



# Safety Week

Proudly provided by the Safety Institute of Australia  
National Office: PO Box 2078, GLADSTONE PARK Victoria 3043  
Website: [www.sia.org.au](http://www.sia.org.au) Email: [natadmin@vic.sia.org.au](mailto:natadmin@vic.sia.org.au)

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## CONTENTS

- WA *Minister releases full report into Varanus Island gas pipeline explosion*
- WA *Apache Northwest Pty Ltd statement regarding DoIR/NOPSA report June 3, 2008, Varanus Island incident*
- VIC *If it can move, it can kill – WorkSafe*
- QLD *Government cracks down on senseless assaults on emergency services*
- SA *S.E. Farm Company Fined Over Hand Amputation*
- QLD *Child Safety Officers given greater protection*
- QLD *Fallen firefighters remembered*
- FED *World Mental Health Day National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day Launched*
- ACT *Improved guide to reduce safety risks with cytotoxic drugs*
- NSW *Simple safety steps" may have prevented fatality*

## SPECIAL ARTICLES

*"Safety In Australia" Update by Kevin Jones*

## IN BRIEF

- New WorkCover Prosecution Case*
- Commonwealth Legislative Amendment*
- Queensland web page for Safe Work Australia Week*

## Minister releases full report into Varanus Island gas pipeline explosion

10 October, 2008

Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore has released the final report into the Varanus Island offshore gas pipeline incident which occurred in June this year. The report, prepared for the Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR) by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA), reveals that the immediate physical cause of the gas explosion at the island's gas production facility operated by Apache Energy Ltd was the rupture of the 12-inch gas sales pipeline. Mr Moore expressed disappointment that the investigation's limited terms of reference meant that it had not addressed issues relating to regulatory oversight of the safety regime on the Varanus Island facility. "Interestingly, the Labor government chose the regulator (NOPSA on behalf of DoIR) to carry out the investigation," he said. "The lack of leadership and direction from my predecessor meant that a comprehensive investigation into the causes leading to this disaster - rather than simply how it occurred - did not take place. "The Labor government should have ordered a full and independent investigation into this issue. I have not ruled out ordering such an inquiry at a later date." The Minister said the report identified the main causes of the Varanus Island explosion as:

- ineffective anti-corrosion coating at the beach crossing section of a 12-inch sales gas pipeline, due to damage and/or dis-bondment from the pipeline;
- ineffective cathodic protection of the wet-dry transition zone of the beach crossing section of a 12-inch sales gas pipeline on Varanus Island; and
- ineffective inspection and monitoring by Apache Energy of the beach crossing and shallow water section of the pipeline.

Mr Moore said the operator was responsible for maintaining a safe working

Continued on page 2



The (then) Minister for Energy & Resources Fran Logan Reviews Damage 06-06-2008

## Letters to the Editor

The Editor  
SafetyWeek

It is a pity that the Bill setting up the governing board of Safe Work Australia has no provision to include people specifically selected for their professional expertise in OHS.

Best wishes

Geoff Taylor, CFSIA

Adj Prof. Curtin University.

If you have any safety issues to discuss, or concerns about SafetyWeek itself, please consider communicating with the editor at [kjones@sia.org.au](mailto:kjones@sia.org.au)



## Australian Health & Safety Matters

The next edition of the SIA member magazines (picture above) will be distributed to members shortly.

More information can be found at <http://www.sia.org.au/news/magazines>

Continued from page 1

environment under the safety case management system.

“Under the safety case regime, the operator is required to identify hazards and assess risks to health and safety and to implement control measures to reduce those risks,” he said.

“The ongoing inspection, monitoring and maintenance of control measures are associated with those risks and the management regime.

“The report has indicated that Apache and its co-licensees may have committed offences under two pipeline Acts.”

The Minister said there were a number of issues relating to the investigation still under way, to identify if any enforcement action would be taken.

