



SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Proudly Sponsored by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)
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Anglo coal workers walk off the job at Dawson mine

BRISBANE, March 15 2006

Three hundred workers at a central Queensland coal mine will walk off the job tomorrow morning after enterprise bargaining negotiations (EBA) with mine management broke down.

Workers from Anglo Coal's Dawson mine near Moura will stop work for four hours from 7am (AEST) tomorrow over proposed changes to the mine's EBA.

Construction, Forestry, Mines and Energy Union (CFMEU) vice president Stuart Vaccaneo said permanent employees at the mine, including electricians and production workers would take part in the strike.

According to Mr Vaccaneo, a key element of the dispute is Anglo Coal's efforts to require staff to submit to medical examinations at any time, rather than at five-year intervals.

"The company are seeking to remove rights which currently exist and we are certainly seeking to protect those award provisions," he said.

An Anglo Coal spokeswoman said the company would continue negotiating the EBA with the workers.

"Anglo Coal is intending to continue to work cooperatively with our employees and their union to achieve a satisfactory resolution and we don't intend to negotiate the agreement with our employees through the media," she said. AAP

Seven in hospital after fumes escape in Parramatta building

SYDNEY, March 14 2006

Seven people needed hospital treatment for exposure to fumes that forced the evacuation of an office building in western Sydney today.

Eight people suffering nausea and dizziness were treated by paramedics at the scene in Macquarie Street, Parramatta.

Five were taken by ambulance to Westmead Hospital and two to Blacktown Hospital. About 200 people were evacuated from the building. An ambulance spokesman said the victims had been exposed to fumes from an unidentified substance.

The NSW Fire Brigade's Hazardous Materials specialists were at the scene trying to identify the substance, but the building has now been declared safe. AAP

Mosman Council calls on NSW councils to follow smoking bans

SYDNEY, March 18 2006

A northern Sydney council has called on NSW councils to follow its lead and ban smoking in public places.

Mosman Council, on Sydney's lower north shore, last week unanimously decided to extend its smoking bans after residents lobbied for tougher smoking restrictions.

The ban means smoking is now no longer allowed in parks, public squares, bus shelters and council car parks.

It comes on top of restrictions already in place at beaches, outdoor dining areas, children's playgrounds, public events, playing fields and the grounds of council managed buildings.

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Mosman Mayor Denise Wilton said the earlier bans had been in place for the past three years and had led to an overall reduction in smoking in the municipality.

"We've really seen a difference in the amount of people smoking in public places," Ms Wilton said. "We did this because we've had calls for the community to take further steps."

The ban will not apply to the footpaths, roads or private businesses.

To date council rangers have presented warning notices to offenders but no fines have been issued.

Fellow Councillor Andrew Brown said second-hand cigarette smoke was a lethal cocktail of toxins and carcinogens with no safe level. "We would not expect to sit at a bus shelter and allow someone to blow a lethal cocktail of 4,000 chemicals in our face," he said.

AAP

Spray painter killed by truck in workplace accident March 13 2006

WorkSafe is investigating the death of a Perth spray painter who was hit by a truck in the yard of a truck modification business.

The 57-year-old man was walking across the rear yard of Park Motor Body Builders in Bassendean, in Perth's north, about 10am (WDT) today when he was hit by the truck, WorkSafe said.

The man was taken to Royal Perth Hospital but died a short time later.

WorkSafe investigators have begun interviewing witnesses.

WorkSafe Western Australia Commissioner Nina Lyhne said she was alarmed that this death brought to 17 the number of people killed in WA over the past six years in accidents involving large mobile machinery.

"Another worker was crushed less than a week ago at Bedfordale when the road roller he was operating overturned," Ms Lyhne said. "Today's death serves as a warning to all workplaces that extreme care is needed when large mobile machines are moving in the same vicinity as people on the ground."

Park Motor Body Builders closed following the incident and is not commenting on the incident.

AAP

Auto Firm Fined \$85,000 After Worker Injured In Crane Collapse. 16 March 2007

An Adelaide suburban automotive component maker has been fined over a workplace incident nearly five years ago, that left a worker seriously and permanently injured.

In a prosecution brought by SafeWork SA, A.I. Automotive Pty. Ltd. pleaded not guilty to three charges of breaching the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986, but was convicted after a trial before Magistrate Richard Hardy in the SA Industrial Relations Court, last year.

A.I. Automotive has appealed against the trial decision with a hearing date to be advised, but

Magistrate Hardy nevertheless handed down a decision on penalty this week. (Wed. 14 March)

Proven were two breaches of section 19(1)(a) of the Act in failing to ensure that employees were safe from injury and risks to health while at work, and a breach of section 24A(1)(a) in failing to ensure that plant was maintained in a safe condition.

