



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

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## QUICKSCAN

- IRC Fines Security Firms \$400,000 Over Guard's Death** 1
- Asbestos sufferers hopeful but cautious** 1
- Victoria has one year free of farm deaths** 1
- Safety tips for new young workers** 2
- Neighbours' workplace aggression issues resolved** 2
- Tunnel operators risk motorists' health** 3
- Mechanical failure and human error blamed for ferry crash** 3
- SA's SafeWork has new chair** 4
- School ceiling falls on students and teacher** 4
- New jockey safety helmet on display** 4
- Is professional accreditation necessary? - Letter** 5

## IRC Fines Security Firms \$400,000 Over Guard's Death

December 2 2005

The NSW Industrial Relations Commission has fined two Sydney security firms more than \$400,000 over the murder of a Chubb security guard.

Ahmad Rashid was dragged from his car outside the Punchbowl RSL Club in south-west Sydney and shot dead on September 3, 2001.

The 32-year-old was carrying the club's takings of \$55,291 to a borrowed, non-armoured car. The sedan was not fitted with remote central locking, two-way radio, safe or panic alarm, WorkCover said in a statement.

In what WorkCover called a landmark ruling, the IRC today found contractor Chubb Security and sub-contractor All Time Security were liable for not providing Mr Rashid with safe working conditions.

Chubb Security Australia was fined \$246,000 while All Time Security was fined \$140,000.

All Time Security's director, Safdar Ghafoor, was personally fined \$21,000, WorkCover said. WorkCover NSW chief executive Jon Blackwell said today's ruling should act as a warning to sloppy practice. "This judgment is a landmark decision which has clarified that the place of work definition in the Occupational Health and Safety Act applies equally to principal contractors and sub-contractors," he said. AAP

### Asbestos sufferer says \$4.5 billion deal is enough

November 30 2005

Asbestosis sufferer Bernie Banton says if a \$4.5 billion payout from James Hardie Industries for asbestos victims is true, it will be the best deal imaginable.

But he says he won't believe it until he sees it in writing.

"After the briefing from the government negotiators yesterday, I feel a little more confident that we are going to get this over the line, he said today. "But let's face it, the pen has not been put to paper yet." Mr Banton said the \$4.5 billion over 40 years would begin with an amount up front, then topped up each year.

Asked if that was enough, Mr Banton said, "I believe it is. We've worked very hard to get this deal and from all accounts, it is the very best that we could have imagined," he said. "For future victims it gives them some sort of justice. Money never replaces your health and welfare, and I've certainly suffered heaps through all of this," he told the Nine Network.

Mr Banton said without the very public campaign for compensation for asbestos victims, he did not believe James Hardie would have considered such a payment.

"Sufferers all over Australia will absolutely hail Thursday if we get this deal signed off, but we are talking about James Hardie - they have danced around the table for over 15 months and thankfully someone's finally tripped them up." AAP

### A Year of Farm Safety But Lessons Still To Learn

November 24, 2005

The Minister for WorkCover, John Lenders, today congratulated Victoria's farm employees for achieving one year without one work-related death.

Since the same week last year no farmers have died while working on farms, compared with an average of 14 in the previous four years. Mr Lenders said the figures demonstrated that farmers were listening to WorkSafe's messages.

WorkSafe is helping by funding a number of initiatives to reduce farm deaths and injuries. It appears our message is getting through and farming communities are reaping the benefits, Mr Lenders said. Farmers are increasingly talking about work and getting involved in making their farms safer, not just for themselves and their workers, but also their families.

Previous years have shown us the terrible cost suffered by regional communities when one of their own is killed. In 2004, 13 farmers died on Victorian farms. Since 2000, 57 deaths related to farm work have been reported to WorkSafe, nearly all were men and more than 60 per cent were over the age of 50.

Mr Lenders said that while a recent death on a hobby farm was a tragic incident the WorkSafe message in relation to working on farms was getting through. The

Continued on page 2





# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

## Adobe Acrobat V7 Information

Some readers have expressed difficulty in upgrading to the latest version of Acrobat Reader with one of the problems being that the download can be over 25 megabytes - a substantial burden to dial-up internet connections.

