



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Proudly Sponsored by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)  
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## Workers Will Sabotage WorkChoices

### Workers will retaliate with sabotage - Labor senator

CANBERRA, March 30 2006

Workers may resort to "subtle sabotage" in retaliating against unscrupulous employers in the current industrial climate, a senior Labor senator and former union chief says.

Senator George Campbell said similar tactics occurred on assembly lines in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s when there was management exploitation.

"I worked for a long time in this country in the '50s and '60s and there was a lot of sabotage that went on in the workplace, in a very subtle way," he told reporters.

"What concerns me is the sort of relationship that's now been established in the workplace is going to encourage that sabotage to take place again.

"I don't mean in a serious sense, but little things, like a screw being left out.

"As they used to say, never buy a motor car that was produced on a Monday or Friday."

Senator Campbell trained as a shipwright and later was for many years national secretary of the militant leftwing metalworkers' union, before entering parliament in 1997.

He said the government's Work Choices laws reminded him of working in factories in his early days.

"I think workers will find subtle ways of evening up the score with employers if they are being unnecessarily oppressed in the workplace.

"I don't advocate it, I just accept reality.

"I mean, that is what happened in the '50s and '60s."

He said the problem with the Work Choices laws was that those who drew them up had never experienced the realities of factory work or blue-collar jobs.

"Some of them actually ought to spend a few months working in factories seeing what it's actually like to go to work at seven o'clock every morning to work on a production line, to know what kind of relationship is being management and labour in those circumstances.

"They never did. John Howard developed all his industrial relations agenda sitting in the MTIA (Metal Trades Industry Association) offices in North Sydney." AAP

### Changes needed to lifeboats after crew injury: report

MELBOURNE, March 27 2006

Australian transport safety investigators have recommended safety modifications to lifeboats after a crew member on a French Antarctic research vessel almost severed his thumb while trying to recover the body of another man who fell overboard.

A 40-year-old Frenchman either jumped or fell from the Antarctic research ship L'Astrolabe just before 3am (local time) on January 27 last year, while the ship was in the Southern Ocean about 400km south of Hobart.

The ship's master initiated a search when the crew member - who had been exhibiting signs of depression and was intoxicated - failed to report for a 4am (AEDT) watch.

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The crew found the man's body about 9.30am (AEDT) and dispatched one of the ship's lifeboats to recover it.

But during the recovery operation, the ship's second engineer was injured.

"The relative movement between the ship and the lifeboat in the two-metre seaway during the lifeboat recovery operation caused damage to the lifeboat, its fittings, and injured one crew member," an Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) spokesman said. "The second engineer almost severed his thumb when he caught his right hand between the swinging lifeboat fall block and the lifeboat hook assembly.

"Neither the fall block nor the suspension ring had hand holds attached, and the ship was not outlined with foul-weather recovery strops, thus the crew were required to manhandle the blocks and rings."

The ATSB investigation report released today recommended that ship owners, operators and masters of ships that carried enclosed lifeboats should consider fitting lifting rings with hand holds and foul-weather recovery strops.

The L'Astrolabe is the main resupply vessel used by the French Antarctic exploration authority L'Institute Polaire for its base, Dumont D'Urville, in Adelie Land.

It also ferries passengers and equipment to Concordia, the joint French and Italian Antarctic station.

The ship is based in Hobart and has been in service since the summer of 1988-89.

It has twice been chartered by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) for supply work. AAP

## Workshop to improve safety in crowd control

March 29 2006

How to reduce the risk of injury while dealing with aggressive or abusive patrons is one of the issues being examined during a special workshop in Melbourne next week.

The move is part of a program to make Victorian licensed venues and events safer for patrons and crowd controllers, who are often in the front line of aggressive, abusive and anti-social behaviour.

The workshop will focus on key crowd control activities, including entry control, violent behaviour, first response first aid and event evacuation. It will provide crowd controllers with an opportunity to have a say in how to make their industry safer.

WorkSafe Acting Director, Clarke Martin, said there was growing acknowledgment of the crucial role crowd controllers play in providing secure environments for all Victorians.

