

WORKCOVER NEWS

The workplace safety and injury management magazine

56

March 2004 – May 2004



- Special Feature – Falls from Heights Prevention Campaign
- Moving Plant Code of Practice
- Protect your Young Workers from Workplace Hazards
- Shearing Shed Open Day



WorkCover Accredited Public Courses 2004

Vital Training for Effective Risk Management

also available ON SITE

course in occupational health & safety consultation

formerly the OHS Committee Course \$570 Plus 10% GST (\$627 incl. GST)

Jan	12	13	19	20	City	CIT1
Jan	12	13	19	20	Parramatta	PAR1
Jan	22	23	29	30	City	CIT1/2
Jan	22	23	29	30	Parramatta	PAR1/2
Feb	2	9	16	23	Parramatta	PAR2
Feb	10	11	17	18	Parramatta	PAR22
Feb/Mar	11	18	25	3	City	CIT2
Feb	19	20	26	27	City	CIT22
Feb	19	20	26	27	Campbelltown	CAM2
Feb/Mar	20	27	5	12	Parramatta	PAR23
Feb/Mar	23	24	1	2	City	CIT23
Feb/Mar	23	24	1	2	Chatswood	CHA2
Feb/Mar	25	3	10	17	Hurstville	HUR2
Feb/Mar	27	5	12	19	Rooty Hill	RH2
Mar	3	4	10	11	Parramatta	PAR3
Mar	8	9	15	16	Parramatta	PAR32
Mar	11	12	18	19	City	CIT3
Mar/Apr	15	22	29	5	City	CIT32
Mar/Apr	15	22	29	5	Wollongong	WOL3
Mar/Apr	17	24	31	7	Parramatta	PAR33
Mar/Apr	17	24	31	7	Chatswood	CHA3
Mar/Apr	23	24	30	31	Hurstville	HUR3
Mar/Apr	24	25	31	1	City	CIT33
Mar/Apr	25	26	1	2	Parramatta	PAR34
Mar/Apr	29	30	5	6	Parramatta	PAR35
Apr	13	14	20	21	Parramatta	PAR4
Apr	14	15	21	22	City	CIT4
Apr	14	15	21	22	Rooty Hill	RH4
Apr/May	20	27	4	11	City	CIT42
Apr/May	21	28	5	12	Campbelltown	CAM4
Apr/May	28	5	12	19	Parramatta	PAR42
May	3	4	10	11	Parramatta	PAR5
May	6	7	13	14	City	CIT5
May/Jun	12	19	26	2	City	CIT52
May	13	14	20	21	Parramatta	PAR52
May	17	18	24	25	City	CIT53
May/Jun	18	25	1	8	Hurstville	HUR5
May/Jun	24	25	31	1	Parramatta	PAR53
May/Jun	26	27	2	3	Parramatta	PAR54
June	1	8	15	22	Rooty Hill	RH6
June	3	4	10	11	City	CIT6
June	3	4	10	11	Wollongong	WOL6
June	4	11	18	25	Parramatta	PAR6
June	4	11	18	25	Campbelltown	CAM6
June	8	9	15	16	City	CIT62
June	8	9	15	16	Parramatta	PAR62
June	17	18	24	25	City	CIT63
June	17	18	24	25	Chatswood	CHA6
June	21	22	28	29	City	CIT64
June	21	22	28	29	Parramatta	PAR63
July	6	13	20	27	Parramatta	PAR7
July	9	16	23	30	City	CIT7
July	15	16	22	23	Parramatta	PAR72
July	21	22	28	29	City	CIT72
Jul/Aug	21	28	4	11	Parramatta	PAR73
Aug	2	9	16	23	City	CIT8
Aug	2	3	9	10	Parramatta	PAR8
Aug	3	4	10	11	Hurstville	HUR8
Aug	5	6	12	13	City	CIT82
Aug	6	13	20	27	Parramatta	PAR82
Aug	11	12	18	19	Campbelltown	CAM8
Aug	16	17	23	24	Parramatta	PAR83
Aug/Sep	17	24	31	7	City	CIT83
Aug/Sep	18	25	1	8	Parramatta	PAR84
Aug	18	19	25	26	Rooty Hill	RH8
Aug/Sep	30	31	6	7	Parramatta	PAR85
Sep	1	2	8	9	City	CIT9
Sep	3	10	17	24	Chatswood	CHA9
Sep	7	14	21	28	Wollongong	WOL9
Sep	9	16	23	30	Parramatta	PAR9
Sep/Oct	10	17	24	1	City	CIT92
Sep	14	15	21	22	Parramatta	PAR92
Sep	20	21	27	28	City	CIT93
Sep	22	23	29	30	Parramatta	PAR93
Sep/Oct	29	6	13	20	City	CIT94
Sep/Oct	30	7	14	21	Rooty Hill	RH9
Oct	1	8	15	22	Parramatta	PAR10
Oct	5	12	19	26	City	CIT10
Oct	6	7	13	14	Parramatta	PAR102
Oct	11	12	18	19	Parramatta	PAR103

Oct/Nov	11	18	25	1	Campbelltown	CAM10
Oct/Nov	11	18	25	1	Hurstville	HUR10
Oct	14	15	21	22	City	CIT102
Oct/Nov	20	27	3	10	Parramatta	PAR104
Oct/Nov	28	29	4	5	Parramatta	PAR105
Nov	1	2	8	9	City	CIT11
Nov	3	4	10	11	Wollongong	WOL11
Nov	5	12	19	26	City	CIT112
Nov	9	16	23	30	Parramatta	PAR11
Nov	10	11	17	18	City	CIT113
Nov/Dec	15	22	29	6	City	CIT114
Nov	17	18	24	25	Parramatta	PAR112
Nov	22	23	29	30	Rooty Hill	RH11
Nov/Dec	29	30	6	7	Parramatta	PAR113
Nov/Dec	30	1	7	8	City	CIT115
Dec	7	8	14	15	Campbelltown	CAM12
Dec	7	8	14	15	Hurstville	HUR12
Dec	9	10	16	17	City	CIT12
Dec	9	10	16	17	Parramatta	PAR12

ohs risk management for supervisors & managers

formerly OHS for Supervisors & Line Managers
\$470 Plus GST (\$517 incl. GST)

Feb	12	13	City	CITS2
Feb	25	26	Parramatta	PARS2
Mar	9	10	City	CITS3
Mar	22	23	Parramatta	PARS3
Mar	23	24	City	CITS32
Apr	1	2	Parramatta	PARS4
Apr	19	20	City	CITS4
Apr	29	30	Parramatta	PARS42
May	17	18	Parramatta	PARS5
May	20	21	City	CITS5
June	23	24	City	CITS6
June	23	24	Parramatta	PARS6
July	8	9	Parramatta	PARS7
July	14	15	City	CITS7
Aug	16	17	Parramatta	PARS8
Aug	19	20	City	CITS8
Sep	1	2	Parramatta	PARS9
Sep	14	15	City	CITS9
Oct	7	8	City	CITS10
Oct	25	26	Parramatta	PARS10
Nov	3	4	City	CITS11
Nov	11	12	Parramatta	PARS11
Dec	1	2	Parramatta	PARS12
Dec	2	3	City	CITS12

construction general ohs induction

\$120 (GST free)

Feb	9	City	CITCN2
Mar	1	Parramatta	PARCN3
Apr	13	Parramatta	PARCN4
Apr	27	City	CITCN4
May	17	Parramatta	PARCN5
Jun	15	Parramatta	PARCN6
July	19	City	CITCN7
Aug	30	Parramatta	PARCN8
Oct	5	City	CITCN10
Oct	25	Parramatta	PARCN10
Nov	22	Parramatta	PARCN11
Dec	7	City	CITCN12

effective case coordination for return to work coordinators

\$290 Plus 10% GST (\$319 incl. GST)

Apr	2	City	CITE4
July	19	Parramatta	PAR7
Oct	18	City	CITE10

senior first aid

\$160 Plus 10% GST (\$176 incl. GST)

