



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

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Issue 70 September 25 2006  
 ISSN 1832-6714  
 Supplied by SAFETY AT WORK magazine

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## Bullying in Victoria Police

### Police union bullying allegations handed to WorkCover

MELBOURNE, September 21 2006

A culture of bullying exists within Victoria's Police Association, an investigation has found.

Conducted by two senior members of Victoria Police and oversighted by the Ethical Standards Department and the Office of Police Integrity, the investigation was launched earlier this year and became public knowledge in May.

In a statement today, a Victoria Police spokeswoman said the investigation had been completed.

"The findings .... indicate a culture of workplace bullying exists at The Police Association," the statement said. "Victoria Police is therefore concerned about the health, safety and welfare of its employees involved with the Police Association, and as a result has referred the matter to the Victorian Workcover Authority (VWA). There will be no further action taken on the part of Victoria Police subject to the outcomes of the VWA inquiry. The Office of Police Integrity supports the referral to the VWA."

Police Association Victorian secretary Paul Mullett was accused of bullying last year, but was cleared by an internal inquiry, and in May said the probe was a direct attack on the union.

In May, Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon would not reveal details about the allegations. She said they were made by one police member about another and involved serious misconduct. She said she was legally obliged to ensure they were investigated.

Today's announcement comes as Mr Mullett heavily criticises Ms Nixon and Deputy Commissioner Simon Overland over their response to an Office of Police Integrity investigation into accusations that members of the armed offenders squad mistreated suspects.

The OPI has presented secretly recorded video tapes of detectives with the now-disbanded armed offenders squad allegedly assaulting suspects. Yesterday, two former squad detectives were suspended from duty.

Earlier today, Mr Mullett declared the hearings a "show trial" and said the suspensions were a "gross over-reaction on the part of Ms Nixon and Mr Overland. "They (Ms Nixon and Mr Overland) should really start to stand up and demonstrate leadership," he said. "A gross over-reaction. You could even say they panicked in suspending these members, and there appears to be a course of conduct right from the outset of gross over-reaction." AAP

### Police chief defends bully probe

MELBOURNE, September 22 2006

Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon today denied the probe she ordered into bullying allegations at the police union was a political move. Ms Nixon defended her actions as police prepare to rally today over enterprise bargaining issues and a corruption inquiry that has led to three officers being suspended.

The police chief yesterday released the results of a bullying investigation - which confirmed harassment had occurred - as police anger mounted over the Office of Police Integrity hearings.

Ms Nixon rejected assertions by Police Association Victoria secretary

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Paul Mullett that the move was politically motivated and timed to discredit the union. "I'm sorry that Paul (Mullett) sees this as a personal attack or even a political attack," Ms Nixon told ABC Radio. "It's not that. I did what I'm required to do. It was a tough decision."

Ms Nixon said she had been obliged under legislation to act after she had received complaints about behaviour within the police union. The police chief acknowledged some officers were upset about the way detectives had been required to give evidence at the OPI's public hearings. But morale remained high in the force and her relationship with Mr Mullett was not one of conflict, she said.

"I don't like to see arguments within the organisation like this," she said. "I have a long history of having had a union background and understand that point of view. I think we do work together on a very positive basis on the vast majority of issues. There's a few we don't agree on. I guess this is one of them."

AAP

## **New Framework For Safety In Construction**    September 22 2006

A new workplace safety framework aimed at improving safety on Australian construction sites and developed by Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Construction innovation was launched today by the Minister for Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews.

The framework aims to bring about a long-term cultural and behavioural change in the building and construction industry to improve occupational health and safety (OH&S) practices. It is estimated that one person dies each week on Australian construction sites and there are thousands of serious injuries reported by the industry each year.

The framework, the key recommendation of the A Construction Safety Competency Framework report, is the result of industry research over two years. It is unique in terms of the scope of partnership and collaborative working between industry, Government, researchers and unions.

Mr Andrews commended the CRC for Construction innovation for its leadership in addressing the significant cultural issues impacting workplace safety in the construction industry. "A standardised safety framework makes it possible for the industry as a whole to proactively improve the behaviours and attitudes of the site managers who influence safety on construction sites the most," Mr Andrews said.

