



SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

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 Website: www.sia.org.au Email: natadmin@vic.sia.org.au

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Don't wait for me to fix Burnley tunnel: coroner

By Nick Lenaghan

MELBOURNE, April 16 2007

A coroner has warned tollway operator CityLink and Victorian authorities against postponing safety improvements to Melbourne's Burnley Tunnel following the crash that claimed three lives.

Victorian coroner Graeme Johnstone [a Fellow of the SIA] said at the start of the inquest into the three deaths today that any necessary improvements should be made immediately, without waiting for his official recommendations.

The inquest into the deaths of Damian McDonald, 34, Geoffrey Kennard, 51 and Darren Sporn, 37, who were killed in last month's fiery eight-vehicle pile-up, could take months to complete.

The state coroner's comments contrast with the public stand taken previously by CityLink which said it would wait on any findings from the inquest. But Mr Johnstone said he had "an important message" to deliver today and he "wholeheartedly endorsed" a similar call for action in the opening address by his counsel assisting Paul Willee QC. "Safety agencies and private agencies need to address issues of safety as they arise and not wait to hear from the coroner," Mr Johnstone said.

Outside the court, CityLink spokeswoman Jean Ker Walsh acknowledged Mr Johnstone's appeal but refused to speculate on what, if any, action the operator would now take. "We heard what the coroner had to say about not necessarily waiting until the end of his inquiry before any action is taken," she told reporters. "We're obviously talking with people around the sort of things that are of concern and we're just taking that on board and will consider it."

In the aftermath of the tragedy, CityLink said safety standards were up to scratch and there was no need for any additional measures as it reopened the tunnel. "We ought not to pre-empt what might come from the appropriate inquiries and the recommendations that they put forward," Ms Ker Walsh said in March.

Commuters and some road safety experts have called for a lower speed limit for trucks than other vehicles, currently restricted to 80km/h. Others have called for lane restrictions on trucks or for one of the tunnel's three lanes to be turned into an emergency lane.

CityLink lost an estimated \$3 million in tolls during the shutdown - with another \$1.5 million on repairs - and has conceded some safety measures, such as an emergency lane, would cut into profits.

In his opening address, Mr Willee said the inquest would look at how the accident happened and whether existing traffic rules would have prevented it. The investigation could consider whether trucks should be restricted to one lane only in the tunnel, speed limits reduced and measures introduced to curb tailgating.

AAP

Mobile phone call may be to blame for Burnley disaster

MELBOURNE, April 14 2007

A truck driver talking on a mobile phone may have triggered the fatal chain of events in Melbourne's Burnley tunnel last month that left three people dead.

The phone call, allegedly received by the truck driver seconds before his semi-trailer ploughed into three vehicles in the tunnel, will come under scrutiny at a

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coronial inquest on Monday. It's believed the call was made by the owner of the truck, who was talking to the driver when the crash occurred, News Limited reports today.

Three people died in the horror smash and fireball deep within the cross-city tunnel on March 23. It's believed the truck driver was questioned by police this week over the call and could face charges. If convicted of culpable driving causing death he faces up to 20 years' jail.

Police believe the driver may have been distracted by the phone call and unaware a truck with a flat tyre had caused the closure of the tunnel's left lane and reduced the speed limit from 80Km/h to 60Km/h.

AAP

Beaconsfield mine charges could be laid with two weeks

HOBART, April 11 2007

A decision on whether the Beaconsfield gold mine operators will face charges after the Anzac Day rock fall last year is expected to be made within two weeks.

Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, authorities only have 12 months to lay charges from the time inspectors notice a possible breach - the day of the accident on April 25.

Miner Larry Knight died in the rock fall, which trapped his workmates Brant Webb and Todd Russell underground at the northern Tasmanian mine for 14 nights.

Tasmania's Director of Public Prosecutions Tim Ellis is working from the time of the accident, a spokeswoman from his office confirmed today.