Feb	16	17	City	CITFA2
Mar	1	2	Parramatta	PARFA3
Apr	6	7	City	CITFA4
May	6	7	Parramatta	PARFA5
May/Jun	31	1	City	CITFA5
Jun/Jul	30	1	Parramatta	PARFA6
Aug	3	4	City	CITFA8
Sep	2	3	Parramatta	PARFA9
Oct	7	8	City	CITFA10
Nov	8	9	Parramatta	PARFA11

ohs committee chairperson*

\$260 Plus 10% GST (\$286 incl. GST)

Mar	18	Parramatta	PARC3
Apr	19	City	CITC4
May	18	Parramatta	PARC5
June	23	City	CITC6
July	14	Parramatta	PARC7
Aug	10	City	CITC8
Sep	17	Parramatta	PARC9
Oct	11	City	CITC10
Nov	2	Parramatta	PARC11
Dec	13	City	CITC12

* There is no WorkCover Accredited Course

introduction to return to work co-ordination

\$480 (GST free)

Feb	5	6	Parramatta	PARR2
Feb	23	24	City	CITR2
Mar	3	4	Parramatta	PARR3
Mar	16	17	City	CITR3
Mar	30	31	Parramatta	PARR32
May	13	14	City	CITR5
June	8	9	City	CITR6
July	12	13	City	CITR7
July	29	30	Parramatta	PARR7
Aug	18	19	Parramatta	PARR8
Aug	25	26	City	CITR8
Sep	22	23	City	CITR9
Oct	28	29	City	CITR10
Nov	15	16	Parramatta	PARR11
Nov	24	25	City	CITR11
Dec	14	15	City	CITR12
Dec	14	15	Parramatta	PARR12

ohs committee refresher/update*

\$260 Plus 10% GST (\$286 incl. GST)

Feb	13	Parramatta	PARF2
Mar	10	Parramatta	PARF3
Mar	30	City	CITF3
May	7	Parramatta	PARF5
June	10	Parramatta	PARF6
June	30	City	CITF6
July	5	Parramatta	PARF7
Aug	11	City	CITF8
Sep	3	City	CITF9
Oct	5	Parramatta	PARF10
Nov	16	City	CITF11
Dec	3	Parramatta	PARF12

* There is no WorkCover Accredited Course

workplace substances

1 day course \$260 Plus 10% GST (\$286 incl. GST)

Apr	28	City	CITWS4
Aug	5	Parramatta	PARWS8

Visit our website
www.courtenell.com.au

for information on our courses, OH&S information, search facility & recent editions of our publications
'Committee Member' (now 'Your Safety Matters')

For more information call us on:

9552 2380

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Chief Executive Officer



A new Code of Practice has been developed to guide employers in preventing health and safety risks associated with moving plant on construction sites. *The Code of Practice Moving Plant on Construction Sites* provides practical guidance on the safe operation of moving plant, controlling workplace hazards, supervision and training. WorkCover's Construction Industry Reference Group and the Civil Contractors Federation will be holding information seminars about the new Code across NSW from late March to June 2004. See page 6 for further information about the Code of Practice and information seminars.

Falls from heights is a significant problem on construction sites and results in serious injuries and death of workers. Every employer has a legal duty to ensure that any worker required to work at heights can do so safely and without risk to their health. WorkCover provides guidance on page 14 about the two Codes of Practice for working at heights and details the ongoing safety compliance program targeting work at heights in the NSW construction industry.

A series of WorkCover open days will be held at shearing sheds across the state from March to May. The open days are a practical demonstration of WorkCover's ShearSafety incentive

scheme to improve occupational health and safety in shearing sheds across NSW.

The first WorkCover shearing shed open day was recently held at a property in Caloola, just 32 kilometres south of Bathurst, to showcase the health and safety modifications made to the property's shearing shed. See page 10 for more details about the ShearSafety improvement initiative with before and after photos of shed modifications.

WorkCover will be focusing on the occupational health and safety of young workers during 2004 by educating employers about identifying and preventing hazards in the workplace.

WorkCover has been running a statewide television advertising campaign that focuses on the need for employers to provide a safe workplace, proper training and supervision for workers, especially young workers.

Young workers entering the workforce or a new workplace can be particularly vulnerable to safety risks as they are generally very keen, inexperienced and may not be willing to speak up about concerns they have. See page 3 for employer responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

I urge employers to pay special attention to the health and safety of their young workers and provide them with the appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to undertake their work safely.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jon Blackwell', written in a cursive style.

Jon Blackwell
Chief Executive Officer
WorkCover NSW

Protect your young workers

from workplace hazards

STARTING A NEW JOB can be an exciting experience for young people entering the workforce or a new workplace.

Employers and those in control of workplaces need to be conscious that young workers often join the workforce keen, enthusiastic, ready to please and usually not willing to speak up about things that might concern them. All of these things make them particularly vulnerable.

Employers must pay special attention to the health and safety of young workers. Workplace hazards need to be identified, the risk of injury assessed and appropriate control measures put in place to ensure health and safety is not put at risk.

Working on construction sites, working at heights, using electrical equipment, plant or machinery are all areas of immediate high risk. Others, like working with chemicals or repetitive processes, can cause injury or illness over a period of time.

A culture of workplace safety needs to be established that doesn't accept the risk of injury 'as part of the job'. Workplaces need to be appropriately managed and the potential for injury or illness identified, assessed and suitably controlled to ensure safety. Workers, young and old, have a legitimate role to assist in this process and should be appropriately consulted about matters that affect their health and safety.

Under the new occupational health and safety legislation, employers must:

- identify the safety risks associated with the tasks their workers are required to perform and put in place procedures to eliminate or control these risks
- train workers in these procedures and provide them with any safety equipment they may need to use
- ensure workers perform their tasks safely by providing supervision, training and support
- encourage workers to raise with their supervisor any safety issues they may encounter.



Above: A supervisor checks a safety harness from the WorkCover television campaign

WorkCover has produced two publications to help businesses and young workers better understand their rights and obligations with regard to work place safety.

Starting work? Know your Legal Rights (Catalogue No. 915) and *Protecting Young Workers from Workplace Hazards* (Catalogue No. 227) can be ordered from the WorkCover Publications Hotline on **1300 799 003**.

For further information, visit the WorkCover website **www.workcover.nsw.gov.au** or phone the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.

'Employer of the Year'

'ABSOLUTELY THRILLED', said Andrew de Lore, General Manager of Somersby-based Continental ACE Pty Ltd, when he received the award for 'Employer of the Year' at the 2003 WorkCover NSW Premium Discount Scheme (PDS) Awards held in November 2003.

Continental ACE, the leading supplier of conveyors and conveyor technology to Australia and Asia, is one of approximately 2200 NSW employers who have benefited by participating in the innovative Scheme, which rewards those who improve their occupational health and safety (OHS) and injury management (IM) systems.

Since its introduction in June 2000, the PDS has provided more than \$67 million in workers compensation premium reductions to those participating in the Scheme – and has helped provide more than 324,000 workers with a better and safer environment in which to work.

Continental ACE is a subsidiary of Continental Conveyor and Equipment Pty Ltd, which has three sites in Australia – at Somersby, Minto and Mackay. The parent company was formed when North America's largest manufacturer and supplier of conveyor systems, Continental Conveyor and Equipment Company, acquired Australia's most progressive conveyor engineering group, Australian Conveyor Engineering.

Continental ACE, with 49 employees at its Somersby manufacturing plant, offers a total systems approach to the design, manufacture, installation, commissioning and operation of conveyor systems.

In 2001, the company was introduced to the PDS and was attracted by the benchmarking opportunity the Scheme provides, the discipline of annual audits and the focus on long-term sustainable improvement in all aspects of workplace health and safety.