Reiterating that the investigation had focused on the technical causes of the incident and not the regulatory system or actions of the regulators, Mr Moore said he was considering a further inquiry.

“I think it is important that we cover those aspects,” he said.

“However, I would like to see what the Senate inquiry findings are before I commit to any further investigations.”

The Senate inquiry is looking into the economic impact of the Western Australian gas crisis and the State Government’s response to the incident.

Mr Moore said today that DoIR had already contacted NOPSA and the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection requesting advice about any changes to procedures that could be considered.

He said he publicly released the full detail of the report because the WA public had a right to know the cause of the Varanus Island gas pipeline explosion incident which cut 30 per cent of the State’s gas supplies.

Source: WA Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Fisheries; Electoral Affairs

### Apache Northwest Pty Ltd statement regarding DoIR/NOPSA report June 3, 2008, Varanus Island incident

10 October 2008

Apache Northwest Pty Ltd said today that conclusions in the Western Australia Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR) report on the June 3, 2008, Varanus Island explosion were premature and based on an incomplete investigation.

“Apache disagrees with any conclusions drawn at this time about this unforeseeable event because they are premature and misleading,” said Tim Wall, Managing Director of Apache Northwest Pty Ltd.

“Since the explosion, Apache has worked with DoIR and the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) in a cooperative effort to determine the cause of the explosion. The parties agreed on a rigorous protocol for metallurgical tests; all recognized that the tests would take several months to complete and thoroughly analyze.

“It is unfortunate that NOPSA has chosen to produce a ‘Final Report,’ and even goes so far as to assert that further information is unlikely to change its mind.

“Apache only received a copy of the report yesterday. After we have had some time to review it thoroughly, we will provide a more detailed response.”

As stated in a 17 July, 2008 DoIR media statement: “The pipelines and Varanus Island facilities have been the subject of an independent validation report [by Lloyd’s Register] which was received in August 2007. NOPSA has also undertaken a number of inspections between 2005 and the present.”

On 7 September, 2008 Apache made a substantive submission in response to questions posed by DoIR and NOPSA. Apache’s submission is available online at [www.apacheenergy.com.au](http://www.apacheenergy.com.au).

Apache is an independent oil and gas producer that has built a significant business in Western Australia. Apache provides energy supplies for the economy while operating in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

“The explosion was an unforeseeable and unfortunate event, but it is important to remember that no one was injured, the environment was not damaged and – through Apache’s efforts – operations have been restored ahead of schedule,” Mr Wall said.

Continued on page 3

## SIA News

### The Annual Report of the Safety Institute of Australia

Several members have contacted SafetyWeek expressing difficulty in finding a copy of the 2008 Annual Report for the Safety Institute. The SIA included a link to the Report on the website in an email on 3 October 2008.

The annual report of any organisation is one of the most important documents available as it reports the achievement of performance targets and anticipates future activity.

The current Annual Report is available to SIA members section of [www.sia.org.au](http://www.sia.org.au) through the Members section by following the following path

Login to Members Section

- SIA National Updates
- SIA National AGM 2008 - Final Notice of Meeting
- go to the very bottom of the page and click on "SIA National Annual Report 2008"

The 65-page Annual Report contains lengthy, informative and thought-provoking reports from

National President,  
Dr Geoff Dell CFSIA, &

National Secretary,  
Mr Gavin Waugh FSIA

I urge all members to get a better understanding of your organisation by downloading the SIA Annual Report for 2007-2008

Continued from page 2

Pipeline explosions are rare and it typically takes months to determine the cause. Everything must be examined, from the manufacture and design of the pipe to its installation and numerous environmental factors.

All told, the pipeline was the subject of more than 50 inspections, audits or reviews conducted by top international consultants and regulators – with no warnings that the pipeline had a corrosion problem or other issues that could lead to its failure.

"Apache will work to determine the root cause of this explosion thoroughly and methodically – as we also continue to develop significant new gas resources for the Western Australia economy," Mr Wall said.