"It is a demanding role, with significant risks to health, safety and welfare for those employed as crowd controllers," Mr Martin said. "The majority of injuries relate to hazardous manual handling, fractures, cuts and open wounds. Crowd controllers are also often subjected to death threats and assaulted with weapons including bottles and knives."

Information gathered at the workshop will be used to develop practical measures that will be made into guidance material. This will help security companies and venue owners make entertainment venues safer for both the staff and patrons.

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## SIA EVENTS

### The Visions Conference 2006

Venue:

Rydges International Resort, Yeppoon

August 30, 31 - September 1 2006

[www.sia.org.au](http://www.sia.org.au)

### The Safety Conference, Sydney NSW

17 - 19 October 2006

[www.thesafetyshow.com](http://www.thesafetyshow.com).

### Safety in Action 2006

Venue: Melbourne Exhibition Centre,  
2 Clarendon Street Southbank

16-18 May 2006

<http://www.safetyinaction.net.au>

### Contractor Safety Management

SIA -Gippsland Branch

26 April 2006

More information is at <http://www.sia.org.au/documents/Invitationtoattendfunction260406.pdf>

## OTHER EVENTS

### Waves of Change

Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists, Inc.

Venue: Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort,  
Gold Coast QLD

2-6 December 2006

For more information email mailto:

[conference@aioh.org.au](mailto:conference@aioh.org.au)



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As well as WorkSafe, the workshop will include presentations from Victoria Police, Liquor Licensing, the Crowd Controllers Employers Association and Australian Hotels and Hospitality Association.

“By bringing together those working in the industry with employers, venue owners and other regulators, we can create solutions to help minimise risks that threaten the safety of those who control security at venues and improve the safety of patrons”.

The safety solutions workshop will be held at Rydges on Bell, 205 Bell Street, Preston, on Thursday 6 April between 9am and 3pm. Those wishing to attend can contact Amanda Kristapsons on 9641 1837 or go to [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) Source: WorkSafe

## Lemma slashes workers compensation premiums again

29 March 2006

NSW business will benefit from a 10 per cent reduction in workers compensation premium rates announced by NSW Premier Morris lemma today.

“This a \$290 million discount per year for 250,000 employers in NSW and is in addition to the five per cent (\$140m) reduction I announced in November 2005,” Mr lemma said.

It is the second reduction Mr lemma has announced in just eight months as Premier.

“The NSW Government is working hard to reduce the cost of doing business in NSW – by cutting workers compensation premiums we are saving money for every business in NSW.

“The NSW Government has designed a scheme that focuses on the needs of injured workers, with fewer disputes and delays, a focus on occupational health and safety, better injury management and return to work outcomes.

“Our changes rescued the finances of the WorkCover scheme, ensuring that the reduction from 30 June is both responsible and affordable.”

Mr lemma announced the premium reduction today with Minister for Commerce, John Della Bosca and Drummoyne MP, Angela D’Amore at the IGA Supermarket at Breakfast Point.

“This small business, for example, will save \$2,500 each year as a result of the reduction announced today – that’s practical assistance that makes doing business cheaper in NSW,” Mr lemma said.

In its latest calculation, released today, the independent actuary found the WorkCover scheme deficit has fallen to \$1,162 million – a substantial \$831 million less than it was six months ago.

“This consistent positive performance has allowed us to deliver a total 15 per cent rate reduction in just eight months - \$430 million per year - to help get NSW moving,” Mr lemma said.

The ten per cent rate reduction will deliver practical benefits for business:

- An industrial machinery manufacturer in Sydney’s northern suburbs will save \$237,916 per year.
- A bus service on the South Coast will save \$5,691.
- A small Concord florist will save \$223. As a small employer, they are protected from an increase even if they have a claim.

The NSW WorkCover scheme offers the nation’s largest suite of benefits for injured workers, but remains excellent value for employers. Some schemes provide support for two years, while the NSW scheme supports injured workers until they return to work or reach retirement age.

The NSW scheme has a target premium collection rate of 2.17 per cent of wages, which makes it the third lowest of the eight State and Territory jurisdictions.

This latest rate reduction builds on the recent improvements to the WorkCover premium system.