Before finally committing to the PDS, the company reviewed the potential benefits of participating in the Scheme – a reduction in claims, improved systems and processes, safer work practices, fewer accidents/incidents, premium cost reductions, and an overall cultural change towards OHS. As a result of the review, Continental ACE decided to enter the PDS and appointed the Australian Industry Group (AIG) as its Premium Discount Adviser to help them in developing the company's OHS and IM systems.

INITIATIVES

During its first year in the PDS, a raft of initiatives and innovations were introduced:

- pre-employment medicals were conducted
- injury management procedures were reviewed
- more useful and meaningful suitable duties for injured workers were adopted
- rehabilitation of long-term claimants was improved
- workplace assessments were increased
- incident reporting was enhanced
- OHS training was implemented
- a systematic risk assessment program was also introduced and solutions implemented.

To restrict the need to carry heavy items:

- workshop trolleys were introduced
- an air-rail lifting system was installed
- an overhead lifter and sub-assembly waist-high skid were installed
- a rotating welding jig was created to reduce repetitive movements by workers, especially twisting and lifting.

Below: Continental Ace receives their PDS Award from WorkCover CEO Jon Blackwell and Minister John Della Bosca



Continental ACE Pty Ltd

Following the appointment of a new company president, workplace safety was placed at the top of all monthly meeting agendas and company-wide safety reports were reviewed by the president.

Regular contact with its workers compensation insurer, Vero Workers Compensation, allowed the company to develop more efficient claims management procedures by collating and analysing statistics, such as return-to-work outcomes, claims costs and lost-time injury rates.

The treatment provider, Hill Street Rehabilitation, became actively involved in the return-to-work program, developing a list of suitable duties for three key roles.

BENEFITS

Continental ACE has benefited in several ways through its involvement in the PDS. Its cost of claims has reduced significantly, from more than \$150,000 (12 claims) to less than \$1000 (three claims), in the first 12 months. Its experience premium has also fallen – by \$277,000 – which supports the ultimate objective of the PDS of ensuring sustainable premium reductions.

By implementing programs to improve workplace safety and return-to-work strategies for its injured workers, the company achieved the maximum 15 per cent discount on its workers compensation premium during its first year in the PDS – a discount exceeding \$22,000.

The PDS promotes effective business management and emphasises that a great track record in OHS, IM and improved return-to-work is not just important in improving staff morale and retention through better and safe work practices, but is also good for the organisation's bottom line.

'But financial benefits are secondary', said Mr de Lore.

'More importantly', he added, 'the company has benefited from the dramatic cultural change in employees' attitude to OHS and IM'.

The staff's general level of awareness has increased due to more frequent and improved communication and, as a result, employees have adopted a more active role in workplace safety. This has been demonstrated by an increased

willingness to report incidents and potential hazards so that changes can be made and risks managed.

With its keen focus on workplace safety, the company's motto, 'Engineering a safer way forward', takes on a new, broader meaning.

Addressing manual handling risks

As for many manufacturing enterprises, manual handling of heavy components is common practice at Continental ACE and injuries can be a major problem. Workers compensation claims exceeded \$500,000 in 2000 and a large proportion of these were for manual handling-related injuries. Obviously, something had to be done.

In 2002, the cost of claims at Continental ACE was less than \$1000. What changed?

Continental ACE joined the PDS and, among other things, developed a range of innovative solutions to address manual handling problems, most notably a 'rotating welding jig' used in the manufacture of its conveyor frames.

Traditionally, frames were manufactured with welded brackets, which required the welder to lift the 20 kg frame five or six times during the manufacturing process.

The rotating welding jig eliminated the need for the welder to lift the frame and made it unnecessary to lean over the job while welding. The work area was also modified with waist-high trestles and overhead air-operated winches, which limited manual handling to lifting the individual components into the pre-assembly jig prior to the welding process.

Not only was the welder's job made easier, the jig also reduced the overall mass of the frame, making it cheaper to produce and lighter for the end user. The number of frames produced per hour also significantly increased.

The development of the jig was a combined effort between the engineering, design and manufacturing departments, coupled with regular consultation with the end users.

Moving Plant

Code of Practice

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS have a new Code of Practice to guide them in preventing health and safety risks on construction sites where moving plant is used.

The term 'moving plant' refers to machinery that:

- moves under its own power or is pulled or pushed by other moving plant
- moves on or around the construction site, enters or leaves the site, or moves past the site, including road vehicles (such as tip trucks).

The *Code of Practice Moving Plant on Construction Sites* provides safe work guidance procedures on planning work, controls for the safe operation of plant, practical steps for controlling hazards, supervision and training. The Code applies to the use of moving plant at all construction sites in NSW, except mines.

The Code's aim is to prevent critical and/or fatal injuries caused by moving plant striking people, rolling over, or coming in contact with electricity supplies either above or below ground.

The Code adopts a risk management approach, whereby employers and self-employed people must identify any foreseeable hazards, assess the risks and take action to eliminate or control them.

To assist employers, operators and users of moving plant understand their occupational health and safety responsibilities under the new Code of Practice, the Civil

Contractors Federation (CCF) and the NSW Construction Industry Reference Group are presenting a series of information seminars in 14 locations across NSW from late March to June 2004.

Around 8000 seminar invitations have been issued by supporting stakeholders including the CCF, Master Builders Association, Master Plumbers Association, Housing Industry Association, Employers First, Rail Infrastructure Corporation, the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) will also provide a speaker and panel member for the seminars.

Bookings for the sessions should be made by completing the booking slip on the invitation and posting it to the CCF at 30 Oramzi Road, Giraween, NSW 2145.

If you did not receive an invitation, booking arrangements can be made with the CCF on (02) 9631 8610.

All sessions will run from 7.30am to 10.00am and cost \$40p.p. including a hot breakfast.

The *Code of Practice Moving Plant on Construction Sites* (Catalogue No. 1310) can be ordered from the WorkCover Publications Hotline on **1300 799 003**.



City/Town	Venue	Day Date
Parramatta	Rydges Hotel	Thur 25 March
Lismore	Lismore Workers Club	Thur 6 May
Coffs Harbour	Pacific Bay Resort	Fri 7 May
Griffith	Gemini Hotel	Wed 12 May
Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga RSL Club	Thur 13 May
Newcastle	Wests Leagues Club	Tue 25 May
Port Macquarie	Port Macquarie Panthers	Wed 26 May
Tamworth	The Frog and Toad	Thur 26 May
Bathurst	Bathurst Panthers	Wed 2 June
Dubbo	Country Comfort Motel	Thur 3 June
Shellharbour	Shellharbour Workers Club	Tue 22 June
Bateman's Bay	Corrigan Cove Resort	Wed 23 June
Queanbeyan	Tiger's Club	Thur 24 June
Liverpool	Liverpool Catholic Club	Wed 30 June

WorkCover participates in Vietnamese New Year Festival

WORKCOVER NSW RECENTLY TOOK PART in the three-day Vietnamese New Year Festival, which was held at Warwick Farm from 31 January to 2 February 2004.

This is the third year WorkCover has participated in the Festival as part of the Government Business Education Network (GBEN), alongside the Australian Taxation Office and the NSW Office of Industrial Relations.

The Vietnamese New Year Festival is an annual traditional event celebrated by the Vietnamese Community that marks the beginning of the lunar calendar. The festival includes a range of cultural performances, displays and exhibits.

WorkCover's exhibit provided information and literature, including two publications in the Vietnamese language, about employer and worker OHS responsibilities and the workers compensation notification system.

Vietnamese-speaking WorkCover inspectors, Duy Nguyen and Tuan Tran, and WorkCover staff member, Cherie McGrath, were on hand during the festival to talk about safety issues and answer any queries posed by attendees.

WorkCover received plenty of interest from the public with over 1000 people visiting the exhibit over the three days, and staff members receiving many requests for information and publications.

Obituary – Geoffrey Mansell

Born 25 December 1945

Died 17 February 2004

GEOFFREY MANSELL was a visionary in the field of occupational health and safety (OHS). His commitment and foresight contributed to significant advancements in the development of OHS training and inspection practices in NSW.