Safety At Work publishers are now allowed to distribute the latest edition of Acrobat Reader on a CD. If you want a copy of Acrobat Reader 7.00 please email me at [jonesk@sia.org.au](mailto:jonesk@sia.org.au) and include your full postal address. A CD will be mailed to you shortly after.

The CD won't be pretty as it is a burnt copy of the software that Adobe permits us to distribute. It is not allowed to be given to anyone other than the person requesting the CD and all CDs will be checked with Norton Antivirus before distribution.

Continued from page 1

dramatic reduction in fatalities by workers on farms has followed a major WorkSafe campaign, Mr Lenders said. This campaign, developed in partnership with the farming sector, is having great success in improving workplace health and safety on farms, he said. And while it is welcome news in workplace safety we know there is much more to do. WorkSafe initiatives to improve farm safety include:

- More than 1000 farm visits by inspectors in the past year;
- Targeted campaigns around tractor safety and second-hand equipment sales;
- New guidance material to help farmers reduce risks at work;
- Additional funding for the Farm Safe Alliance, a stakeholder group involving the VFF and the Australian Workers Union and;
- An enhanced presence at agricultural field days, sponsoring and participation in community health events and practical on farm safety training days.

Mr Lenders said that even though the figures were encouraging, Victoria's regional community could not let down its guard. The number of non-farm regional workplace deaths, however, remains unacceptably high, Mr Lenders said.

Of the 16 deaths reported to WorkSafe this year, 13 have happened in regional workplaces three in the past month. This figure is horrifying. Employers and workers must use it as the trigger to review their own practices, and take whatever steps are needed to protect themselves and their work mates.

Source: Minister For Workcover

## Call for Young Worker Safety

November 27, 2005

WorkCover Minister John Lenders today urged employers to take care of the thousands of young Victorians who are entering the workforce for the first time, as the university and school year comes to an end.

As thousands of young Victorians begin holiday jobs, it is critical for employers to act on the workplace safety of inexperienced workers, Mr Lenders said. Since 2001, 10 people under the age of 20 died while engaged in work or at a workplace in Victoria. Last year alone, 778 young workers aged under 20 were injured seriously enough at work to make a workplace injury insurance claim, and sadly many of those injuries occur during the Christmas break.

All new employees but particularly young and inexperienced workers should be given advice on safety procedures on their first day of work. Mr Lenders said taking the time to explain workplace hazards and safety policies would prevent injuries and save lives. Lets make their first experience at work be a positive one and not a tragic one, he said.

There are a range of ways that employers can make workplaces safer for young workers including proper induction and training, as well as giving employees the ability to raise issues and concerns about hazards in the workplace.

Other strategies that can minimise workplace risks include:

- Removing "slips, trips and falls" hazards; particularly using slip mats in kitchens and other high risk areas;
- Ensuring machines, such as mixers or dough rollers, had appropriate guarding and shut-down procedures and;
- The use of, height adjustable trolleys and other appropriate equipment to retrieve and move stock to prevent manual handling injuries.

Mr Lenders also urged young workers to seek advice from employers or fellow workmates if they were unsure about workplace dangers. "Too often young workers don't have the confidence to access advice from fellow workmates and employees. The message is simple if you don't know then ask." Source: Minister For Workcover

## Sacked Neighbours star gets more money from Grundy

December 1 2005

Sacked Neighbours star Shane Connor has walked away from his civil suit against the show's producers with more than \$230,000.

Mr Connor, who played Joe Scully in the internationally-successful Network Ten soap, sued Grundy Television for wrongful dismissal after being fired from the show in September 2003. He made a compromise offer after legal proceedings were underway of \$174,000, which Grundy rejected.

Yesterday, Victorian Supreme Court Justice Robert Osborn ordered Grundy Television to pay Mr Connor \$196,709 in damages. Today he ordered a further \$35,178 be paid to Mr Connor in interest plus legal costs.

During the civil hearing, Grundy argued it was entitled to sack Mr Connor on the grounds of negligence and misconduct, and the fact he received a final written warning about his behaviour five months earlier. It alleged he was aggressive

Continued on page 3

# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Continued from page 2

towards other cast members, instructed them not to follow directions and turned up with drug hangovers.

