business support for safety
Also speaking at the conference was HSE manager for Saunders International, Jeremy Stevenson, who said the main challenge faced by OHS professionals in all industries is to get an equivalent level of understanding and commitment from operational and financial managers of the problems they face.
Many OHS/HSE professionals equate the mantra “safety first” or “zero harm” with the concept of “safety at any cost,” according to Stevenson, who said this is not how operational or financial managers interpret the safety first or zero harm mantra.

“In fact, this safety first/zero harm/safety at any cost is the greatest pitfall for most OHS professionals, because by considering that safety is the primary driver, OHS professionals lose sight of the only purpose of the organisation – to make a profit (sacrilege to say this, I know). The unfortunate fact is – if an organisation cannot make a profit, it will cease to trade,” he said.

There are a number of key stakeholders the OHS professional interacts with, each of whom has their own drivers in relation to addressing issues, he added. “In gaining support from these stakeholders, the OHS professional needs to address the relevant driver for the respective stakeholder, be they the worker, production manager, financial controller or CEO,” he said.

“For instance, when gaining support from the worker, the OHS professional needs to consider personal comfort or benefit from the decision to be implemented, while not adversely impacting job security. An operations manager is likely to consider the impact any change will have on productivity and/or training requirements; while the financial controller will be looking for cost/benefit impact or ‘payback’ of the investment.”

The needs of each stakeholder will need to be considered and responded to in an appropriate way if the OHS/HSE professional wishes to gain their support, according to Stevenson, who noted that it is important for any OHS/HSE professional to understand the operational and administrative procedures for their organisation and to apply these.

How high conflict behaviours impact OHS
Monash University professor of law and dispute resolution, Tania Sourdin, also said OHS professionals need at least a basic understanding of high conflict behaviours and their potential impact in the workplace. She said the impacts of high conflict behaviours can be extensive and can include bullying behaviours, social and work isolation and a “toxic” work environment.

“Stress and psychological harm can be the result of high conflict behaviours in the workplace. Some very problematic behaviour can leave people paralysed and feeling powerless,” she said. “More vulnerable workers may be more likely to suffer, particularly if they have experienced violence and abuse in other areas of their life. A significant proportion of workers’ compensation claims are directly related to psychological harm in the workplace.”

Sourdin said it is “really important” that OHS professionals have some understanding of these behaviours and be ready to respond. It is estimated that up to 20 per cent of the workforce may exhibit high conflict behaviours, and she said changed workplace arrangements and responses may be necessary.

Sourdin also observed that many individuals with personality disorders may be undiagnosed. Some high conflict behaviours are a result of personality disorders or behavioural traits, and she said people with some disorders may have little empathy and may not care about others. “They can be aggressive and even violent and may be hypersensitive,” she said. “Moods can be unstable, and these can result in challenging behaviours that can include difficult behaviours in meetings, via email, in performance reviews and in social media and social groups. Some people with high conflict behaviours can be bright and charming and may influence the workplace and promote a culture of mistrust.”
Are JHAs doing their job?

Panel members at the recent Safety in Action 2014: Perth Safety Conference argued that Job Hazard Analyses (JHA) are not an effective risk management tool and they should be used as intended in a way that adds value to safety, or gotten rid of. The panel members supported the argument that implementation of safety management systems is largely ineffective, during the interactive session about its effectiveness in big and small businesses. The ability and motivation of workers to comprehend and adopt aspects of the management systems being designed by organisations was seriously challenged by the panel.

Among the other outstanding presentations provided at this year’s Perth Conference, the panel discussion titled ‘Achieving effective implementation of safety management in big and small organisations engaged delegates with numerous questions and much debate. The panel discussion was chaired by Will Edmond, GM at safesearch, with Greg Smith, legal practice director at STE Safety & Legal and Danny Spadaccini, director of safety at Alcoa Australia.

The presentation by Smith argued that the implementation of safety management is largely ineffective because, as he stated, “Documented systems are too complex for the organisations to comprehend, implement and maintain. You should be aware that, depending on which jurisdiction you look at, up to 96 per cent of [health and safety] prosecutions are successful. The majority [of companies] are found wanting due to non-compliance with their own systems requirements,” he said.

Smith also said, “Many safety management systems fail to satisfy not just the legal requirement, but the organisation’s imperative to control the critical risks in the business. In a lot of cases, the complexity of implemented safety management systems, and tools such as the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), create mistrust within organisations.” Smith highlighted that research has revealed trust across organisations as one of the most important factors contributing to the effectiveness of the organisation, including the effectiveness of safety management. He also spoke about the “arse-covering mentality that has evolved” and said that “there is a real sense by supervisors, that they are not trusted, because when they complete JHAs there is often too great a focus on the trivial hazards and little to no feedback from those they submit them to”. Smith asked: “If supervisors and workers do not perceive any safety impact on the outcome of the task...”
“In a lot of cases the complexity of implemented safety management systems, and tools such as the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), create mistrust within organisations.”

When asked whether, as a lawyer, he would propose that JHAs not be part of the system, Smith said, “If we understand that our legal obligations match our safety obligations, we should be asking ourselves, as OHS professionals, ‘how do I stop people from dying?’ When the answer is to fill out another form so you can prove that you have done it, we’ve lost our focus on the behaviour that makes the job safe.”