Geoff commenced work in 1978 as the Director of Corporate Planning and Research for the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), the predecessor to WorkCover. This unit provided operational staff for the inquiry into occupational health and safety and led to the introduction of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983*.

Geoff became the first OHS Manager at the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board (now Sydney Water) before returning to DIR as the Director of Inspection Services in 1986. In this capacity, Geoff was instrumental in the development of the Newcastle University OHS Degree which provided the opportunity for the up-skilling of the inspectorate at that time. Geoff held this position for a number of years during which time he assisted in redefining the role of the inspectorate.

In 1988, Geoff attended an international inspectors' conference in Vienna, Austria, where he found that inspectors in the USA were using laptops to assist them in all aspects

of their work. Laptops were introduced into the WorkCover Inspectorate in 1989.

In 1994, Geoff became the Regional Manager Metropolitan West in the Regional Operations Division of WorkCover. During this time, he was the first to formulate the use of an auditing tool by which inspectors could conduct their work.

Geoff was a driving force in the introduction of OHS pre-qualification requirements for the construction industry. He also acted as WorkCover's Manager, Regional Operations Division, and led that Division through a period of major change that saw the establishment of the OHS Division as it is today.

Geoff's final management role was as Manager of WorkCover's Systems Safe Unit, where he introduced workplace-auditing systems.

Geoff's interest in and commitment to equity issues was evident in his involvement with the WorkCover Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Network.

Geoff was a visionary manager whose contribution will have a lasting impact on WorkCover, in particular, the OHS Division.

All who worked with him will sadly miss Geoff. His legacy in contributing to the shape of OHS in NSW will continue.

The Arbitrator



Above: Ross Bell

ROSS BELL is one of over 80 independent arbitrators appointed by the Workers Compensation Commission, the main body now responsible for resolving workers compensation disputes in New South Wales.

The Commission's arbitrators are legally qualified and/or have expertise in workplace injury management and are located across the state.

'I enjoy working as an arbitrator because I can actively assist employers and injured workers who are in dispute toward a solution, rather than imposing an outcome on them,' said Ross.

'Earlier in life I was a high school teacher,' he said. 'That was the start of my involvement in dispute resolution, whether in the classroom, playground or staff room.'

'From teaching I moved into the industrial relations side of our public education system, working for the Teachers' Federation and then the NSW Education Department.'

Ross's ongoing involvement in dispute resolution guided him to a legal career. He became a lawyer in 1994 and worked in private practice specialising in workers compensation.

By 1998, Ross was enlisted as a conciliator with the Workers Compensation Resolution Service. When the Workers Compensation Commission was formed in 2002, Bell was appointed as an Arbitrator.

The Commission is not bound by the rules of evidence, but 'informs itself', which means that the rituals of the adversarial system are avoided. The arbitrator can call for relevant information without having to rely on the legal representatives to bring out the evidence, as previously used in the courts.

Arbitrators also have more flexibility to actively explore avenues for settlement and act as conciliators right through the process.

A key aspect of the Workers Compensation Commission's dispute resolution process is the teleconference. Provided there is phone access, an arbitrator can conduct a teleconference from anywhere. This is beneficial because parties in dispute and their advisors can take part without having to travel to a central point.

'It's terrific for people living in rural or regional areas because they're not forced to travel to the city,' said Ross, who is himself based in regional NSW.

'Many disputes that come before the Commission settle successfully at this early teleconference stage with the help of an arbitrator. If the teleconference fails to provide an outcome, the resolution continues with a formal 'face-to-face' conference soon after,' he said.

Ross explains that whilst arbitrators are not judges, they must exercise judicial powers when determining disputes, if they are not resolved.

'An arbitrator must listen to people, absorb and assess the evidence, and get right to the genuine issues,' said Ross. 'A situation is rarely black or white. You have to weigh things up and make a decision. That is not as easy as it sounds.'

Ross enjoys the challenges of being a Commission arbitrator.

'You can start off with a dispute that seems intractable, but if working through the issues leads to an agreement, it can be very satisfying. The parties can keep control of the outcome and avoid having a decision imposed on them.'

For further information about the Workers Compensation Commission visit their website at www.wcc.nsw.gov.au or call **1300 368 040**.

New test for harmful chemicals

SOLVENTS CAN BE PARTICULARLY HARMFUL and lead to adverse health problems in people exposed to them over a period of time. Solvents are commonly found in a range of workplaces, placing employees at risk of developing serious medical conditions.

WorkCover's Laboratory Services at Thornleigh has developed a new test for screening a large number of commonly found volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including solvents.

The test uses a sophisticated analytical instrument called a gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer (GC/MS), which both identifies the specific chemicals and the amount found in a sample.

One of the first steps in controlling the risks associated with using solvents is to find out how much of the solvent vapour is present in the workplace; more particularly, in the worker's breathing zone.

Charcoal is commonly used for such sampling devices because of its ability to trap a wide variety of organic chemicals on it.

Air samples can be collected onto either charcoal sampling tubes or charcoal passive sampling devices, which look like badges and can be clipped onto the collars of workers so that breathing zone air can be sampled.

By comparing the amount of a solvent found in an air sample, taken via a charcoal passive sampler or a sampling tube with the Australian Exposure standard, the level of risk associated with a particular process or a worker's daily exposure can be evaluated.

Below: Laboratory worker



A result greater than the standard would indicate an unsafe condition that might, over time, lead to adverse health effects in some workers. The test will be available from March 2004.

The GC/MS test can screen for over 70 commonly found VOCs like toluene, xylene, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, benzene, hexane, ethanol and ethyl acetate.

HIGH TECH TESTS USED FOR IDENTIFYING POTENTIALLY HARMFUL MATERIALS

WorkCover's Laboratory Services has also been using two sophisticated X-Ray instruments for identifying a range of potentially harmful substances in the workplace such as lead, asbestos and crystalline silica.

The X-Ray Fluorescence and X-Ray Diffraction are very sensitive and accurate analytical instruments.

X-RAY FLORESCENCE AND DIFFRACTION TESTS

The Florescence test provides the elemental composition of a sample and can identify most of the chemical elements listed in the periodic table.

The Diffraction test gives excellent qualitative information about the nature of the chemical or mineral, provided that the sample is crystalline in nature. For example, a Florescence test might identify lead and sulphur in a sample; whereas the Diffraction test will specify whether the sample contains lead sulphate or lead sulphide.

There are many requests for the combined test on a variety of bulk samples such as dust, rocks or minerals because of its diagnostic value to problem solving in the workplace.

There are plans to purchase new X-Ray Fluorescence and X-Ray Diffraction instruments this year so that it can continue to be at the forefront of analytical excellence in the OHS area.

NSW employers and workers will be able to avail themselves of highly accurate and useful technical information to assist them in identifying workplace hazards and helping with the risk assessment process.

For more information, call WorkCover's Laboratory Services on (02) 9473 4000 or email lab@workcover.nsw.gov.au.

Shearing Shed

Open Day



Above: Shed before improvements.



Above: Grinder before.



Above: Shearing board and stand before.

THE FIRST WORKCOVER SHEARING SHED OPEN DAY

was recently held at a property in Caloola, 32 kilometres south of Bathurst, to showcase the health and safety modifications made to the property's shearing shed.

The open day was held as a part of WorkCover's Shearing Shed Improvement Initiative, which provides a dollar-for-dollar incentive of up to \$20,000 for 13 shearing shed owners, to assist them develop a safer working environment. The sheds were selected competitively and are located in different regions throughout NSW.

Farm property owners, shearers and members of the local community attended the open day and were able to view photos of the shed before the improvements were made and compare them with the final modifications. Information about the improvements and estimated costs were displayed around the shed.