During the trial, the court heard how on 19 April 2002 at A.I. Automotive's Woodville premises, a male labour hire worker aged 34 at the time, suffered multiple and serious

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SIA WA BREAKFAST SERIES

Construction Safety Awareness Training - Blue Card

New laws came into effect on 1st January, 2007 requiring those who work in the construction industry to complete a Construction Safety Awareness Training Course.

Learn more about the requirements from Gail McGowan, Director of Policy and Education at Worksafe. Gail will talk about why the new laws were introduced, who they are intended to cover and what's involved in the training. She will also provide a snapshot of some other key developments in the construction area at both state and national level and touch on the new national standards for both construction and high risk work.

PRESENTER: Ms Gail McGowan - Director, Policy and Education of the Worksafe Division of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection in Western Australia.

Since commencing with WorkSafe in 1999 Gail has had responsibility for policy, planning, information and education in the agency, including overseeing the highly successful ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program.

Gail works closely with the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health in Western Australia and is a member of a number of state and national groups related to occupational safety and health, including

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head and leg injuries, when a 1.5 tonne overhead gantry crane fell from its rails onto him.

The employee was trapped beneath the crane for 30 minutes. To this day, he is unable to work, and requires ongoing treatment and rehabilitation.

The crane had been designed and built within the workplace, and Magistrate Hardy found there was:

- Deficient design of the plant.
- No anti-derailment or anti-tilting device fitted.
- No safe operating procedure provided.
- No risk assessment, hazard identification nor expert evaluation done.

Aside from the injured worker, Magistrate Hardy also found a second worker was subjected to the same risks, and was lucky to be alive.

“While self-designed equipment can provide tailor-made solutions to workplace problems, it must still meet safe design standards and the most rigorous safety checks,” says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

Source: SafeWork SA

Inquiry into driveway deaths

March 13 2006

The deaths of people killed by slow-moving cars in driveways is to be investigated by a Queensland parliamentary committee.

Travelsafe committee chairman Jim Pearce told parliament the committee was concerned about the number of low-speed runover deaths, mainly involving children on home driveways. Mr Pearce said the three-month inquiry would examine the number of cases, contributing factors and a public safety campaign.

A public forum will be held at parliament house on April 23.

AAP

Man crushed to death by 15 tonnes of steel

MELBOURNE, March 16 2006

A 51-year-old man was crushed to death when 15 tonnes of steel fell on him as it was unloaded from a truck south-east of Melbourne today.

The incident happened at about 4.20pm (AEDT) in a warehouse at BlueScope Steel in Bayview Rd, Hastings.

WorkSafe spokesman Michael Birt said a forklift was used to unload the steel from the truck when the accident occurred. “The steel has fallen and the man was struck,” Mr Birt said.

Mr Birt said people were urged to keep their distance from machinery as heavy materials were moved and transported.

He said another crushing incident had occurred on January 19 in West Melbourne, where 10 tonnes of steel killed a man as he worked in a ship’s hull. The man was working on the vessel Cape Conway at Appleton Dock when the steel swung from a crane.

AAP

WorkSafe investigates death of worker at Bassendean

March 13, 2007

WorkSafe is investigating the work-related death of a 57-year-old man at Bassendean today.

The spray painter was working in the yard of a motor body building business in Jackson Street when he was struck by a truck. He was taken to hospital but died a short time later.

Inspectors arrived at the site soon after the incident, and will interview witnesses and continue to investigate.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne expressed her concern at the number of WA workers being killed and injured in incidents involving large mobile plant.

“Another worker was crushed less than a week ago at Bedfordale when the road roller he was operating overturned,” Ms Lyhne said. “The worker who was so tragically killed today is the 17th to die in WA over the past six years in incidents involving mobile plant, and I consider this an alarming statistic.”

Source: DOCEP

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several involving the construction sector.

WHEN:

Friday, 30th March 2007

WHERE:

Matilda Bay Restaurant, Hackett Drive, Crawley

PARKING:

public car parking is available

TIME:

7.30am - 9.00am (includes a hot breakfast)

COST:

Members: \$38.50 (GST Incl)

Non Members: \$48.50 (GST Incl).

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Another conviction for WorkCover dishonesty

15 March 2007

A part-time crowd controller and apprentice brick layer has been convicted in the Adelaide Magistrates' Court for dishonestly claiming compensation from WorkCover.

Mr Kosta Douvartzidis suffered injuries to his hand, head and knee while working as a crowd controller in May 2005 and submitted a claim for compensation from WorkCover.