Spadaccini spoke to the audience about safety leadership and needing “to engage the workforce and get them participating in processes that do impact on safety outcomes”. He said, “There is also a need for well-trained supervisors, with clear responsibilities and tools, as a key to achieving critical [risk control] outcomes.”

The conference chair and deputy chair of the SIA, Tony Mitchell, commented, “There remain many safety management system implementation challenges facing safety professionals and practitioners. The WA Branch of Safety Institute of Australia will be organising a number of forums and inviting Mr Edmond, Mr Spadaccini, and Mr Smith to further workshop and share approaches with SIA members over the coming year.”
BOOK REVIEW

Transform Your Safety Communication:
How to Create Targeted and Inspiring Safety Messages for a Productive Workplace

Digicast Productions, 2014
Author: Marie-Claire Ross
US$45 (paperback) or A$38.50 (ebook)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an important part of my personal philosophy. Not necessarily planned as such, but definitely ongoing. I believe it is also important to reflect on what we have learned and how it has affected our practice. Given the subject matter of this book, you, the readers, may decide that I haven’t learned too much – I hope not.

I have recently been considering my communication skills, as it is important in my current roles at work as a consultant, as a policy adviser and within the Safety Institute of Australia. These include all my face-to-face, social media, verbal, writing, presentation and other communication skills, and when receiving my copy of Transform Your Safety Communication by Marie-Claire Ross of Digicast, I realised not only did I have a publication that effectively relates communication skills to what I am doing on a day-to-day basis but one that also provides an easy-to-use model for the creation of influential communication.

Ask yourself if it is a successful safety campaign you want to build. If it is, then take it from me this book can help you achieve that goal. I like the way the book is written – it is easy to read and not so easy to put down. In addition, it is divided into seven chapters with the last one providing the reader with a series of templates which will help in making safety messages stick.

Each part has a specific title: Part 1 is Learn: discover the proven safety communication framework; Part 2 is Attention: capture your audience’s attention; Part 3 is Remember: achieve memorable safety communication; Part 4 is Persuade: get the effective communication system; Part 5 is Create: transform your safety communication; Part 6 is Engage: make your safety writing engaging; and Part 7 is the templates that we can use to make our safety messages stick. And, while talking about sticking, the book contains sticky tips, one of which states: “Let people know what they stand to lose, but make sure you give them tips to avoid a potential threat.”

Each chapter ends with tips that summarise the key points, and at the back is a list of further reading and a list of links that can assist in gaining further communication knowledge and skills. There are also free resources on graphic images along with tip sheets and checklists.

In my view this book provides the tools and templates to quickly produce and improve safety communication, as it uses effective techniques that are commonly used by advertising agencies. The information is presented in an easy-to-understand and easy-to-use manner, giving the reader the ability to design and deliver safety communications that will influence the safety culture of the organisations we work for.

As you can gather, I highly recommend Transform Your Safety Communication.

Reviewed by Phil Lovelock, CFSIA, CFIOSH, professional member ASSE, chair, SIA College of Fellows

“This book provides the tools and templates to quickly produce and improve safety communication, as it uses effective techniques that are commonly used by advertising agencies”
Prevent & Respond
5th Annual SIA Conference

Your registration includes morning/afternoon teas, lunch, networking drinks and delegate satchel and access to all presentations on day/s of registration. All prices are in Australian Dollars and inclusive of 10% GST.

SIA members receive a discount to the conference and attendance at the conference counts towards Continuing Professional Development points required to maintain SIA grades of Chartered Professional Member and above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Type</th>
<th>Early Bird Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Delegate Registration – Member</td>
<td>$240.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Delegate Registration – Non Member</td>
<td>$340.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$290.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$390.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To Register go to: conferences.ozaccom.com.au/2014/ohs14/index.aspx

Visions Occupational Health & Safety Conference
17-18 Nov 2014

The Venue:
Mercure Gold Coast Resort, Gold Coast

The Details:
Call for Papers Close 15 September 2014
Early Bird Registration Close 1 October 2014
Conference Welcome (incl Breakfast) 17 November 2014
Conference Cocktail Dinner 17 November 2014
Conference Close 18 November 2014
HBA Learning Centres is a leading RTO within Australia, providing Nationally Recognised courses within the Vocational Education and Training industry. Government Departments, TAFE teachers, Mining and Construction companies, along with private individuals have all benefited from the expertise and experience of our trainers.

Offering courses in:

TAE40110 – Cert IV in Training & Assessment  
TAE50111 – Diploma of Vocational Education and Training
TAELLN411 - Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills 
BSB41412 – Cert IV in Work Health & Safety
BSB51312 – Diploma of Work Health & Safety 
BSB60612 – Advanced Diploma of Work Health & Safety
BSB41513 – Cert IV in Project Management Practice 
BSB40812 – Cert IV in Frontline Management
BSB51607 – Diploma of Quality Auditing
CHC30113 – Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care

We offer Intensive Face to Face Delivery and Self-Paced Delivery of all courses.

Life is about the choices you make…..make the better choice.

HBA Learning Centres
1300 721 503 | www.hbalearningcentres.com.au