Improvements are based on those outlined in WorkCover's *Shearing Shed Guide 2002* and include guarding of grinders, replacement of electrical wiring, better ventilation, lighting and floors, changes to shearing board and stand design and improvements to sheep pens and gates.

The initiative is a component of WorkCover's ShearSafety project, which was developed in response to the high workers compensation tariff rate that woolgrowers and shearing contractors pay. The ShearSafety Project aims to help woolgrowers and shearers improve their workplace safety, thereby, reducing the number of workplace injuries.

The information provided at the open day illustrated that many improvements need not be excessive in cost and can be applied to sheds of all types and ages.

A number of associated organisations were on site to provide additional information to attendees, such as FarmSafe NSW, Department of Agriculture, the Shearing Contractors Association and the Australian Workers Union.

During 2004, another seven shearing shed open days are scheduled (see opposite). Details of the open days will also be advertised in the rural press.

The *Shearing Guide 2002* (Catalogue No. 692) can be ordered from the WorkCover Publications Hotline on **1300 799 003**.

For further information about the ShearSafety Project, visit the WorkCover website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or call the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.



Above: Shed after improvements.



Above top: Grinder after.
Above: Shearing board and stand after.

SHED OPEN DAY SCHEDULE

Wednesday 24 March	'Hillside', Harden
Thursday 25 March	'Gundouran', Wagga Wagga
Thursday 1 April	'Glen Yarra', Forbes
Tuesday 6 April	'Hillwood', Middle Arm
Thursday 29 April	'Queenlee', Uralla
Friday 30 April	'Marinka', Walcha
Thursday 6 May	'Currawong', Delegate

Notification requirements for blood-borne pathogen exposure

EXPOSURE TO HUMAN BODY FLUIDS poses a serious health and safety risk to employees in many workplaces. Employers are legally required to notify WorkCover NSW of any employee exposed to body fluids in which there is a risk of the transmission of blood-borne diseases.

To assist all NSW employers to meet this requirement, WorkCover has released a new guide entitled the *Notification Requirements for Occupational Exposure to Human Blood-borne Pathogens*.

The guide explains that blood and other body substances, such as saliva, mucous and semen, may contain harmful bacteria and viruses, called blood-borne pathogens, which can cause disease in humans if transmitted from one infected person to another.

Blood-borne pathogens can be transmitted when:

- contaminated sharp objects, such as needles, broken glass, scalpels and any other sharp objects or instruments, puncture the skin
- infected blood or body substances splash onto the eye, other mucous membranes, cuts, abrasions and open wounds
- shared personal objects like syringes, razors, toothbrushes and other personal hygiene items come into contact with body fluids
- non-sterile tattooing, body piercing and skin penetration procedures occur.

Transmission of at least 20 different pathogens by needlesticks and other sharps have been reported, including viruses such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Under Clause 341(h) of the *OHS Regulation 2001*, employers are legally required to notify WorkCover of any workplace incident that occurs which, although not immediately life threatening, can present a risk to health or safety. The Clause specifies exposure to body fluids that presents a risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases.

Employers can do so by completing a Notification Form online via WorkCover's website at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or by calling **13 10 50**. The employer must also contact their workers compensation insurer within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident when compensation is or may be payable.

If the incident involves a non-worker, the employer must notify WorkCover within seven days of the incident.

Exemption Order 003/03 specifically exempts some NSW public health organisations, described by the NSW *Health Services Act 1997*, from reporting each individual incident of occupational exposure if they have the required reporting and recording systems in place.

Public health organisations that are exempt include area health services, statutory health corporations and affiliated health organisations.

Health services that are not exempt and therefore, must report each individual incident of exposure, are the Corrections Health Service, Ambulance Service of NSW, psychiatric institutions, rehabilitation facilities and mothercraft facilities. These organisations must comply with the notification requirements specified under the *OHS Regulation 2001*.

Many different occupations can expose employees to the blood and body substances of another person, possibly involving the transmission of blood-borne pathogens.

Notification Requirements for Occupational Exposure to Human Blood-borne Pathogens can be obtained on the WorkCover NSW website, www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.



Progressive partnerships

reducing workplace back injuries



A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP between WorkCover NSW and the NSW health services industry has been seen as contributing to a 40 per cent reduction in the number of major back injuries and associated workers compensation claims, since the partnership began in 1994.

The recently released WorkCover report, *Persistence in Partnerships*, studies the outcomes achieved since WorkCover and the health industry banded together with the aim of reducing the incidence of back-related injuries in NSW.

The partnership between WorkCover NSW and the state health industry was one of eight industry initiatives formed under WorkCover's 'BackWatch Program'. The five-year, \$5 million BackWatch program targeted 10 industries with a high risk of work related back injuries. The health industry ranked number one for back injury risk.

The aim was to continue to reduce the incidence of back injuries in the industry by following and expanding on the principles of prevention and risk management.

The partnership maintained a focus on risk management to eliminate or reduce exposures to back injury risk factors. This led to a major cultural change for the health industry, which had previously felt that 'good lifting technique' was the answer to back injury prevention.

Health industry injury statistics were analysed in 2002 and showed that the number of major workplace back injuries

had reduced from 1,902 in 1994/1995 to 1,281 in 2000/2001. This was a strong downward trend with an overall 40% reduction.

The associated costs also appeared to be reducing when adjusted for cost of living. This outcome has far exceeded the initial goal of the BackWatch program of a 10 per cent reduction.

Persistence in Partnerships highlights reasons for the success of the partnership in reducing the number of major back injuries and associated workers compensation claims reported:

- The partnership between WorkCover and the health industry represented a new style of interaction between a regulator and its stakeholders. It featured the participation of major health industry unions and associations, the willingness of all parties to be flexible and an innovative responsiveness of the health industry and its management.
- The partnership, in conjunction with the industry team approach, provided the basis for the alignment of WorkCover's services to the mutually agreed goals of the health industry.
- Wide promotion and extensive data collection on the health industry and its manual handling problems facilitated the rapid uptake of interest and participation in back injury prevention by this sector.

A number of elements have been identified from the study as being critical to the success that has been demonstrated:

- recognition by all parties of the need to address a problem
- identification and targeting of 'Black Spot Issues'
- a focus on incremental improvement
- demonstrated internal expertise in the identified problem area within WorkCover
- identification of structural factors and other lead indicators within an industry, which can support responsiveness and change
- consensus on common goals, which permits all stakeholders to adopt a flexible approach, not only to a problem, but also to each other
- change in the culture of an industry towards measurement and evaluation.

Falls from heights prevention

WORKCOVER NSW IS TARGETING SAFETY compliance in the nsw construction industry with a busy schedule of projects planned for 2004. In addition to demolition, asbestos and electrical safety, working at heights will be an area of high priority for compliance projects.

During 2003, WorkCover conducted a number of construction industry blitzes including two that targeted working at heights.

A compliance blitz on residential building contractors was conducted in May and June 2003. WorkCover inspectors visited 420 contractors and issued 441 notices, including 74 relating to unsafe working at heights and 28 relating to scaffolding.

WorkCover inspectors then visited over 600 commercial construction sites during November 2003 and issued 600 safety notices, largely for hazards associated with working at heights.

From 19 April 2004, WorkCover will also join forces with every state and territory for the first time in a national campaign to target falls from heights, which is a significant problem on Australian construction sites resulting in serious injury and death.

Inspectors from every state and territory will visit at least 800 housing and small commercial construction sites around Australia to check that builders are managing work at heights and to take the necessary enforcement action wherever dangerous practices are found.

During the coming national campaign, inspectors will check that builders and sub-contractors have identified the fall hazards at their sites and are using necessary safety measures.

Particular attention will be paid to finish, fit-out and building services installation work: areas that account for a large proportion of the fall-related injuries suffered by construction workers each year.

As with all WorkCover blitzes, enforcement action will be taken wherever appropriate safety standards are not being met.

SAFE WORKING AT HEIGHTS

During 2000/2001, three workers fell to their deaths in the workplace and 1,108 workers suffered a permanent disability as a result of a fall.