"We have got to make a decision within the next two weeks," she said.

The state government has commissioned lawyer Greg Mellick to submit an independent report into the tragedy, which has been pushed back to May because of complicated geo-technical information.

The spokeswoman for Mr Ellis said the DPP was still liaising with Mr Mellick.

AAP

Man faces court over officer's death

SYDNEY, April 16 2007

A man has faced court charged over the death of a NSW highway patrol officer who was knocked down and killed while conducting speed checks.

Senior Constable Peter Gordon Wilson, 41, was conducting radar checks on the F3 at Somersby, north of Sydney, when he was run over by a four-wheel drive on November 11 last year.

The Scots-born officer and father of three, died later in Gosford Hospital. He had been in the force for 10 years.

Daniel Moir, 29, of Woongarah, on the NSW Central Coast, appeared in Wyong Local Court today charged with negligent driving causing death.

He did not enter a plea and the matter was adjourned to the same court on May 28.

Sen Const Wilson was posthumously awarded the NSW Police Medal by NSW Police Commissioner Ken Moroney for his work during a collision involving 35 vehicles in Calga on October 22, 2004.

Following Const Wilson's death, Traffic Commander Chief Superintendent John Hartley ordered that all stationary radar and random breath testing (RBT) operations be conducted from a police car.

He said stationary RBTs would only be undertaken in speed zones of 80km/h or less but the changes would not apply to mobile RBT units.

AAP

Queensland Safety Conference and Show

A host of workshops at the Queensland Safety Show and Queensland Materials Handling, together with expert addresses at the Queensland Safety Conference will equip visitors with the know-how to make workplaces safe.

To be held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from June 19 to 21, the three concurrently held workplace safety events draw together an impressive list of expert speakers and industry partners that includes WorkCover Queensland, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland, the Electrical & Communications Association and Commerce Queensland.

Each industry partner will offer free workshops for trade show visitors, with WorkCover Queensland explaining how employers can meet their obligations and the Master Plumbers' Association providing a vital update on workplace health and safety legislation affecting the construction industry.

The Queensland Safety Conference and the two trade shows are sponsored by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Workplace Health & Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and presented by the Queensland and Northern Territory division of the Safety Institute of Australia.

The Conference opens with addresses from director-general of the Queensland Department of Industrial Relations, Peter Henneken, and WHSQ general manager Judy Bertram discussing the implications of national harmonisation for workplace safety in Queensland.

The law will continue to feature when Freehills lawyers Harold

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Solomons personnel to undertake health survey April 16 2007

Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who served in the Solomon Islands are to have their health surveyed in the first of a series of studies into the health of deployed troops.

The study will be conducted by the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health (CMVH) as part of its ongoing Deployment Health Surveillance Program (DHSP).

In the study, CMVH will assess the health of current and former ADF members sent to the Solomons as part of the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) between July 2003 and December 2005.

They will be compared against a study sample of ADF members who were not deployed during the same period.

The head of Defence Health Services Air Vice-Marshal Tony Austin said the ADF strongly supported the studies.

"The DHSP studies will allow us to adopt better methods to prevent ill health and to manage health issues before, during and after deployment," he said in a statement.

"This research reflects Defence Health Services' ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of current and former deployed ADF members."

CMVH is a consortium of the Universities of Queensland and Adelaide and Charles Darwin University.

The defence-funded Solomon Islands Health Study is the first in a series of DHSP projects. To come are studies of the health of veterans of East Timor, Bougainville and the Middle East operations.

CMVH Professor Annette Dobson, head of the DHSP research team, said this work would produce a better understanding of health issues faced by deployed personnel and veterans.

"Ultimately, DHSP is trying to determine if the long-term health of deployed veterans is worse than their peers in the Australian community," she said in a statement.

"The research aims to make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of those who are serving and have served their nation on active duty as well as benefit veterans and their families in the medium-to-long term."