Project Leader, John Holland Group Safety Manager, Dean Cipolla, said the transient nature of the construction industry had contributed to the high number of deaths and injuries across the industry.

"Many Australian construction sites have a poor safety culture, which has contributed to a fatality rate more than five times higher than the mining industry not to mention many thousands of avoidable injuries," Mr Cipolla said. "Labour mobility makes it difficult for any one company to consistently influence safety attitudes and behaviours because workers and sub-contractors hear different safety messages when they move to different companies, projects and sites. In addition, the sector traditionally has not viewed behaviours such as communication and leadership as a necessary part of safety competency."

The framework, designed for use by safety managers, senior managers and executives, provides a guide on how to create a positive safety culture by ensuring key staff such as project managers, supervisors, OH&S advisors and engineers are aware of and can effectively execute tasks needed to manage OH&S.

CRC Construction innovation Chairman, John McCarthy said: "We plan to develop more world-class industry development programs that will bring unions, Government, researchers and the private sector together to make construction sites safer for workers," Mr McCarthy said.

Source: Construction Innovation

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## Letters

Editor

Bulletin 068 contains at least two areas where bias is clearly shown:

1. The lead story, which I guess is written by you? Being fair and even handed, surely the Federal Governments answer to the lemma Government accusation ought to have been aired as well?
2. Melody Kemp's concluding comment about Australia being pushed back to pre-Industrial Revolution times is a classic of personal bias and mirrors the ACTU perspective. Quite frankly, I think it's an outrageous statement. As one who grew up in an industrial revolution damaged area, and having also spent many years in Asia, I understand some of the issues that developing countries have. I sympathise with Ms Kemp's sentiments. But if her aim is to educate and inform, she firstly needs to report the facts; secondly to develop and maintain a sense of historical perspective; and always to keep her political opinions to herself. Pontification from a Consultant is a self-indulgence.

I recall that your response to my last complaint was to offer me the right of reply. I did not take you up on that because I don't have the inclination or the time to debate political philosophy publicly in an Institute Journal. However, I'm happy for you to publish this letter, because I think your newsletter otherwise provides a valuable and useful service.

Please, please stick with the facts and leave out the politics?

Yours professionally

J. A. E. Dyson



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## Servo attendant praised for quick action during gas leak

September 19 2006

A service station attendant who helped fire crews stop a major gas leak south of Melbourne early today has come in for praise.

The leak, from a 20,000-litre LPG storage tank at a service station at Moorooduc, near Frankston, began at 12.30am (AEST) today, a Country Fire Authority (CFA) spokeswoman said.

The attendant provided detailed information on the leak before fire crews arrived at the scene, the spokeswoman said.

The south-bound lanes of the Moorooduc Highway were closed for more than two hours as fire crews doused the top of the tank with water to slow the leak. They eventually shut off the tank's valves, stopping the leak.

"CFA personnel would like to praise the actions of the service station operator, who gave all the emergency services all the relevant information in his emergency call and assisted us with further information when emergency crews arrived at the scene," the CFA spokeswoman said. Energy Safe Victoria and WorkSafe inspectors are expected at the scene today.

AAP

## Report On The Operations Of The Federal Safety Commissioner 2005-06

14 September, 2006 - Ministerial Statement

I am pleased to announce the release of the Federal Safety Commissioner's (FSC) 2005 06 Progress Report.

The FSC, Mr Tom Fisher, was appointed in June 2005 to foster improved OHS performance in the industry using the leverage of the Australian Government as a major construction client.

This inaugural Progress Report provides an insight into the industry's OHS performance and an overview of the FSC's current and future initiatives to facilitate world class safety in the Australian building and construction industry.

The report identifies the FSC's key achievements during 2005 06, including the development and implementation of the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme) and the development of partnerships with industry to improve OHS performance.