There is no excuse for exposing workers to this risk. Every employer has a legal duty to ensure that any worker required to work at heights can do so safely and without risk to their health. Falls from heights should be prevented, rather than arrested by fall arrest systems.

When working on a roof, there are two potential fall areas; from the edge or through the roof itself.

Two established WorkCover Codes of Practice, *Safe Working on Roofs, Part 1 – Commercial and Industrial Buildings* and *Safe Work on Roofs, Part 2 – Residential Buildings*, provide guidance for safe working on residential and industrial roofs. These are currently being revised in line with the *OHS Regulation 2001*, which provide control measures.

In line with the steps to prevent people falling from the edge of a roof, scaffolding should be erected around its perimeter; another type of temporary work platform, such as an elevated work platform, should be used; or a guardrail system erected along the length of the building.

Fall arrest systems must be provided where workers can fall two metres or more and it has not been practicable to provide either scaffolding, another temporary work platform or edge protection.

To prevent people falling through the roof of a commercial building, the installation of safety mesh is recommended. Recent inspections conducted by WorkCover have demonstrated that, in some circumstances, safety mesh is being installed incorrectly and does not serve as an effective control measure.

campaign

targets the biggest risk on construction sites

A copy of the *OHS Regulation 2001* (Catalogue No. 108), the *Code of Practice: Safe Work on Roofs, Part 1 – Commercial and Industrial Buildings* (Catalogue No. 304) and *Code of Practice: Safe Work on Roofs, Part 2 – Residential Buildings* (Catalogue No. 308) can be obtained by calling the

Publications Hotline on **1300 799 003** or can be downloaded from the WorkCover NSW website **www.workcover.nsw.gov.au**.

For further information, please call the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.



Paralympians spreading the word

AS THE ATHENS 2004 PARALYMPIC GAMES approaches, five Paralympians are working harder than ever; but not just in the sporting arena. They are busy sharing their inspirational stories at workplaces, schools, colleges and throughout the corporate sector.

John Marshall, Terry Giddy, Kahi Puru, Heath Francis and Nigel Smith are successful Paralympic athletes that are proudly supported by WorkCover NSW through its Paralympian Sponsorship Program.

Each athlete was injured in the workplace and is available to tell their courageous stories and promote the workplace safety message. The five athletes attend workplaces, industry groups, conferences, media events and corporate functions to discuss how their individual accidents occurred; measures that could have been taken to prevent the accident; and their rehabilitation and return to the workforce.

JOHN MARSHALL – ARCHERY

John Marshall is a police sergeant in the NSW Police Force. He was involved in an on-duty motorcycle accident over 20 years ago that left him a paraplegic.

John became interested in the sport of archery and was thrilled when selected to represent Australia in the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. John recently competed in the able-bodied National Archery Championships in Perth. As a member of the NSW team, he won gold in the teams event.

John strives to make a difference as a world-class athlete and is a dedicated member of the NSW Police Diving Unit.

TERRY GIDDY – ATHLETICS

Terry Giddy has represented Australian field athletics at almost every Paralympic Games since 1972.

At 15 years of age, Terry became a paraplegic after a tree-felling accident occurred while working with his grandfather. Terry developed an interest in athletics during his rehabilitation and first joined international competition after his workmates threw him a challenge. If he made the 1970 Commonwealth Games team, they agreed to fund his trip



to the Games. Terry made the team and won gold in his first event.

In addition to being an international athlete, Terry has also designed, built and currently runs his own gym from his backyard. He believes that in life you have to take a chance, be committed and determined to achieve success.

HEATH FRANCIS – ATHLETICS

Heath Francis was seven years old when his arm was injured at his family's workplace and was amputated just below his elbow. Heath quickly decided that he was not going to let the accident stop him achieving his goals. He was a member of the successful Australian team at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, where he won gold in the 400m track athletics event and was part of the world record breaking 4 x 100m and 4 x 400 relay teams.

Heath recently competed in the International Paralympic Committee World Championships in Lille where he received silver medals in the 400m and 4 x 400m relay, and a bronze in the 4 x 100m relay. He is now training for the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games.

Heath is studying by distance education for a combined Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business degree at Newcastle University while maintaining a rigorous training schedule at the Institute of Sport. He is known to say, 'Tough times never last, tough people do'.

about workplace safety



From left to right: John Marshall, Terry Giddy, Heath Francis, Nigel Smith and Kahi Puru

NIGEL SMITH – VOLLEYBALL

In December 1993, Nigel was involved in a heavy industrial accident where his leg was caught in a chain conveyor on an industrial paint machine. After numerous operations to save his leg, it had to be amputated.

Nigel had always loved golf, but in 1997, he developed an interest in volleyball. Nigel first represented Australia in the World Championships for standing volleyball in Poland, 1998. In 1999, Nigel was selected to represent Australia in Canada and in Sydney. He was then selected to play for Australia at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games.

Nigel continues to play volleyball in the first division able-bodied competition.

KAHI PURU – POWERLIFTING

Kahi Puru was crushed in a fork-lift accident at work and had his left leg amputated. Doctors feared he would not survive. But he did survive and went on to become Australia's best bench press powerlifter in the 100+kg class.

Kahi is ranked number one in Australia, seventh in the world and represented Australia at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games.

Kahi recently completed a Certificate III Fitness Course at

Newcastle TAFE and is a qualified fitness instructor.

Kahi says that working with colleagues is similar to playing on a football field.

'You all have to work together. If someone isn't pulling his or her weight, the whole team loses. It is the same at work; if you're not watching out for your work mates and doing your best, someone could get badly injured and then the whole team suffers,' he said.

These five inspirational people have overcome the adversity and trauma of a serious workplace accident and reached a heightened level of personal and sporting success. Through their presentations, the athletes deliver the message that workplace safety is paramount and the responsibility of both employers and workers.

To book an athlete to speak at your workplace or event, please fill out the application form inserted in this publication and send to WorkCover NSW. Alternatively, an application form can be obtained on the WorkCover website, www.workcover.nsw.gov.au, or by calling the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.

Please note that organisations can only book one athlete per year. The minimum audience size is 50 people. This is a free service provided by WorkCover NSW.

WorkCover initiatives for the community services sector

AT THE COMMUNITY SECTOR FORUM IN JULY 2003, WorkCover NSW made a commitment to ensure that the community sector receives advice and information so that community service organisations can understand and satisfy their occupational health and safety (OHS) responsibilities.

As part of this commitment, WorkCover has been working closely with the community services sector to implement two initiatives that aim to help workers return home from work free from injury and illness.

The two initiatives are the funding of a 12-month position with the New South Wales Council of Social Services (NCOSS) and the development of *The Community Services Safety Pack*.

NCOSS OHS PROJECT OFFICER

WorkCover is funding a 12-month salaried project officer position within NCOSS, to provide occupational health and safety support needs to non-government organisations (NGOs), particularly those funded by government human service agencies. It is anticipated that the position will take effect from March 2004.

The project officer will initially research and determine NGOs' support needs, obtain OHS and Workers Compensation resources and make the information available to them.

A free consultation service will be provided to NCOSS members. The project officer will assist the development and implementation of OHS systems and be responsible for the ongoing promotion of the project within the sector.

They will also develop relationships with training providers, peak bodies and other stakeholders with the intention of providing suitable training in OHS and Workers Compensation for NGOs.

The introduction of the position will allow for the delivery of information sessions through the NCOSS Regional Forum Network, and represents a significant investment on the part of WorkCover to assist the community services sector in meeting their OHS and Workers Compensation obligations.

The nature of work and the diversity of work settings presents challenges for maintaining the health and safety of workers for many community service organisations.

Each year, about two per cent of workers in the community services sector incur a work-related injury that results in a workers compensation claim.

Workcover and NCOSS are working together to find practical solutions to difficulties that NGOs face in managing the safety of workers.