Source: Apache Energy

### If it can move, it can kill – WorkSafe.

10 October 2008

WorkSafe has warned about the dangers of crushing injuries after two deaths and a serious injury in less than a week.

- A man died at a Powelltown sawmill on 2 October when a 4 metre high stack of timber fell as the man prepared to position another stack with a forklift.
- On 8 October a man died at Northcote when a truck tipped sideways trapping him as he used a truck-mounted crane to move a 4.3 tonne load from another truck. He was standing between the two vehicles which were parked side by side.
- A man suffered serious internal injuries when slabs of stone being unloaded from a shipping container fell at Epping also on 8 October.

WorkSafe's Executive Director John Merritt said while the three incidents were in different circumstances the warning to all workplaces and workers was that safe systems of work must be in place at all times.

"Six people have died at work as a result of crushing injuries this year. The potential for racking, vehicles or stacked goods to move must be considered in any workplace and steps taken to ensure the risk is minimised as far as practicable.

"Loads that have shifted in transit; storage racks not suited to the materials they're holding or which aren't attached to walls, vehicles not properly supported or chocked and poor stacking practices can produce consequences that can be instant and permanent.

"It may be a fatality or lead to someone being crippled, losing an arm or leg or with a permanent head injury.

"In the cases of so-called 'near misses' people should use it as a serious warning not just say 'That was close.'"

"It is not good enough to say 'we've always done it this way and never had any problems', what you must do is understand the potential and do something about it,"

Mr Merritt said.

Source: WorkSafe

### Government cracks down on senseless assaults on emergency services

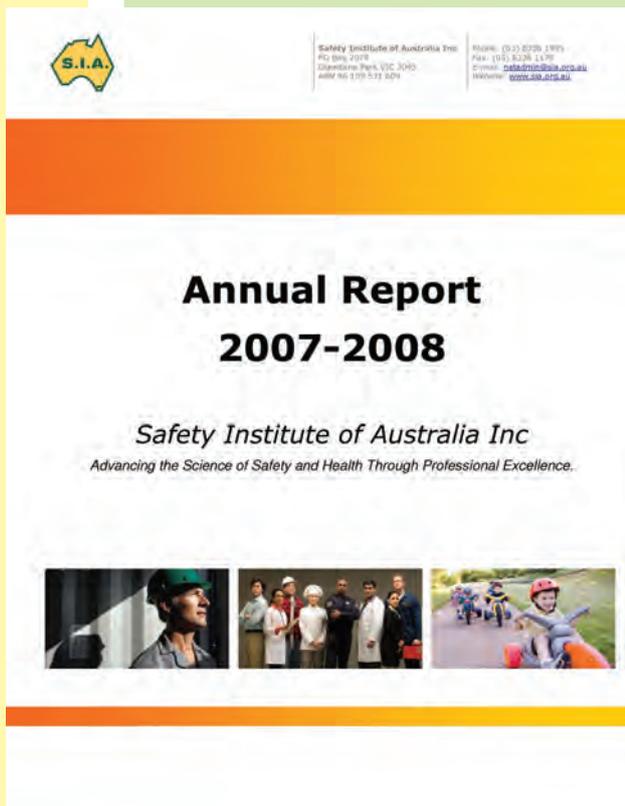
10 October 2008

Emergency Services Minister Neil Roberts has welcomed tough new penalties for people who assault emergency services staff and volunteers.

The new penalties have been introduced as part of wide-ranging amendments to the Queensland Criminal Code passed last night in Parliament.

Mr Roberts said the changes to the

Continued on page 4



The image shows the cover of the Safety Institute of Australia's Annual Report for 2007-2008. At the top left is the S.I.A. logo. To its right is contact information: Safety Institute of Australia Inc, PO Box 21078, St Leonards Park, VIC 3042, and phone numbers (03) 9378 1700 and (03) 9378 1178. The main title "Annual Report 2007-2008" is centered in large, bold, black font. Below it, the full name "Safety Institute of Australia Inc" and the tagline "Advancing the Science of Safety and Health Through Professional Excellence." are displayed. At the bottom, there are three small photographs: a person in a hard hat, a group of people in safety gear, and a person in a red helmet on a motorcycle.