AAP

Review called after Qld mine safety fears BRISBANE, April 15 2007

Serious safety concerns have been raised about Queensland's mines after allegations some companies are providing false figures to the state government.

Queensland Mines Minister Geoff Wilson today ordered an independent review of his department's Queensland Mines and Quarries Safety Performance and Health Report.

Mr Wilson said he ordered the review after "frank discussions" with the Queensland Resources Council, mining companies and unions.

"One of the union's concerns related to the Queensland Mines and Quarries Safety Performance and Health Report, an annual report on safety statistics in the industry," he said.

"They felt that some of the statistics in the report did not accurately reflect the number of safety incidents in some mines.

"As a result I've asked for an independent review of the report by respected mine safety specialists."

The review came after Jason Blee, 33, died at Moranbah North coal mine, near Mackay, last Monday.

The father of four's death was the Queensland mining industry's

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Downes and Geraldine Dann examine the implications of recent convictions of executives and the first suspended custodial sentence under Queensland's Workplace Health & Safety Act.

Law enforcement, too, brings its own safety challenges and Inspector Bernie Althofer of the Queensland Police Service will expose the "undiscussable sacred cows, taboos and unwritten ground rules" that undermine safety. Australia's most high profile safety brand, Qantas, will also come under the spotlight when consultant Brett Wood exposes the threat to the airline's unblemished record and the steps taken to overcome emerging risks.

The three-day Conference program encompasses workplace wellness; practical safety management solutions; leadership; creating easy to use health, safety and environment models; and national harmonisation.

The result, says organiser Marie Kinsella of Australian Exhibitions and Conferences, is a well-rounded safety update for visitors.

"You can see nearly two acres of safety resources at the Queensland Safety Show and Queensland Materials Handling, pick up the latest industry developments at an association workshop and learn how to implement best practice safety programs from the field's leading thinkers at the Conference," she said. "It's a powerful blend of safety resources and know-how."

The Queensland Safety Show, Queensland Materials Handling and the Queensland Safety Conference will run from Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 June 2007 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. For more information, phone Australian Exhibitions & Conferences on 03 9654 7773, email safety@aec.net.au or visit www.qldsafetyshow.com.au





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fourth fatality in 10 months.

Mr Wilson today also issued a warning to mining companies after spot safety audits held last month raised serious concerns at several sites.

“Interim findings have been sent to a number of mines for action,” he said.

“The sole purpose of the audits was to boost safety. It’s not a naming and shaming exercise.

“Some of the early findings hang a lantern on serious safety issues which is exactly what they were designed to do.

“Now it’s up to the mining companies to take action. If they fail to act, they will face the full consequences.”

Mr Wilson said unannounced safety audits would continue at selected mines across the state over several months.

“More safety issues may emerge from the audits. That’s why they are being carried out - to find faults, and for mining companies to fix them,” he said.

AAP

QRC rejects false safety report claims

BRISBANE, April 15 2007

Queensland’s peak mining body has rejected allegations that some companies are providing false safety figures to the state government.

Queensland Resources Council (QRC) chief executive Michael Roche today said the majority of the state’s mining companies had already thrown their support behind a more transparent method of safety reporting.

Queensland Mines Minister Geoff Wilson today ordered an independent review of his department’s Queensland Mines and Quarries Safety Performance and Health Report.

Mr Wilson said he ordered the review after discussions with union representatives raised concerns that some statistics in the report “did not accurately reflect the number of safety incidents in some mines”.

But Mr Roche said the QRC had written to Mr Wilson two weeks ago backing a safety report alternative to be “more transparent and better reflect a mine’s safety performance”.

“The majority of mining organisations operating in Queensland have moved to a more open and transparent method in the recording and reporting of safety performance through the use of Total Recordable Injuries - a measure which encompasses all recordable injuries,” he said.

“Among other things, initiatives such as these shoot down baseless allegations that mining companies are falsely reporting safety statistics. We have no greater obligation than to ensure the safety of employees.”