The report also looks to future initiatives the FSC will be pursuing, including Stage 2 of the Accreditation Scheme, which will extend to all contracts for building and construction projects funded directly or indirectly by the Australian Government, subject to financial thresholds which are yet to be announced.

The FSC will soon be releasing OHS Safety Principles and accompanying guidance material to promote a level of commitment to safety that goes beyond complying with legislative requirements.

The FSC has also entered into an agreement with Master Builders Australia (MBA) to sponsor a new OHS category of their 2006 and 2007 National Awards, and sponsorship of their 2007 International Conference.

The MBA National Awards are well recognised within the building and construction industry and the sponsorship aims to raise awareness of OHS improvement opportunities while also promoting best practice.

The FSC is committed to continuing to work with companies and individuals to bring about sustainable cultural and behavioural change in the building and construction industry.

I commend the FSC Progress Report for 2005 06 to the building and construction industry.

The report can be downloaded at [www.fsc.gov.au](http://www.fsc.gov.au).

Source: Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

## Public Warning Statement - Unlicensed Travel Agent – Best Conferences Pty Ltd and Liam Crowley

19 September 2006

Pursuant to section 162A of the Fair Trading Act 1999, the Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria has issued the following warning to the public:

In January 2006, the Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria warned the public against the operations of "The Crowleys" who arranged and accepted monies for travel for overseas study tours and conferences overseas and conferences within Australia, despite not being licensed to operate as travel agents in Victoria.

The Crowleys comprise of Bevan Crowley, Ann Crowley and their daughter Hannah Crowley who operated under and are linked to various names including

OHS Daily News, The Aged Care Housing Weekly News, The Aged Care Housing Daily News,

OHS International Foundation, OHS Worldwide Resources, The Health Business Daily News,

the newsgroup and eNEWS;

and two companies of which Hannah Crowley is the sole director of, Australasian Corporate Events (2004) Pty Ltd (ACN 107 732 178) and Enews Publications Pty Ltd (ACN 105 460 759).

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Today the Director again warns the public of activities allegedly associated with The Crowleys.

In May 2006, the Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria initiated court proceedings against Bevan Crowley, Ann Crowley, Hannah Crowley, Australasian Corporate Events (2004) Pty Ltd (ACN 107 732 178) and Enews Publications Pty Ltd (ACN 105 460 759) ("the Defendants") and obtained interim orders against the Defendants to restrain them:

- from carrying on business of a travel agent whilst unlicensed to do so;
- from representing that they have an affiliation with Travelscene American Express when they do not; and
- from using business names that are not registered business names such as OHS Daily News.

However, since those interim orders were made, new parties that are not licensed travel agents in NSW or Victoria and who are linked to the Crowleys appear to be carrying on the business of promoting, arranging and potentially accepting monies for an overseas tour to Bali in November 2006 and May 2007.

The new parties that allegedly are involved in continuing to carry out the Crowleys' operations are Liam Crowley, the son of Bevan and Ann Crowley and the company Best Conferences Pty Ltd of which he is the sole director and secretary.

Best Conferences Pty Ltd and Liam Crowley are not licensed travel agents in Victoria or New South Wales. Therefore consumers should not book any tours through them. Best Conferences Pty Ltd is, however, advertising by email to consumers including Victorian Consumers and allegedly arranging tours for consumers to seminars in Bali relating to personal development or tackling stress.

Consumers are advised to check that companies or organisations are licensed travel agents before paying them for arranging travel and accommodation (exemptions apply). For advice on avoiding scams consumers can contact the Consumer Affairs Victoria helpline on 1300 55 81 81.

Source: Consumer Affairs Victoria

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## Industry, farm bodies to be consulted on chemical review

September 15 2006

Industry and farm organisations will be consulted extensively on a review of security-sensitive chemicals.

The Australian Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, said today that it was a matter of public record that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) was undertaking a review of security-sensitive chemicals, including industrial chemicals, agriculture and veterinary chemicals, explosive precursors and security-sensitive fertilizers.

"A draft report is now with the state and territory governments for consideration and further consultation with the Commonwealth," Mr McGauran said. The work will not be finalised until industry and farm organisations have had their views heard.