Over several months, Mr Douvartzidis dishonestly claimed compensation payments after returning to work and acted dishonestly while dealing with health care and rehabilitation professionals. The magistrate, Mr Gurry SM, ordered that Mr Douvartzidis reimburse WorkCover and pay costs – a total of \$6,087 - and enter into a good behaviour bond for 18 months.

"The conviction of Mr Douvartzidis is the third successful prosecution for WorkCover in as many weeks," said WorkCover CEO, Julia Davison. "These recent prosecutions should send a clear message of deterrence to others contemplating similar actions," said Ms Davison.

In February 2007, a Murray Bridge man was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to 14 counts of dishonestly obtaining compensation payments from WorkCover. Nigel Vodopivec dishonestly obtained payments over a four-and-a-half month period. He was convicted in the Adelaide Magistrates' Court and ordered to repay the full amount of monies obtained illegally (approx. \$5,000).

Earlier this month, a 48-year old Port Augusta man pleaded guilty in the Port Augusta Magistrates' Court to dishonestly claiming payments from WorkCover, after alleging that he suffered injuries in a fall at work. Investigations revealed that Anthony John Maguire sustained the injuries after drinking at a local hotel. Mr Maguire was convicted and required to enter into a good behaviour bond for 18 months, complete 80 hours of community service and reimburse WorkCover \$4,806, inclusive of costs.

Source: SafeWork SA

\$20,000 Fine For SE Timber Mill Injury

14 March 2007

Safety guards for old or little-used machines, and proper training in their use are a must in every workplace, says SafeWork SA.

The agency issued the warning after the SA Industrial Relations Court fined a Mt. Gambier timber firm \$20,000 over a serious hand injury suffered by a worker two years ago.

Whiteheads Timber Sales Pty Ltd had pleaded guilty to breaching Section 19 of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986, in failing to ensure that an employee was safe from injury and risks to health, while at work.

The prosecution by SafeWork SA arose from an incident in February 2005 in which a female worker lost part of her left index finger while working with a bandsaw.

The court heard the incident happened within 90 minutes of the worker commencing duties on the machine with a colleague.

In his decision yesterday, Industrial Magistrate Stephen Lieschke found several shortcomings:

- A failure to adequately guard the blade;
- A failure to adequately guard the drive belts and pulleys;
- A failure to provide reasonably necessary instruction, training and supervision.

Despite three pages of safe operating instructions being attached to one side of the machine, the court also heard that proper guarding was given a low priority because the machine was used only occasionally.

Magistrate Lieschke said that this indicated a failure to understand or accept occupational health and safety responsibilities.

"...the law requires a structured approach to thorough training, instruction and supervision, in addition to taking a considered and structured approach to hazard elimination."

SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson said there can never be low priorities with workplace safety. Source: SafeWork SA

FMG announces review after two killed in cyclone

PERTH, March 12 2006

The mining company which owns the construction camp where two people were killed when Cyclone George swept through Western Australia's far north has announced a review of its procedures.

In a statement, Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) chief executive officer Andrew Forrest said his thoughts and deepest sympathies were with the families, friends and work colleagues of the deceased and injured.

Craig Raabe, 42, was fatally injured when the cyclone hit a FMG railway construction camp 105km south of Port Hedland early on Friday morning.

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Perth mother of two Debra Till, 47, also died when the storm flattened the FMG camp, and more than 20 other people were injured.

Mrs Till's family has threatened legal action against FMG for not evacuating staff before the cyclone hit.

"I've lost my wife, the boys have lost their mother and Debbie will never see Tyson, our grandson, again," Mrs Till's husband, John Till, told Southern Cross Broadcasting. "You cannot imagine how hard that is."

Mr Forrest said FMG had commissioned a complete review of procedures and processes to be headed by what he said was an independent risk management and incident investigation specialist.

"We are also cooperating with the Coroner's office and Worksafe in their investigations," Mr Forrest said.

A third person, Sydney Desmond Baker, 74, died of a suspected heart attack, at Indee Station, near the FMG camp, during Cyclone George.

AAP

Government lied about school asbestos danger: Coalition

BRISBANE, March 18 2006

The Queensland Coalition has accused the State government of putting children in danger by covering up the extent of asbestos risks in schools.

Coalition deputy leader Dr Bruce Flegg said the government lied when it issued a media release last week claiming only 18 buildings in 15 schools required urgent asbestos removal.

New figures now reveal that at least 100 buildings in 81 schools require the maintenance work, at a cost of more than \$100 million.

"This is an enormous deception that the government's been caught out in," Dr Flegg said. "The tragedy of all this is while the government covered it up, they put children at risk."

"The only course of action the government should have taken in relation to this matter was to tell parents and tell teachers where this deteriorating damaged asbestos lay so that they could report any incidents or problems and make sure that children were protected."

The government was being sought for comment.

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.

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 7.08 please email me at 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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