But Justice Osborn said Grundy had no grounds to sack Mr Connor in September 2003 and had not given him the opportunity to respond to the allegations made against him. "It is apparent that the chain of reports upon which the defendant relied in making the decision to terminate was flawed by very serious exaggeration," he said.

Mr Connor was not in court today and is currently preparing for the Christmas pantomime Mother Goose in the English city of Stoke On Trent. He said in a statement read by his brother Danny, that the sacking dealt his career a major blow and forced him to seek work overseas.

Grundy yesterday said it did not agree with the court's ruling. In a statement, a Grundy spokeswoman said Connor's claim against the company had "meant a difficult time for all concerned but at all times Grundy's position has been to protect the integrity and safety of the cast, crew and program itself".

"The court has found that Mr Connor's behaviour in September 2003 was insufficient grounds for Grundy to terminate his contract at that time. "Grundy does not agree with the decision of the court, and is considering its position. AAP

## Tunnel operators risking health of motorists

2 December 2005

Deadly carbon monoxide fumes should have forced the M5 East Tunnel to close on at least five occasions, according to the operator's incident reports.

Rather than suffer the embarrassment of having to close the tunnel, the Daily Telegraph reported that its operators risked the health of motorists. The RTA was also aware of the danger but chose to do nothing, yesterday's paper reported.

At least half of the tunnel's control room staff have quit in the past three months over disgust with the safety standards. Air quality has fallen to Level 4, or red light warning, at least five

times in a 10-month period, the operator's incident reports note.

AAP

## Mechanical failure, human error blamed for ferry crash

December 1 2005

Mechanical failure and human error were to blame for the crash of a Sydney ferry in March, a report by the NSW Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI) has found.

No passengers were on board and no crew members were injured when the Manly ferry Collaroy crashed into a wharf at Circular Quay on March 4.

A second crash by the Collaroy at Circular Quay, which occurred on September 19, is still under investigation.

The report into the March crash, tabled in parliament today, found the vessel failed to respond to the master's operating instructions because of a faulty electrical circuit. It also found the master failed to activate warning and back-up systems, that there was poor crew management, and a lack of communication between the engineer and master.

A modified starting procedure had been used on Collaroy in the lead-up to the accident because of problems with the propulsion control system, the report found. "However, there was no evidence to suggest that any formal risk assessment had been applied to address these problems, their potential consequences or the risks associated with the modified procedures," it said.

The OTSI also found one of the Collaroy's deckhands was not subjected to a drug test following the accident.

Transport Minister John Watkins said the government would review the report's findings. Sydney Ferries will hold a vessel-to-vessel evacuation drill tomorrow morning. AAP

Continued on page 4



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Continued from page 3

## Former car boss to head workplace safety group

December 1 2005

Former Mitsubishi boss .. Tom Phillips .. has been appointed to the South Australian government's SafeWork advisory committee. Industrial relations minister Michael Wright says Mr Phillips had been selected .. because of the experience he gained from several decades' work in the car manufacturing sector.

The SafeWork committee advises the government on occupational health and safety policies and legislation. AAP

## Six girls and teacher injured in school building collapse

December 2 2005

Six students and a teacher have been injured in the partial collapse of a building at the exclusive Ascham Girls school in Sydney's east.

The incident occurred about 2.45pm (AEDT) when the ceiling of a room on the bottom floor of a century-old two-storey sandstone building collapsed onto the class. The 35-year-old female teacher suffered abdominal and spinal injuries and was taken to Prince of Wales Hospital, NSW Ambulance spokesman John Wilson said.

The students, aged 12 and 13, suffered minor to moderate injuries, NSW Ambulance said. The worst of their injuries was a suspected broken ankle. They were all taken to Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick.

Authorities earlier said a roof had collapsed at the Edgecliff school but later said other parts of the building's structure may have given way. "This is a result of a partial collapse of a building," Mr Wilson said. Structural engineers are examining the building. AAP

## Safety helmet to be demonstrated in Melbourne

December 4 2005

The prototype of a full face jockeys' helmet (pictured below) designed to minimise head and facial injuries will be demonstrated at the Moonee Valley meeting in Melbourne on Friday.

Sydney riders got a look at helmet at Rosehill last Saturday and several adjustments have since been made. The helmet, which has been developed by Mark Bryant of Safety Helmet Systems, gives 40 per cent more protection and has a rear locking device enabling it to be removed easily in the case of suspected neck injury.