AAP

1,500 residents evacuated at Temora amid fears of silo fire

SYDNEY, April 13 2007

About 1,500 residents from the southern NSW town of Temora have been evacuated amid fears a silo could explode.

The NSW Fire Brigade was called to the town around 1.30pm (AEST) today after the temperature in one of the silos started to escalate.

The fire brigade established an 800-metre exclusion zone around the 200-tonne silo, after the canola inside it heated to about 90 degrees.

“There’s 170 tonnes approximately of canola in the silo, which for some reason unknown to anyone at the scene, started to spontaneously heat,” Superintendent Tom Cooper said.

“Someone rang triple-0 to report that it had reached a temperature of about 90 degrees.”

The fire brigade set up ground monitors and pumped water through them to cool the silo, which is in a compound with 26 other silos.

The silo’s vents have also been opened to reduce the risk of explosion.

About 1,500 residents were evacuated and taken to Temora town hall as a precaution, Supt Cooper said.

“It’s not uncommon for a silo to get hot,” he said.

“There are fire crews in breathing apparatus there at the moment monitoring what is coming out of the silo to ascertain whether it is explosive and how safe it is.”

A Hazmat vehicle is also at the scene and the Hazmat commander and scientific officer are being flown from Sydney to assess the situation.

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In January, about 1,500 residents of the southern NSW town of Cootamundra were evacuated from their homes for two days because of fears a massive grain silo could explode. AAP

Teacher acquitted of coffee cup attack

BRISBANE, April 13 2007

An elderly trade college teacher has been found not guilty of assaulting a work colleague with a coffee cup.

The Brisbane District Court jury took less than a day of deliberations to find Robert Taylor, 67, of Shailer Park south of Brisbane, not guilty of assault occasioning bodily harm while armed against 58-year-old Raymond Norman Powell on August 6, 2003.

The jury also found him not guilty of lesser charges of assault occasioning bodily harm and unlawful assault.

The court heard Taylor and Mr Powell had worked together for eight years as training consultants at the Plastic and Rubber Technical Education Centre (PARTEC), based at the Mount Gravatt TAFE grounds in Brisbane's south.

Prosecutor Jody-Ann Thomas said on the morning of the attack, Mr Powell - who taught plastic and rubber apprentices and trainees "generics" such as health and safety and first aid - was photocopying materials for his classes when Mr Taylor arrived at work.

"Mr Taylor told him there was a change in the scheduling of classes and that's what caused an argument between the two," Ms Thomas said.

"They came chest to chest ... the accused, holding the coffee cup with his right hand, struck the complainant on the side of the head, shattering the cup.

"It caused a large gash down the side of Mr Powell's neck and face.

"He started to bleed heavily and was taken to hospital.

"He still carries the scar down the side of his face."

However, lawyers for Taylor argued that Mr Powell had been the aggressor.

The court also heard the work environment had been tainted with tension at the time. Mr Powell had been unhappy with his workload and had offered his resignation shortly before the incident. AAP

Man impaled by forklift

SYDNEY, April 13 2007

A man was critically injured today when impaled by a forklift and pinned against a truck trailer in the far west of NSW.

The industrial accident happened about 3am (AEST) at a Broken Hill warehouse, police said.

The 56-year-old suffered extensive internal injuries when he was impaled by one of the arms on the forklift.

He was taken by ambulance to Broken Hill Base Hospital in a critical but stable condition.

Police and WorkCover are investigating the incident. AAP

COAG must tackle business red tape: Costello

CANBERRA, April 12 2007

Federal Treasurer Peter Costello says the government remains committed to cutting red tape and is working actively through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to ease the regulatory burden on business.

Reports today said Prime Minister John Howard would offer the states \$110 million at tomorrow's COAG meeting of federal and state leaders if they agree to 10 national schemes to slash red tape.

In return for the funding, the states must refer their powers to the commonwealth in issues such as product safety, personal properties security, building regulation, rail safety and occupational health and safety.