In the event of a claim, 92 per cent of NSW employers are now protected from an increase in their premium. The largest eight per cent of employers will continue to pay more if they have a claim.

Source: NSW Premier

## Victorian Farms Safer Under Bracks Government

March 28, 2006

The Minister for WorkCover, John Lenders, today released the Victorian government’s response to the

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Parliamentary Inquiry into the Cause of Fatality and Injury on Victorian Farms.

“Since the inquiry was launched the rates of injuries and deaths have improved dramatically,” Mr Lenders said. “The improvement in safety shows our initiatives to improve safety at Victorian farms are on the right track.”

Since 2001 the Bracks Government has provided more than \$2.5 million dollars to promote safer work practices on Victoria’s farms, including:

- OHS inspectors regularly visiting farms to provide advice and, where necessary, enforcing compliance with the new OHS legislation;
- Supporting and conducting OHS education and training for farmers via the State administered Farmbis program and other registered training organisations, and for students of rural primary schools via the WorkSafe Kids program;
- the development of farm safety specific publications, which includes the safe use of tractors, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and other farm machinery; and
- WorkSafe expanding the workplace safety message to rural Victoria through sponsorship of the Victorian Country Football League and Victorian Netball League.

“We have focused on building community partnerships to promote safety on Victoria’s farms,” Mr Lenders said. “The recent record low injury and death rates have been achieved through WorkSafe’s close relationship with the Victorian Farmers Federation and various trade unions.

“While we are clearly moving in the right direction we have already had a farm fatality this year which is a stark reminder of the dangers on farming worksites.”

Victorian farms employ about three percent of the State’s workforce but have accounted for over one-third (46) of the work-related deaths between 2001 and 2004

Last year there were no fatalities on Victoria’s commercial farms (compared to 14 in 2004).

Mr Lenders said that WorkSafe would continue to provide support to farmers through its activities to assist them in making their farms safer.

Source: The Minister for Workcover

## Country ambulance service investigation proposal

MELBOURNE, March 31 2006

The new chairman of Rural Ambulance Victoria wants the state government to investigate his organisation amid claims of sexual harassment, fraud and workplace bullying.

Leigh Hocking told The Age he would request the review at a crisis meeting with Health Minister Bronwyn Pike.

The state opposition called yesterday for RAV chief executive Doug Kimberley to be sacked after it was revealed a senior manager was allowed to keep his job despite allegedly sexually harassing his personal assistant, the Age said.

The call comes just days after revelations another manager, who has resigned, had been investigated for allegedly forging signatures to get jobs for his underqualified friends.

Ms Pike admitted yesterday that the service had serious problems but said she would wait for outcome of today’s meeting, the Age reported.

Mr Kimberley also defended his organisation.

“I think we’ve got a very good reputation but it’s under a bit of pressure and on that basis I have no intention of resigning,” he told the Age.

AAP

## 28 people overcome by fumes in Newcastle

SYDNEY, March 30 2006

Workers in a Newcastle office building have been taken to hospital after being overcome by fumes.

Authorities evacuated the building on the corner of Argyle Street and Wharf Road, Newcastle, about midday (AEDT) today after 28 people reported symptoms including headaches and eye irritation.

The NSW Fire Brigade’s hazardous materials unit was called to the building.

The nature of the fumes is yet to be determined, with the fire brigade unable to

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confirm reports paint fumes had caused the incident.

Twelve people were taken to John Hunter Hospital, nine to Mater Hospital and seven to Belmont Hospital - all in Newcastle.

A 40-year-old woman who had an asthma attack after inhaling the fumes was now in a stable condition, an ambulance spokesman said.

"The rest certainly had minor symptoms but were transported for observation more than anything," he said.

None was expected to require overnight hospital care, he added.

Workers were allowed to return to the building after it was declared safe by the fire brigade.

"They had an air conditioning technician check out the air conditioning and they tested the area and everything's come back clear," a fire brigade spokesman said.

AAP

## Faulty lift may have killed woman, police say

Queensland 31 March 2006

Police say a faulty lift may have contributed to the death of an elderly woman in far north Queensland.