# Safety Week

Issue 167

October 13, 2008

Page 4

## SIA News

### 2008 NATIONAL AGM

Our National Office based in Victoria will have a telephone link to the National AGM held in Sydney on the 29th October. All financial members are welcome to attend.

Date: 29th Oct 2008

Time: 6pm

Location: 2/217-219 Mickleham Rd  
Tullamarine

RSVP: 28th October 2008 to  
Rachelle Bullock

e: [vicadmin@sia.org.au](mailto:vicadmin@sia.org.au)

Members in other States should contact their local Divisions or the National Office for local contact arrangements.

The CEO will be distributing further details on this matter shortly.

Continued from page 3

legislation shows the Government has listened to strong representations from the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Union and the United Firefighter's Union about assaults against ambulance officers and fire fighters.

"There have been some very recent examples in the news of senseless attacks against ambulance officers and firefighters," Mr Roberts said.

"These attacks have underlined the importance of stronger penalties against those who harm emergency services staff and volunteers \_ who spend their time trying to help people."

Mr Roberts said the strong new laws would provide further protection for ambulance officers, firefighters, State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Brigade volunteers and honorary ambulance officers.

"These new provisions will ensure emergency services staff and volunteers who are attacked in the course of their duties will now be afforded the same level of protection as a police or prison officer," he said.

"Those who commit these senseless attacks will be liable for a maximum penalty of seven years in prison.

"Assaults against emergency services workers are serious incidents and will now be viewed as serious assaults in the eyes of the law."

Mr Roberts added that it was disappointing to see the Shadow Minister had nothing to add to the debate on this important legislation.

"In Question Time this week the Member for Mirani asked me what the Government was doing to protect ambulance officers from assaults, and then didn't even have the good grace to show up in the debate."

Source: Q'ld Minister for Emergency Services

### S.E. Farm Company Fined Over Hand Amputation 10 October 2008

A small farming company has been fined more than \$18,000 over an incident in which its farm manager's hand was amputated.

Southwest Pastoral Pty Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching section 19(1) of the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986 in failing to ensure the safety of an employee, and breaching section 20 (1) in failing to prepare and maintain written safe work policies.

The incident happened in January 2006 at the company's dairy farm at Mt. Schank. The farm manager aged 53 at the time, was working with another employee using an auger to mix feed.

SafeWork SA's investigation revealed that the machine had been modified for use in a manner for which it was not designed. A hatch cover from the auger was removed to allow more mixed feed to be collected in another container.

This left the auger, in essence a large corkscrew turning within a cylinder, exposed. In trying to scoop out the last of the grain from this open hatchway, the manager's hand became caught when his workmate unexpectedly started the mixer up again.

The man's hand was severed at the wrist. He returned to work with the defendant company six weeks later, but since left for other employment. The court noted that the injured man had coped well with family support and support from the defendant company.

It also heard that the company had only leased the property for about seven months prior to the incident and had delegated responsibility to the manager who was

Continued on page 5



### Visions Conference 2008

16th Annual Occupational Health and Safety Conference

12 to 14 November 2008

Cairns International Hotel, Cairns Australia

Now in its sixteenth year, Visions hosts a variety of local, national and international speakers. The conference is considered by OHS professionals as Queensland's premiere safety event, and attracts up to 300 delegates annually. [www.visions.org.au](http://www.visions.org.au)

Continued from page 4

ultimately injured.

Industrial Magistrate Richard Hardy said the defendant was wrong to do so, and was legally obliged to identify the hazards and assess the risks of the machinery its employees had to use.