The treasurer made no reference to funding in his statement, but he said he wants to ensure that regulatory burdens, especially where jurisdictional overlaps add to compliance burdens, are addressed at all levels of government.

Mr Costello, who is currently in London, issued a statement saying the government's commitment to tackling red tape was ongoing.

"I have commissioned the Productivity Commission to commence an annual review process to identify regulation that is unnecessarily burdensome, complex or redundant, or duplicates regulation in other jurisdictions," he said.

This rolling program of reviews will examine all sectors of the economy over a five-year cycle, commencing with the primary sector this year. Continued on page 6





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“The commission’s first review will be completed by the end of October 2007 and will form the basis of a rolling red tape reduction agenda, which will be considered by the Government each year.”

AAP

Builder injured during scaffolding fall

12 April 2007

A builder is in a critical condition after falling from scaffolding at a work site in Sydney’s north-west.

The NSW Ambulance service says the 50-year-old man suffered a heart attack after falling this morning.

He was taken from the site on Windsor Road in Rouse Hill .. to The Hills Private Hospital.

AAP

New class action filed over F-111 maintenance

BRISBANE, April 11 2007

Former RAAF maintenance workers will today file a class action against the federal government in their battle for compensation over health problems resulting from work on the F-111.

An inquiry six years ago heard former RAAF members who used toxic chemicals to repair the fuel tanks of the strike-fighters suffered a range of health complaints from cancer to blackouts and breathing problems.

The federal government has already paid out more than \$20 million but has rejected many claims for lump sum payments because of what it says is a lack of scientific evidence linking chemical exposure to health problems.

The maintenance program, known as deseal-reseal, was conducted at the RAAF base at Amberley in Queensland between 1975 and 2000.

Today’s claim follows a similar one lodged in the Supreme Court in December. It is expected up to 600 former workers in south-east Queensland could join the action.

AAP

Federal authorities to investigate ship explosion

SYDNEY, April 3 2007

Federal authorities will investigate the cause of an explosion on a coal ship moored off Newcastle, in NSW, which left three Filipino sailors with serious burns.

The three men suffered burns to their faces and arms when the boiler on the Shirane, a bulk carrier from Panama, exploded at about 12.30pm (AEST) yesterday.

A fourth man also received minor injuries.

The marine unit of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) was about to start a full investigation, a spokesman said today.

Responsibility fell to the ATSB as the coal ship, which was moored about 10 km off Nobby’s Head, was outside the jurisdiction of the local port authority at the time of the accident.

The ATSB spokesman said it was too early to tell how long the investigation would take.

The three sailors were yesterday airlifted to John Hunter Hospital in a stable condition. Two of them, a 51-year-old and a 38-year-old, remained at the hospital in a satisfactory condition awaiting transfer tomorrow to the specialist burns unit at Royal North Shore Hospital.

A 33-year-old was discharged yesterday.

AAP

Paper Australia committed to stand trial

2 April 2007

Paper Australia Pty Ltd has been committed to stand trial in the County Court on a workplace health and safety charge.

A man died on 25 May 2005 when he was struck by a falling five-tonne roller on a paper-making machine at the Maryvale Paper Mill in Gippsland.

The roller was being lifted, but a cable snapped causing it to fall and hit the man inflicting fatal injuries.

Latrobe Valley Magistrate, John Dugdale, was told maintenance was underway at the time of the incident.

The case has been listed for a case conference in the County Court on 20 August.

Source: WorkSafe

Agribusiness warned on health and safety

April 2007

WorkSafe has completed the third prosecution of a major agribusiness company this year resulting in a conviction and \$85,000 fine for GrainCorp Operations Limited.

The case follows those involving Tatura Milk Industries Limited which was fined \$40,000 without

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conviction in February, after a worker was sprayed with a hot acid and caustic cleaning solution when a sight glass shattered as a pipe was being cleaned.