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SAFETY PACK

WorkCover has produced *The Community Services Safety Pack*, which is a resource for management committee members, managers, coordinators or directors of community sector organisations and members of OHS committees.

The Community Services Safety Pack provides user-friendly information on OHS, workers compensation and injury management for community service organisations.

It identifies OHS and Workers Compensation issues specific to the sector and gives step-by-step instructions for organisations on how to begin developing an OHS management system.

The Safety Pack may be used in training handouts to workers and volunteers or as part of an organisation's operating procedures.

Visit the WorkCover NSW website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au to download a copy of the *The Community Services Safety Pack* (Catalogue No. 4421) or call the WorkCover Publications Hotline on **1300 799 003** to purchase a hard copy or CD-ROM.



Stop Press

ROLL-OVER PROTECTIVE STRUCTURE SCHEME EXTENSION

WorkCover's successful tractor Roll-Over Protective Structure (ROPS) scheme has been extended to 31 May 2004.

The ROPS scheme offers rebates of \$200 to tractor owners who fit an approved roll over protection structure to their tractors. Correct roll over protection is a legal requirement under NSW Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

The ROPS scheme had been due to end on 31 December 2003, however, the extension will give owners until 31 May 2004 to take advantage of the rebate, by which time the remaining ROPS funds will be exhausted.

The ROPS scheme has been an overwhelming success, with 8,823 tractor owners receiving \$200 rebates since the scheme was launched in August 2000, which is a total of \$1.76 million provided.

Serious tractor-related incidents in the first year of the scheme fell from 102 to 78, representing a 29 per cent improvement on the preceding nine-year average.

The ROPS rebate has been especially helpful for farmers who have been severely affected by the drought. The scheme has improved the safety of nearly 9,000 tractors and has made a measurable difference to safety in rural NSW.

Tractors remain the most dangerous piece of equipment on NSW farms, with rollovers alone claiming 19 lives in the past decade.

All tractors weighing between 560 kg and 15,000 kg are required by law to have ROPS fitted.

Information on the ROPS scheme can be obtained from WorkCover's toll-free **Rural Safety Hotline, 1800 300 377** or by downloading application forms at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.

WorkCover Diary

1. SHEARSAFETY SHED OPEN DAYS

Demonstration and display of financially affordable improvements for shearing sheds, based on WorkCover's *Shearing Guide 2002*.

'Hillside', Bouyeo Rd, HARDEN **Wed 24 March**

'Gundouran', RMB 937 Albury Rd, WAGGA WAGGA
Thu 25 March

'Glen Yarra', FORBES **Thu 1 April**

'Hillwood', 1867 Middle Arm Rd, MIDDLE ARM **Tue 6 April**

'Queenlee', Salisbury Plains, URALLA **Thu 29 April**

'Marinka', WALCHA **Fri 30 April**

'Currawong', DELEGATE **Thu 6 May**

RSVP to WorkCover's Rural Team on 02 4321 5269 to register your attendance.

2. INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR MOVING PLANT CODE OF PRACTICE

Who should attend: Construction contractors, supervisors, operators, landscapers, suppliers of Moving Plant.

Time: 7.30am – 10am. **Cost:** \$40p.p. (includes hot breakfast)

Enquiries: Civil Contractors Federation 02 9631 8610

Parramatta	Rydges Hotel	Thur 25 March
Lismore	Lismore Workers Club	Thur 6 May
Coffs Harbour	Pacific Bay Resort	Fri 7 May
Griffith	Gemini Hotel	Wed 12 May
Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga RSL Club	Thur 13 May
Newcastle	West's Leagues Club	Tue 25 May
Port Macquarie	Port Macquarie Panthers	Wed 26 May
Tamworth	The Frog and Toad	Thur 26 May
Bathurst	Bathurst Panthers	Wed 2 June
Dubbo	Country Comfort Motel	Thur 3 June
Shellharbour	Shellharbour Workers Club	Tue 22 June
Bateman's Bay	Corrigan Cove Resort	Wed 23 June
Queanbeyan	Tiger's Club	Thur 24 June
Liverpool	Liverpool Catholic Club	Wed 30 June

Workplace fatalities & injuries

MAN FALLS FROM UNSECURED FLOOR JOIST

A carpenter suffered head injuries on a residential construction site when he walked on an unsecured joist that tipped causing him to fall 3.5m into the basement area.

SAW MILLER SUSTAINS FATAL CRUSH INJURIES

A sawmill worker sustained fatal crush injuries while operating a timber skidder machine that moved when its engine was started.

CARPENTER FALLS AFTER ELECTRICAL SHOCK

Two carpenters were working off the roof of a house replacing rotten timber fascia boards when one of the men disconnected a light and received a shock that threw him almost 3m to the ground causing him to break an arm and sustain a cut to his head.

MECHANIC KILLED DURING TOW MISHAP

A mechanic sustained fatal injuries while attempting to free a bogged truck by towing it with a tractor.

AIR CONDITIONING INSTALLATION LEADS TO FALL

An electrician working at a residential construction site fell nearly 6m after pulling cable through from one point in the roof to the air conditioning when a heavy downpour occurred. He slipped and slid down the roof and sustained fractures to his ankle and wrist.

WORKER KILLED AFTER FALL INTO TANK

A man became trapped and sustained fatal injuries when he fell into a tank located at a sewage plant.

Disclaimer: These reports are of a preliminary nature and are based on initial reports from WorkCover Inspectors. Full details of incidents will be available after the completion of coronial and other processes. No liability on the part of any parties referred to herein can be inferred from these reports.

Prosecution Highlights

FIREWORKS FIRM FINED \$162,500 AFTER FATAL EXPLOSION

Company: Foti's International Fireworks (Displays) Pty Ltd

Fine amount: \$162,500

Date of Judgment: 12 December 2003

A western Sydney display fireworks company has been fined \$162,500 by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission sitting in court session following an explosion and fire, which killed an employee in 2000.

Foti's International Fireworks (Displays) Pty Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* for failing to ensure the health and safety of its employees.

The worker who died had been preparing up to twenty-eight 75mm aerial shells in a shed at Foti's factory in Leppington when the explosion occurred.

Justice Staunton stated that Foti's approach to Occupational Health and Safety prior to the incident had been cursory and that the risk of injury was obvious and foreseeable. It was those factors that rendered the offence objectively serious.

\$175,000 FINE AFTER WORKER'S LIFT SHAFT FALL

Company: Bovis Lend Lease Pty Ltd

Fine amount: \$175,000

Date of Judgment: 8 January 2004

A scaffolder who was seriously injured when he fell 20 metres down a lift shaft on a Sydney building site has led to construction company Bovis Lend Lease Pty Ltd being fined \$175,000.

The company pleaded guilty in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission sitting in court session to failing to ensure the health and safety of the worker under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983*.

The court heard that the scaffolder fell on 29 March 1999, when a temporary access platform in the lift shaft, on which he was standing, gave way.

The scaffolder suffered massive external and internal injuries, including collapsed lungs, and underwent 18 surgical operations after the incident. Another scaffolder working at a higher level in the lift shaft was able to scramble to safety.

In handing down the penalty, IRC President J Wright said: 'the defendant failed to carry out basic obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. In addition, the risk posed by the failure to ensure a safe working system for the erection of the stair system was clearly foreseeable.'

\$322,000 IN FINES FOR INCIDENT AT REDFERN STATION

Company 1: Rail Infrastructure Corporation

Fine amount: \$147,000

Company 2: Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd

Fine amount: \$175,000

Date of Judgment: 12 January 2004

Fines totaling \$322,000 have been imposed by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission sitting in court session following an incident at Redfern Railway Station in which a worker suffered severe head injuries causing brain damage.

Rail Infrastructure Corporation was fined \$147,000 and Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd \$175,000 after both pleaded guilty to breaches of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* for failing to ensure the health and safety of workers.