Magistrate Hardy added that “in the absence of appropriate oversight and supervision, (the defendant) ought to at least have had appropriately developed written policies and procedures.”

He fined the company a total of \$18,375 following a 25 per cent reduction for cooperation with authorities and contrition.

“Our statistics show that farms are some of the most dangerous workplaces in Australia,” says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson, “and this incident highlights the need to have a thorough workplace safety system in place.”

“If an employer intends to conduct a work activity, they must also take an active role in ensuring the safety of all concerned, as the law clearly requires them to do.”

Source: SafeWork SA

## **Child Safety Officers given greater protection** 10 October 2008

Queensland’s Child Safety Minister Margaret Keech today welcomed changes to the criminal code that could see people who assault Child Safety Officers jailed for 7 years. Mrs Keech said the changes acknowledged that front-line child protection workers have one of the toughest jobs in government.

“Our Child Safety Officers are community heroes - on a daily basis they protect children from harm and they deserve this increased protection,” she said.

“When children are involved emotions can be running high and our CSO’s are often faced with confronting situations.

“While they were previously protected by the law in the same manner as any victim of crime - CSO’s are now specifically acknowledged by the criminal code.

“Be warned if you assault a Child Safety Officer - a person there to protect children - you could be jailed for seven years.”

The Criminal Code and Other Acts Amendment Bill was passed by state parliament overnight.

Mrs Keech said figures showed that so far this year there have been around 53 threats and 17 assaults against staff, carers and service providers.

In 2007 there were 41 assaults and 157 threats, 52 assaults and 96 threats in 2006 and 28 assaults and 72 threats reported in 2005.

“Child Safety Officers are now given the same level of protection as a police officer or prison guard, and so they should be,” Mrs Keech said.

“I hope that these legislative changes will act as a deterrent.

“Our staff deserve to go to work every day without the fear of physical violence, abuse or threats hanging over their heads.

“I want to encourage staff to bring any of these issues to the Department’s immediate attention so that we can ensure the offenders feel the full force of the law.”

Source: Q’ld Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women

## **Fallen firefighters remembered** October 10, 2008

Queensland firefighters paused for a minute’s silence today to pay tribute to all those firefighters who gave their lives in the line of duty. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Brisbane region held a commemorative service at St Brigid’s Church in Red Hill this morning and flags at fire stations throughout Queensland were flown at half mast throughout the day.

Continued on page 6



QFRS Assistant Commissioner Bruce Byatt reads the official address.

## SafetyWeek PLUS

Please don't forget there is a special members-only edition, SafetyWeek PLUS, available only as a download at the SIA website at <http://sia.org.au/members/members-newsletter/member-safetyweekplus-bulletins.html>

The latest edition includes article entitled

- New tests show Mt Isa children still at risk
- Most bosses ignore workers' mental health: survey
- Asbestos sufferers to receive apology from state
- WA may seek new review of Varanus explosion
- Company may have offended over exploding pipeline
- No evidence to support claims phone, laptops caused drop
- Union to meet with govt over bus seatbelts
- Worker busted taking sickies after false lung cancer claim
- Man's crushing death due to cost-cutting, union says
- Man dies in Qld industrial accident

Continued from page 5

The tenth day of the tenth month is the National Day of Remembrance for firefighters, an occasion where members of QFRS, their family, friends and the community at large, pay their respects to fallen firefighters at commemorative services around the country. "Today we commemorate the courage and heroism of firefighters who have given their lives to protect the lives and safety of others," said QFRS Commissioner Lee Johnson. "This day will ensure we continue to remember the 47 Queensland firefighters who lost their lives while on duty serving the Queensland community since 1877. "It is also an opportunity to remember the retired firefighters who have passed away in the previous year. We are heartened by the fact that we have not lost a firefighter since July 2007," he said.

The Brisbane service featured the ringing of the original Ithaca fire station bell which was used to call firefighters to the station in the event of a fire.