In January, Australian Cooperative Foods was convicted and fined \$20,000 after a February 2006 incident at its Allansford plant, which left an employee with an injured arm caused by an unguarded cheese conveyor.

WorkSafe's Executive Director John Merritt said the cases highlighted the need for large and small businesses to properly guard equipment and train employees in safe working procedures.

"These are fundamental requirements of health and safety law. More importantly it is a vital part of being part of the regional community.

"Every year WorkSafe deals with a great number of serious injuries and deaths as a result of cases like these. It is the expectation of the community that people should not be hurt at work.

"It is reasonable that employers are aware of the known and potential hazards in their workplace and ensure they are eliminated as far as is practicable."

GrainCorp Operations pleaded guilty to two charges laid under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 at the Horsham Magistrates Court on Friday,

The court was told a man's leg and hip were seriously injured and he suffered bruising all over his body when the auger fell and pinned him between the barrel of the machine and the wheel frame at GrainCorp's Antwerp rail siding site near Dimboola in August 2005.

He was in hospital for 17 days, including two weeks in traction, and off work for seven weeks.

WorkSafe's investigation found:

- No adequate risk assessment was carried out on this type of auger;
- The company had no manuals or Safe Working Instructions for the auger. It failed to provide information, instructions or training to employees in relation to the safe use of the auger;
- The injured man had not operated that type of "cotton reel" auger before the incident. Nor had his workmate;
- GrainCorp Operations could not state when the cotton reel auger was last inspected and would only have been aware of its general condition through staff observation. There were no records of any maintenance of the cotton reel auger;
- Two people escaped injury when a similar auger collapsed at a GrainCorp site at Carpolac several months before the incident at Antwerp.

Source: WorkSafe

Proposal to ban smoking in cars carrying children

12 April 2007

Health Minister Stephen Robertson will conduct a review all of Queensland's smoking laws in mid 2007.

"I'll look at the Queensland Cancer Fund proposal then and work through the issues in consultation with the experts.

"There are significant issues to resolve first to make a ban on smoking in private cars workable. For example, how do you enforce such a ban? Who do you report an offence to: the police or Queensland Health?"

"Another issue is establishing proof of an offence because the evidence literally goes up in smoke."

While Mr Robertson personally supports restrictions on smoking in cars carrying children, any final decision on whether Queensland would introduce legislation would be a matter for State Cabinet.

"Educating parents will remain the most effective way of stopping people smoking in cars carrying children."

Smoking is already banned in all Queensland Government vehicles.

Source: Queensland Minister for Health

NEW ZEALAND

Public feedback on serious harm definition sought

According to the New Zealand Department of Labour website, the Labour Minister Ruth Dyson has announced the government is seeking public feedback on the definition of "serious harm" as stated in Schedule 1 of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

"The current definition of serious harm has not been amended since the Act came into force in 1993. A review is timely and I welcome the public's input on this," said Ruth Dyson. "I need to make sure it is clear and relevant to today's workplaces, so I would like to hear from as many people as possible."

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As a basis for the consultation, the Department of Labour has released a discussion paper that contains a draft revised definition. The draft addresses areas of improvement that arose from initial consultation with businesses and stakeholder groups.

The discussion paper and more information can be found at the Department of Labour website www.osh.dol.govt.nz/serious-harm/

The public has until 15 June 2007 to make a submission

Inspection program to reduce manual handling injuries in metal manufacturing April 4, 2007

Manual handling injuries resulting from heavy lifting and repetitive tasks are the focus of a Trans-Tasman workplace safety project targeting manufacturing.

Following an extensive period of consultation with stakeholders and education within the industry, inspections will be conducted across Australia and New Zealand in the first half of this year.

In WA, the project will specifically target the metal manufacturing sector, one of the top high-risk sectors where manual handling injuries account for the highest number of total injuries.

The project incorporates two phases – an education and awareness component, followed by workplace visits by inspectors to ensure workplaces are taking all possible steps to guard against manual handling injuries.