The helmets will be made from lightweight Kevlar and weigh approximately 800 grams, about 240g more

than the current skull caps.

Racing NSW medical officer, Dr John Saxon, is part of the steering committee set up to address safety issues in the wake of a spate of serious falls earlier this year. He said the Sydney jockeys who tried the helmet on last week had expressed some concerns over ventilation and flexibility around the chin.

"The ventilation and the flexibility have been improved," Saxon said. "This is still the prototype and further modifications may need to be made."

Jockeys at yesterday's Rosehill and Newcastle meetings were give questionnaires regarding their equipment, riding and trackwork commitments and other aspects of their job as part of the ongoing investigation into jockey safety and health.

Recommendations will be made by the steering committee to racing authorities in March. AAP





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## Letter to the Editor - Professional Accreditation

I am a Member, and am working toward a Fellow.

I have credentials that are already part of both the national and state educative frameworks. Each accreditation is verifiable by a third party audit, eg WorkCover - who have carried out a couple of audits of my business over the past few years (as a part of their own ongoing check-and-review process), and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (who have audited WorkCover - both external - accredited trainers like myself - and internal - WorkCover's own staff) etc.

I personally do not see the need for the intervention of another accrediting body, no matter how well the system is established in other countries.

The failure of any system can - and should be found in the simple application of an audit... and, in its very simple, understandable, form, an audit has two aspects: "1: Check that a system exists; 2: Challenge that system." This applies to financial auditing, OHS auditing, educative auditing, and yes: accreditation auditing.

The one major weakness in any system is still our 'human error' factor (whether deliberate or through ignorance). Regardless of whatever system is in place, for example, a reviewer might a) decide to take a bribe, or b) accidentally turn two pages of a reviewing process and miss out on some key issue that should have been applied. Humans are Humans. I personally become concerned of anything springing from the USA, since they had their top emergency management official exposed without any credentials in the aftermath of the hurricane that hit New Orleans a few months ago, and also the fact that Ernst and Young (whose CFO in Australia recently received an award for good governance, by the way) - have several times had prosecutions against their operations in the USA, with suspensions against them for six month periods where they are not to take on new audit clients in the USA... Great work! And have you wondered why people like the Murdochs, etc. take their dollars offshore - away from Australia? So they can avoid our Australian corporate governance rules!!!

I think it is our current SIA 'business' that needs reviewing, and some more staff need hiring to not only professionally review accreditation upgrade applications, etc., but to ensure even the simpler paperwork of membership

applications is handled speedily and accurately. The dollars for this could very likely be gleaned from the various Safety Shows we lend our name to. Maybe get some hard-nosed wheeler dealers in to negotiate? Besides, if the SIA does not - of itself - rise to the occasion, ensuring its presence is stand alone in health and safety in Australia, I believe its own credibility will be watered down and 'lending its name' may not be worth so much to potential sponsors. There are some very big dollars in safety (don't forget, in Australia, the cost of safety is around thirty percent more than our defence budget, and look at how much money is spent on weaponry shows) and therefore make for fine fishing-grounds for operations that are out to make a buck, no matter how nice the wrapper, or smooth the talker.

If the various state bodies coordinate their national approach, there should be no need for mention of such things as having a USA-based body set-up in Singapore for the purpose of providing accreditation - WE should be there, providing our services, not so much to take-over the region, but to provide a helping hand to sister organisations, etc. (eg obviously, in consideration of the fact that we really are an Asian country through our geographic position, one of the aims already of some Aussie groups is the increased possibility of Australian expertise and assistance to the Chinese mining industry.)

Finally, I am a proud member of the SIA, and use every opportunity to enhance its good name and its members. It is an organisation worth promoting, and I even emphasise to potential clients: you should always consider my competitors, since quality cannot be denied, but whatever else, always check that the other business has SIA professionals in their line-up in the first instance. By ensuring plenty of publicity is given to the role of the SIA, if not a giant LEAP, at least a giant STEP, is taken to embedding its presence in the region.

My kind regards, and keep up your good work!

Doug Wakefield,  
Director, SafeMeasure Pty Ltd.

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