Following the service, wreaths were taken from St Brigid's Catholic Church and laid at the memorial statue of James Thomas Mooney – the first known Brisbane City volunteer firefighter to lose his life in March 1877 - on the corner of Queen and Creek Streets, Brisbane City.

Commissioner Johnson said that firefighters' role in protecting the public required training, teamwork and bravery, as well as the support of loved ones.

"It takes a special kind of person to be a firefighter. They are the kind of person who sets themselves apart from the crowd.

"We all owe it to these people to never forget them, their contribution, their families and their workmates. To them we say 'thank you,'" he said. Source: Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

## World Mental Health Day

10 October 2008

In a statement by the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, the government said:

To mark World Mental Health Day, the Rudd Government will take several important steps to improve mental health services, including:

- Establishing a new National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention
- Investing \$30.5 million in improving rural and remote mental health services
- Applications for postgraduate scholarships in mental health have now opened, following a \$35 million boost to the Mental Health Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme

Mental health is an issue for all Australians. Around 20 per cent of adult Australians, or one in five people, will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives. Many will live with more than one mental illness at a time. Mental illness not only impacts on the individual sufferer, but also has an impact on their families and friends and communities.

The Rudd Government supports World Mental Health Day and has a strong commitment to supporting people with mental illness, by developing and enhancing services and programs for people living with mental illness.

Today the Government is announcing three mental health initiatives which are targeted at helping to address some of the most pressing issues affecting mental health, including the needs of people in rural and remote Australia, strengthening the mental health

Continued on page 7

## SIA News

### “Safety In Australia” Update

By Kevin Jones  
BA FSIA RSP(Aust)

Like most Safety Institute of Australia members, I have been wondering what progress has been made on the SIA's peer-reviewed journal, “Safety In Australia”. The journal has been mentioned repeatedly since the Institute entered a contract with publishers, Crowther Blayne.

The National President, Dr Geoff Dell, provided me with some information over the weekend.

The Editorial Board is being finalised by Dr Geoff Dell and Dr Steve Cowley. Prominent Australian and overseas OHS academics have been approached to participate

Dr Dell wrote:

“The scientific standing of the Editorial Board is an important factor in attracting others from the scientific community to publish. It is even more important since we are trying to establish Safety in Australia as a peer review journal in the Australian academic marketplace.”

It is also difficult to obtain research submissions as papers are submitted to achieve, to some extent, official recognition from universities; but that recognition cannot be established easily by a new journal.

When the process has been finalised and the first edition published, all SIA members will receive a copy of the new Journal.

No timetable has been provided so, in the meantime, SIA members will need to rely on SafetyWeek and Australian Safety & Health Matters.

Continued from page 6

workforce, and helping people at risk of suicide.

#### **Mental health services in rural and remote areas**

\$30.5 million will be provided to enhance rural and remote mental health services under stage two of the Government's Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas program.

This funding, over three years, will help ease the barriers faced by people living in rural and remote areas accessing mental health services. Under this stage of the program, 24 organisations will be funded to provide mental health services for people living in 25 rural and remote areas, with a focus on drought-affected areas and areas of high need. Allied and mental health nursing professionals – including social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, mental health nurses, Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal mental health workers – will be engaged through Divisions of General Practice, Aboriginal Medical Services and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

#### **National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention**

Having a history or current symptoms of mental illness, such as depression, increases the risk of suicide. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) promotes suicide prevention activities across the Australian population, as well as for specific at-risk groups. The strategy also aims to develop and enhance existing services and programs with governments, business, non-government and community organisations that support people at risk of suicide and self-harm.

Under the strategy, there has been an increasing emphasis on funding research in order to strengthen the evidence base for suicide prevention and intervention activities. As part of this, the Government has committed almost \$1.5 million to establish a National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention. The Government is currently finalising negotiations with a major Australian university to host the Centre.

The work produced by the Centre will help to ensure that suicide prevention initiatives are evidence based, effective and supporting the most high-risk groups amongst the population.