On 10 July, 1999, a Barclay Mowlem Construction employee was seriously hurt and another narrowly escaped injury when struck by a redundant electrical wire, which fell while they were attempting to remove it from overhead pylons.

The court heard that the overhead wire, which was not live, had been held in place with ropes to maintain it in a state of tension during the removal process.

However, the restraining ropes slipped off, releasing the wire from its tension, 'like a big rubber band', and it fell onto the station platform in a whiplash motion striking the two workers.

In handing down his decision, IRC President J Wright said: 'Barclay Mowlem was not unaware of the problem posed by high radial forces on the contact wire. The risk was not, however, adequately or appropriately dealt with.'

He said the culpability of Rail Infrastructure Corporation in the matter lay in the corporation's failure to adequately supervise the work of Barclay Mowlem and its employees.

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION FINED \$300,000 AFTER TRAIN DRIVER DEATHS

Company: Rail Infrastructure Corporation

Fine amount: \$300,000

Date of Judgment: 20 January 2004

The Rail Infrastructure Corporation (RIC) has been fined \$300,000 by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission sitting in court session following an incident in which two train drivers were killed.

The two drivers suffered fatal injuries on 19 May 1998, when their National Rail Corporation Freight Service locomotive was derailed after hitting concrete debris from a collapsed bridge support on the Unanderra/Moss Vale rail line.

The RIC pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that the railway line was safe and without risks to workers under section 17(a) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983*.

The court heard that demolition work to remove the deck of a redundant road bridge over the rail line in 1997 destabilised the bridge supports.

Furthermore, no engineering advice was sought before the work was performed, and heavy rain, which fell between 6 May and 19 May 1998, caused the collapse of the support on the upside of the rail line.

In handing down his judgment, IRC President J Wright said: 'the relevant risk was plainly foreseeable. Simple, straightforward, well known and, in the defendant's case, well-promulgated precautions, if observed and required to be observed, would have obviated the risk and avoided the accident and loss of life.'

Disclaimer: This list is a selection of cases and does not represent all prosecutions undertaken and/or resolved by WorkCover NSW (under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983*) in the three months since WorkCover News was last published.

POPULAR PAGES

This new section of the WorkCover NSW website displays the most popular downloads from the site, including both pages and publications. The top 20 pages and publications will be updated regularly. To access this information, follow the link under 'More Information'.

The aim is to provide users with a 'quick find' method for popular pages, and speed up the way users find information, by having the most popular information available just one click away from the home page.

Visit: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/most_popular.htm

ANNUAL REPORT

The WorkCover 2002/03 Annual Report is now available on the website. The report includes details regarding:

- reforms to the Workers Compensation Scheme, consolidated during 2002/03

- the NSW Workplace Safety Summit
- a number of high profile educational programs which successfully targeted a range of industries
- the relocation of WorkCover's head office to Gosford.

Available from the home page under 'More Information' or visit: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Publications/General/AnnualReports/annualreport_200203.htm

Users can download all or part of the Annual report by selecting the desired download option.

ROPS EXTENSION

Roll Over Protection Scheme (ROPS) Rebate has been extended to 31 May 2004. Information is available from: <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Initiatives/ROPS/default.htm>

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Feb 11 • May 12 • Sept 28

OHS RISK MANAGEMENT FOR SUPERVISORS - 2 Days

Feb 4,5 • March 10,11 • May 19,20 • July 21,22 • Sept 15,16 • Nov 23,24.

INTRODUCTION TO RETURN TO WORK CO-ORDINATION - 2 Days

Feb 16,17 • April 14,15 • June 8,9 • Aug 18,19 • Oct 5,6 • Nov 29,30

OHS INDUCTION FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS - 1/2 Day

March 12 • June 11 • Sept 9

WORKPLACE SUBSTANCES MANAGEMENT - 2 Days

Feb 10,11 • May 11,12 • Sept 8,9

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- **Training** – our accredited trainers facilitate a range of OHS training courses (both WorkCover NSW and QBE courses) at competitive rates. Please contact us for a 2004 Training Calendar.

- **OHS Risk Management** – we can conduct risk assessments in your workplace, including manual handling, plant, hazardous substances, etc. We can also assist you with OHS legislative compliance and due diligence.

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Gary Wall
Manager, OHS Risk Management Services
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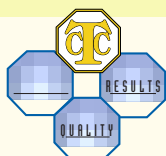


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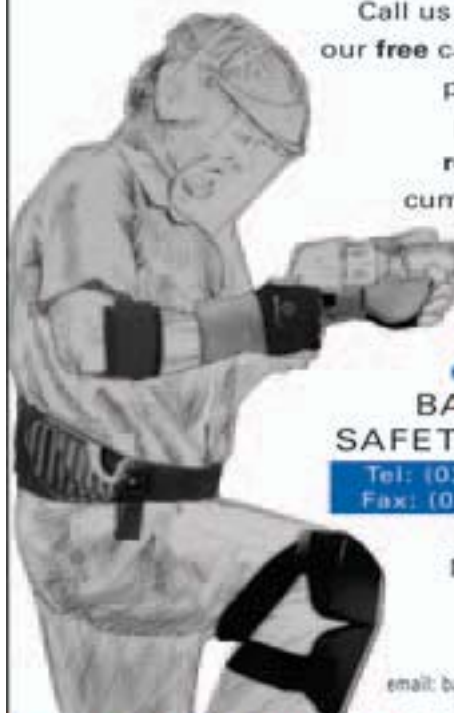
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25-26 March 2004
11-12 May 2004
24 June 2004 (Awareness)
28-29 June 2004
26-27 July 2004
16-17 August 2004
2-3 September 2004
11-12 October 2004
25-26 November 2004

OHS Consultation (for committee members and OHS Representative)

8, 9, 15, 16 March 2004
20, 21, 22, 23 April 2004
10, 17, 24, 31 May 2004
17, 18, 24, 25 June 2004
19, 20, 21, 22 July 2004
6, 13, 20, 27 August 2004
18, 19, 25, 26 August 2004
8, 9, 15, 16 September 2004
12, 13, 14, 15 October 2004
5, 12, 19, 26 November 2004
1, 2, 8, 9 December 2004

OHS Risk Management - Skills Training

31 March 2004 (Community Services)
24 March 2004 (General)
27 April 2004 (Child Care)
21 May 2004 (General)
28 May 2004 (Community Services)
1 July 2004 (General)
19 July 2004 (Child Care)
23 July 2004 (Community Services)
31 August 2004 (Community Services)
21 September 2004 (General)
25 October 2004 (Child Care)
1 November 2004 (Community Services)
1 December 2004 (Child Care)
3 December 2004 (General)

Certificate IV in Auditing OHS Systems

19, 20, 21, 22, 23 April 2004
13, 14, 15, 16, 17 September 2004
6, 7, 8, 9, 10 December 2004

Writing Workplace Documents

21-22 June 2004
19-20 October 2004

Introduction to Return to Work Coordination

1-2 April 2004
7-8 June 2004
4-5 August 2004
11-12 November 2004

OHS Committee Chairperson

3 June 2004
12 August 2004
18 October 2004

OHS Induction for Employees

1 March 2004
27 April 2004
25 June 2004
20 August 2004
28 October 2004

Senior First Aid

10-11 March 2004
7-8 April 2004
18-19 May 2004
15-16 June 2004
23-24 August 2004
5-6 October 2004
8-9 November 2004

Manual Handling for Employees

2 March 2004
28 May 2004
2 July 2004
10 September 2004
18 November 2004

OHS Developing and Implementing OHS Systems

29-30 April 2004
9-10 August 2004
15-16 November 2004

Accident/Incident Investigation

6-7 May 2004
9-10 September 2004

How to Conduct an OHS Audit

6-7 May 2004
23-24 September 2004

Accessing & Using OHS Information

9 March 2004
1 September 2004

OHS & Managing Human Resources

3, 10, 17, 24 March 2004
3, 10, 17, 24 June 2004
8, 15, 22, 29 October 2004

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