Three free industry workshops were held in Perth over the past fortnight to raise awareness of the causes of these injuries, the preventative measures that can be taken and obligations under occupational safety and health laws.

With the education and awareness phase of the campaign completed, workplace inspections will begin this month and continue for around three months.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that national projects such as this were an important means of ensuring national consistency in workplace safety and health.

“These national campaigns are aimed at protecting workers by ensuring employers are aware of their responsibility under the laws to minimise the risk of injury,” Ms Lyhne said.

Source: DOCEP

Man run over by tractor BRISBANE, April 6 2007

A 21-year-old man is in a stable condition in a north Queensland hospital after being run over by a tractor on a property near Mareeba.

The man had been riding on the side of a tractor towing a banana trailer when he fell off about 12.50pm (AEST) yesterday, police said. He was then run over by a rear tyre of the tractor.

Police said he was taken to Mareeba Hospital with spinal and head injuries and later transported to Cairns Hospital. Work Place Health and Safety officers were notified and investigations are continuing.

AAP

Beattie To Push For Better Disaster Planning 12 April 2007

Premier Peter Beattie will push for a more coordinated approach to national disaster planning at tomorrow's COAG meeting in Canberra.

Mr Beattie said the recent threat of a tsunami hitting Australian shores had exposed flaws in the nation's preparedness for certain disasters.

“Australians are well versed in dealing with natural disasters such as bushfires or cyclones,” Mr Beattie said. “Over the years these disasters have unfortunately become regular occurrences and we have been able to develop very effective methods of preparing and recovering from their impact. The proof is our own experience with Tropical Cyclone Larry. However, climate change is going to expose our country to more frequent and severe natural disasters - worse than has been faced in thousands of years.

“We face increasing risk from cyclones, storm surges, sea level rises, bushfire, heatwave, drought and increase in the spread of diseases such as dengue fever, Ross River fever, and Japanese encephalitis.

“We need to be more proactive in our planning for these disasters and consider a shared investment in initiatives such as mobile desalination plants which can be moved to areas hardest hit by drought.

“We also need a better early warning system for tsunamis and I will be suggesting a national community information and warning system with consistent protocols be progressed urgently through the Australian Emergency Management Committee.

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"I will also continue my push for the Federal Government to accelerate the deployment of buoys as part of a better early warning system. They have indicated this work will not be completed until at least 2008. That is simply not good enough.

"Australian communities should not be put at risk for another two years because of a lack of funding or lack of will on the part of the Federal Government.

"I also want modelling and simulation capability on tsunami events to be fast tracked as a matter of priority, led by Geoscience Australia, in consultation with States and Territories.

"This modelling is particularly important because gaps exist in the data and modelling currently available. In a fast impacting event such as a tsunami it is essential sufficient warning is given and actions taken to enable people to escape from the potential impact zone.

"In relation to tsunamis I will also discuss the need for a communications system capable of better disseminating time-critical information to affected communities. Any potential system would be inclusive of existing warning systems such as radio and television but supplemented by other possible modes such as fixed telephone lines and SMS messaging."

Mr Beattie said he also believed a national cooperative research centre on disasters should be established to undertake more research and development.

"We already have a similar centre based in Victoria looking specifically at bushfires but I think Queensland would be the ideal location for a centre to look at the bigger 'all hazards' picture and the impact of all natural and man made disasters including terrorism," he said.

Source: Premier and Minister for Trade

ADVERTISING

A limited amount of advertising has been approved by the Safety Institute of Australia.

If you want to advertise to over 3,000 safety professionals in Australia, please contact Joanne at the SIA Secretariat through natadmin@sia.org.au

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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Editor Kevin Jones
Editorial Inquiries +61 (0)3 9478 9484
jonesk@sia.org.au

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Workplace Safety Services Pty Ltd
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A.B.N. 68 091 088 621
www.safetyatwork.biz

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