The 93-year-old died after being pinned against the ceiling of her Cairns home while operating the water lift on March 17.

The lift .. which uses water hydraulics .. was installed privately to allow the woman access to the top floor of her house.

Inspections have shown it did not comply with Australian safety standards.

Police say it's too early to say if anyone will be charged over the death.

AAP RTV

## Warner WorkCover fraud

March 30, 2006

A Warrnambool masseur, who fraudulently obtained more than \$4,500 from WorkCover, was fined \$5,000 in the Melbourne Magistrates Court on Wednesday 22 March.

The Court heard that Daryl Warner, a registered masseur, falsely claimed reimbursement from WorkCover for massage services he supposedly provided to injured workers.

A WorkCover investigation revealed that the insurers of 15 injured workers who were receiving treatment from Mr Warner were invoiced between August 2002 and July 2004 for services they did not receive.

It was found that Mr Warner provided approximately 58 false invoices to the WorkCover for payment.

VWA Rehabilitation and Compensation Executive Director, Len Boehm, said the VWA had an obligation to prosecute cases of fraud to protect the honest workers, employers and healthcare professionals of Victoria.

"The vast majority of healthcare professionals who service injured workers provide a vital service which helps the worker back to work and back to leading the life they want to lead," Mr Boehm said.

"However, a case like this gives the legitimate ones a bad name and undermines community confidence and support in the WorkCover system

"The case demonstrates the potential consequences of defrauding the WorkCover system."

Source: Victorian WorkCover Authority

## New Medical Clinic To Treat Workplace Accidents

March 24 2006

Workers based in the industrial hub around Brisbane Airport who suffer broken bones, burns, chemical exposures, cuts or even sprains and strains now have a medical clinic right on their doorstep dedicated to helping them get better faster.

Unlike emergency centres or general practice medical centres, the new clinic, Health For Industry Northside, only treats injured workers and is staffed with doctors and nurses who specialise in occupational medicine.

'This means that companies who sign up to use our services can send injured workers straight to us. Workers are examined and treated on the spot by medical staff who are experts in workplace health and injuries,' Dr Keith Adam

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occupational physician and founder of Health For Industry explained.

'And we don't just treat the initial injury—we also offer a complete range of rehabilitation services to help them recover and get back to work.'

Speaking at the official launch, Minister for Human Services, The Hon Joe Hockey MP, said Queenslanders should be proud of Health For Industry.

'This is the third Health For Industry clinic to open in Brisbane and its opening is in response to surging client demand. The first clinic opened more than 20 years ago when Queensland doctor Keith Adam identified a need for a medical service dedicated to industrial workers,' Mr Hockey said.

'The model he came up with has been hugely successful because it provides benefits to both workers and employers.

'Workers achieve better health outcomes because they are diagnosed and treated minutes from their workplace by medical staff who specialise in workplace health. Employers benefit from significant reductions in sick leave and lower insurance premiums.'

Health For Industry has three clinics in Queensland, and five more will be launched in 2006–07, one more in Brisbane and two in Sydney and Melbourne.

Source: Health Services Australia Group

## St John Ambulance Implements Changes to CPR

March 29 2006

St John will be teaching new CPR techniques in its first aid classes from April 2006.

The changes are being implemented following the recommendations made by the Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) last month.

They are based on extensive research by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation, which has found that giving more compressions may result in more lives saved.

The new CPR protocol will involve a ratio of 30 compressions to two ventilations.

"While the current method of CPR is still valid, the new changes aim to make CPR easier to learn and easier to perform in an emergency situation. The important thing for people to remember is that by giving CPR you could help save someone's life," said Robyn Galwey, General Manager for Training, St John (NSW).

The ARC hopes that the new changes will lead to more people receiving CPR following a cardiac arrest. They estimate that currently, less than 50% of victims are given resuscitation out of hospital.

People with current CPR or first aid certificates will still be qualified, however if they wish to learn the new protocol, St John offers a four hour course on resuscitation techniques.

Source: St John Ambulance

### Adobe Acrobat V7.07 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 20 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 7.07 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 for viruses before distribution.

For those readers who are unconcerned about download limits, the latest version of Acrobat Reader is available for free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

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