#### **National Advisory Council on Mental Health**

As I announced in June 2008, the Government has established a National Advisory Council on Mental Health, chaired by Mr John Mendoza and consisting of 9 other individual experts. The Council is providing the Government with independent, confidential and balanced advice, to help improve Australia's mental health system and drive mental health reform. I attended the Council's inaugural meeting in August, and the Council will meet again next week.

Other initiatives include under the National Perinatal Depression Initiative, Commonwealth funding of \$55 million over five years including an additional \$20 million in funding for the Access to Allied Psychological Services program (ATAPS), \$5 million to beyondblue for information and community awareness activities, and \$30 million through States and Territories for screening, workforce training and development and support, care and treatment.

Source: Minister For Health And Ageing

### **National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day Launched**

October 13, 2008

The inaugural National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day has today been launched by Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Simon Corbell.

“I am very pleased to be part of today's celebration and demonstrate my support for those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,” Mr Corbell said.

“Today's proceedings have been organised by Picking up the Peaces, a non-profit organisation committed to raising awareness and understanding of PTSD.

“I hope that through events like this stigma associated with PTSD and to assist those who are suffering to seek assistance. It is well recognised that PTSD can severely impact on a person's quality of life and on the lives of family and friends.

PTSD symptoms can develop after someone is exposed to an extremely traumatic

## In Brief

### Commonwealth Legislative Amendment

Last week, Parliament passed amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety (Safety Standards) Amendment Regulations 2008 (No. 1). These Regulation are intended to

- “preserve certain State and Territory occupational health and safety laws, which may currently be excluded by the OHS Act; and
- implement the National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work (the Licensing National Standard).”

Further details are available at <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/comlaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrumentCompilation1.nsf/0/F673EFBA5B5306CA2574DD0004F63D?OpenDocument>

### Queensland web page for Safe Work Australia Week

The Queensland Dept of Employment & Industrial Relations has set up a web page in support of Safe Work Australia Week. It can be found at

<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/training/events/safeworkaustralia/>

### New WorkCover Prosecution Case

9 October 2008

VWA v Priest

Case concerning the divulgence of information under the AC Act 1985

<http://www.l.worksafe.vic.gov.au/vwa/vwa097-002.nsf/content/Comp120809>

Continued from page 7

event such as war, torture, rape, child sexual or physical assault, kidnapping, natural disaster, car accidents, or being diagnosed with a serious illness.

“Many emergency service personnel who are exposed to traumatic events can be prone to PTSD,” Mr Corbell said. “If untreated, PTSD symptoms can severely impact on quality of life due to memory deficit, suicidal actions, fatigue and social phobia.”

Picking up the Peaces has attracted a growing national audience and is supported by groups such as the Vietnam Veterans Federation, the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Defence Force.

The launch of PTSD Awareness Day coincides with Mental Health Week 2008 in the ACT which runs from Sunday 5 October to Saturday 11th October, with World Mental Health Day celebrated on Friday, October 10. The theme for Mental Health Week this year is ‘Participate’.

Source: Simon Corbell, MLA

### Improved guide to reduce safety risks with cytotoxic drugs

8 October 2008

WorkCover NSW has launched a revised guide to assist employers and workers reduce the risks associated with handling cytotoxic drugs and related waste.

WorkCover NSW CEO, Jon Blackwell, said the comprehensive guide, Cytotoxic Drugs and Related Wastes - Risk Management, contains practical advice to manage occupational hazards associated with cytotoxic drugs.

“The latest guide builds on previous editions and will assist workplaces develop and implement safe work systems that meet occupational health and safety requirements in New South Wales,” Mr Blackwell said.

“Cytotoxic drugs are used in a range of health care settings across New South Wales including hospitals, veterinary clinics, nursing homes, mortuaries, pharmacies, pathology laboratories, patient homes and waste collection and disposal facilities.