Mr McGauran said firm dates had not yet been set for stakeholder discussions, but are expected to commence in November. Stakeholder comments are a critical part of the process.

"I am extremely mindful of the potential economic and regulatory impact on farmers with any changes to the regulation of chemicals," Mr McGauran said. "Our aim is to find balance between national security concerns and the interests of farmers. My Department is examining several industry stewardship programmes for chemical use by industry. The aim is to use these programmes to the greatest extent possible to meet security requirements and minimise the impact of changes on farmers," he said.

Source: Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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## Man fined \$66,000 over forklift licence scam

September 19 2006

The last of nine men caught up in a forklift licensing scam referred to the NSW corruption watchdog has been fined \$66,000 for his part in the racket.

Chief Industrial Magistrate Gregory Hart today found former licence assessor Quang Tran was overseas when he claimed to have assessed seven forklift licences, WorkCover NSW said in a statement.

Tran was the last of nine former WorkCover-accredited assessors to be prosecuted over the issuing of false Certificates of Competency to operate forklifts.

Mr Hart fined Tran \$66,000 for seven deliberate breaches of required conduct. WorkCover referred the matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 2004.

WorkCover CEO Jon Blackwell said: "These were very serious offences, which could have led to the serious injury and even death of workers. WorkCover has introduced substantial changes to prevent corruption, and to ensure that all Certificates of Competency holders are properly identified and competent to operate the equipment listed on their licences," he said. AAP

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## Fed gov't launches safety code for construction industry

September 22 2006

A new safety code designed to stem the high death rate in Australia's construction industry has been launched by the federal government.

Workplace Minister Kevin Andrews said the industry had the worst record for fatalities, with one workplace death a week.

"This is an industry that historically has had a culture which doesn't reflect best practice," Mr Andrews told reporters after the Melbourne launch today. "A culture which unfortunately I think has seen shortcuts taken so far as occupational health and safety is concerned. An industry that's got a record far worse than any other and that's simply unacceptable."

The new framework developed by the Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation aims to bring about a long-term cultural and behavioural change, leading to safer working environments in the industry. The federal government has contributed \$14 million to the project, which spawned a partnership between industry leaders, researchers and unions.

Project leader Dean Cipolla said the transient nature of the industry contributed to the high number of deaths and injuries. "Many Australian construction sites have a poor safety culture, which has contributed to a fatality rate more than five times higher than the mining industry not to mention many thousands of avoidable injuries," he said. "Labour mobility makes it difficult for any one company to consistently influence safety attitudes and behaviours because workers and sub-contractors hear different safety messages when they move to different companies, projects and sites."

The new framework will provide guidelines for managers to share a uniform response to occupational health and safety issues. AAP

## Mine operations suspended after death

September 23 2006

Consolidated Minerals Ltd has suspended operations at its Western Australian nickel mine after a worker was crushed to death in a rock fall. The 43-year-old contractor was killed yesterday while working underground at the Kambalda Beta Hunt mine about midday AWST.

Police and mining inspectors from the department of Consumer and Employment protection are looking into the cause of the accident. Authorities today said operations would remain suspended until the investigation was complete.

Consolidated Minerals spokesman Allan Quadrio said the miner, an airleg operator, had considerable experience in his trade and had been working at the Beta Hunt mine for about two and a half years.

"It's devastating to all employees at the mine and to all people in the mining industry," Mr Quadrio told ABC Radio. "Nobody likes fatalities in the industry or any injury, in particular in the mining industry."

AAP

## Adobe Acrobat V7.08 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.

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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>

SIA Safety At Work Bulletin  
Issue 70, September 25, 2006  
ISSN 1832-6714

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Designer/Publisher:  
Workplace Safety Services Pty Ltd  
849 High Street, Regent VIC 3073 Australia  
A.B.N. 68 091 088 621  
[www.safetyatwork.biz](http://www.safetyatwork.biz)

This weekly news bulletin is produced on behalf of the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division) by Workplace Safety Services P/L.

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