“Cytotoxic drugs include a wide range of chemical compounds and are used extensively to treat cancer and other medical conditions and they work by killing tumour cells by interfering with cell division.

“Working with certain drugs or chemicals may pose a health risk for workers if adequate precautions are not taken to control the risk of exposure,” he said.

Exposure to cytotoxic drugs may occur from ingestion and sharps injuries, inhalation of aerosols and drug particles as well as skin contact and absorption.

“Occupational exposure to cytotoxic drugs and related waste may occur where control measures are insufficient or are not in place,” Mr Blackwell said.

The guide highlights control measures to reduce the risk of exposure to these drugs and cover a range of issues including:

- safety when preparing, dispensing and administering cytotoxic drugs
- managing cytotoxic contaminated body wastes
- spill and waste management
- caring for patients in community settings
- cytotoxic drugs in veterinary practices

“The guide can also be used as a tool to assist in the development of policies and procedures and the training of staff that work with cytotoxic drugs,” Mr Blackwell said

“The guide includes a cytotoxic drugs register and risk assessment template as well as alert pro-formas for home spills and general safety precautions,” he said.

The guide was reviewed and developed following extensive consultation with health care industry associations and unions including representatives from nursing, oncology, pharmaceutical and veterinary professions.

The new guide is available from <http://www.workcover.gov.nsw.gov.au/>

Source: WorkCover NSW

### Simple safety steps” may have prevented fatality

8 October 2008

The death of a worker after just one week into his new job has emphasised the need for employers to be alert and diligent in seeking out potential risks, rather than simply reacting to incidents, a NSW Industrial Court judge has stated.



# SafetyWeek

Issue 167

October 13, 2008

Page 9

Continued from page 8

Justice Haylen was delivering sentence on the stock feed manufacturer, Provimi Australia Pty Ltd, following the death of 42-year-old Lionel Gray on 10 July 2006 at the company's Forbes plant.

Mr Gray suffered fatal crush injuries while cleaning the inside of a large stock feed mixer when the machine was activated.

A WorkCover investigation found that Provimi had failed to ensure that employees could only enter the mixer once the plant had been isolated from the electrical supply and "locked out", and had not undertaken adequate risk assessments of the mixer's essential operational procedures.

Another young Provimi employee said in evidence that the process of cleaning the mixer was "quite frightening" because the interior was dark and the person cleaning could not be sure that the isolating system was working properly.

The court heard there was a contest between workers not to perform the cleaning task, which had to be undertaken up to 20 times per day.

Justice Haylen fined Provimi \$150,000 and said the case provides another example of a gap being exposed in an otherwise extensive system of safety in circumstances where a level of complacency may have crept into the procedures because of a lack of prior accidents.

WorkCover NSW CEO Jon Blackwell said that Provimi responded promptly to the WorkCover investigation of this incident and acted quickly to have guarding and interlocking devices fitted to the machinery.

"This incident serves as reminder that simple and effective steps to protect Provimi's employees could have been taken at a much earlier date," said Mr Blackwell.

"It is important that employers identify any potential hazards associated with plant and equipment, including machine guarding and ensure that risk controls are in place to reduce risks.

"While the employer must also provide appropriate instruction, training and supervision in relation to guarding it is essential that workers must also co-operate with their employer, which includes following safe work methods and reporting problems in relation to guarding," he said.

Information on workplace safety including requirements for machine guarding can be found on <http://www.workcover.gov.nsw.gov.au/>

IRC 1026 of 2008 - Insp Michael Salmon (WorkCover NSW) v Provimi Australia Pty Ltd

Source: WorkCover NSW

## 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 the SIA Secretariat through [natadmin@sia.org.au](mailto:natadmin@sia.org.au)

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Editor Kevin Jones  
Editorial Inquiries 03 9478 9484

[kjones@sia.org.au](mailto:kjones@sia.org.au)

Designer/Publisher:  
Workplace Safety Services Pty Ltd  
849 High Street, Regent VIC 3073  
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