



Safety mentoring at its best

FULL STORY PAGE 18



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Course Fee: \$720 (\$792 incl. gst)

Course Length: 5 days (9am - 4pm)

Month	Dates								Location
Jan	Fri 17	Fri 24	Fri 31	Fri 7	Fri 14	City			
Jan	Tue 21	Wed 22	Thu 23	Wed 29	Thu 30	Parramatta			
Feb	Tue 11	Wed 12	Thu 13	Tue 18	Wed 19	City			
Feb	Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19	Mon 24	Tue 25	Rooty Hill			
Feb	Mon 24	Tue 25	Wed 26	Mon 3	Tue 4	Parramatta			
Mar	Wed 5	Thu 6	Fri 7	Wed 12	Thu 13	Campbelltown			
Mar	Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19	Mon 24	Tue 25	City			
Mar	Mon 24	Tue 25	Wed 26	Mon 31	Tue 1	Parramatta			
Apr	Tue 1	Wed 2	Thu 3	Tue 8	Wed 9	City			
Apr	Mon 7	Tue 8	Wed 9	Mon 14	Tue 15	Parramatta			
Apr	Mon 28	Tue 29	Wed 30	Mon 5	Tue 6	Rooty Hill			

Effective Health & Safety Committee Course

Course Fee: \$580 (\$638 incl. gst)

Course Length: 3 days (9am - 4pm)

Month	Dates						Location
Jan	Mon 13	Tue 14	Wed 15	Parramatta			
Jan	Tue 21	Wed 22	Thu 23	City			
Feb	Mon 3	Tue 4	Wed 5	Parramatta			
Feb	Wed 19	Thu 20	Fri 21	Parramatta			
Feb	Tue 25	Wed 26	Thu 27	City			
Mar	Mon 10	Tue 11	Wed 12	City			
Mar	Wed 12	Thu 13	Fri 14	Parramatta			
Mar	Wed 19	Thu 20	Fri 21	Rooty Hill			
Mar	Wed 26	Thu 27	Fri 28	City			
Apr	Wed 2	Thu 3	Fri 4	Parramatta			
Apr	Mon 7	Tue 8	Wed 9	Campbelltown			
Apr	Mon 28	Tue 29	Wed 30	City			

Special Offer

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- Access to our online course, WHS Legislative Framework



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for information on our courses, WHS information & recent editions of our publication 'Your Safety Matters'.

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Specialists in Work Health & Safety Training





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The Workplace Safety And Injury Management Magazine
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Cover image:

Craig Murray following a Sydney Fish Market auction in the early hours. The OHS and Environmental Systems Manager participated in WorkCover's Mentor Program. See page 18.

Disclaimer:

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From the CEO

Building a safer and more competitive operation is at the forefront of success in every business. Helping small businesses do just that is at the core of WorkCover's small business mentor program, where large organisations provide best-practice advice to small businesses to help them be safer, reduce injuries and become more efficient.

The successful program has seen more than 330 small businesses mentored by some of Australia's leading companies, and in this edition, some of our mentees share the results their business gained.

This year we have received the second highest number of entries in the annual WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards. For the first time, the Awards also recognised achievements in return to work initiatives. A total of 141 entries were received and I commend every business for submitting an entry to demonstrate how they have made a difference to work health and safety in their workplace; 22 finalists were selected and winners were announced in a ceremony on October 31.

In September, NSW Finance and Services Minister Andrew Constance announced a new strategy designed to make it easier for small businesses to improve work health and safety and become more productive. The strategy, *Small Business and WorkCover: Making it easier*, will enable us to better service businesses while helping them comply with their regulatory obligations.

I thank the Office of the Small Business Commissioner and all of the industry partners that helped develop the strategy and will continue to work closely as each part of the initiative is rolled out to businesses.

Small businesses can now expect to see improved communication and service delivery and more support through rebates, advisory programs, mentoring and a dedicated small business resource to work with industry.

WorkCover's 315 strong field of inspectors form the largest work health and safety inspectorate in Australia. Our inspectorate prides itself on working hard to prevent incidents and fatalities and ensure a thorough investigation takes place when an incident does occur.

This edition includes a profile on a typical day for Assistant State Inspector Sarah Nicholson.

Lending a helping hand to rebuild Christchurch

I am pleased to announce that over the coming months, members of WorkCover's Work Health and Safety operational team will travel to New Zealand to assist with the rebuild of the earthquake-affected region of Canterbury as part of a 12-month program.

The area has suffered from three strong earthquakes since 4 September 2010. The rebuild program is underway and estimated to cost more than \$40 Billion and will require 20,000 workers.

The New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) sought the assistance of WorkCover NSW in providing skilled construction inspectors to help focus industry attention on addressing hazards during remediation works.

Julie Newman PSM



*Right: A facade from the city's famous Canterbury Cathedral is salvaged as part of remediation works following the December 2011 earthquake.
Shaun Robinson/Shutterstock.com*



*Damage to Canterbury Cathedral after the devastating earthquake.
Lakeview Images/Shutterstock.com*

WorkCover congratulates finalists in annual safety awards

WorkCover NSW has congratulated all of the businesses who submitted entries in the 2013 WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards. WorkCover received 141 entries – the second highest number of entrants in the ten years since the Awards began.

This year saw the introduction of a new category that recognises individuals and businesses that are helping injured workers return to safe and sustainable work.

A total of 21 finalists were selected for initiatives that range from risk modelling benchmarking systems, the establishment of a respite facility on one of Sydney's largest construction sites, to innovations such as the development of mechanical lifting systems to reduce manual handling injuries.

In the past decade, 45 awards have been handed to businesses from a range of industries across metropolitan and regional NSW.

Winners were announced at a ceremony in Sydney on Thursday October 31.

FINALISTS – 2013 WorkCover NSW Safe Work Awards

Abigroup Contractors

The last major project on the Hume Highway is the Holbrook Bypass, a 9.5km section of dual-carriage roadway. Abigroup's safety management system focused on risk management and was divided into hazard identification, risk assessment, risk control, implementation and monitoring. There has been just one single lost time injury in 828,071 working hours.

Arup

The Arup Management System was designed to address the health, safety and environmental issues associated with their day-to-day business activities. Key to this is a comprehensive set of health and safety risk management tools that facilitate the identification of hazards associated with the delivery of projects and safe work method statements.

Adam Forsythe – A.H. Beard Bedding Pty Ltd

Adam suffered a workplace injury that meant he couldn't return to his existing role, however, he returned to work as

the safety officer. Adam educates workers on the emotional effects of an injury and manages the organisations safety and injury management plans. Since Adam took on the role the company has experienced their lowest recorded injury rate.

BAUER AFS Joint Venture

Due to the presence of historic asbestos at the Bangaroo South development, piling and excavation workers were required to wear face masks and coveralls suits in hot conditions. The Venture designed a self-contained and portable respite facility that can be deployed in remote and contaminated work sites.

Bridge Solutions Alliance

The Bridge Solutions Alliance (BSA), comprising of Roads and Maritime Services, Boulderstone, Freyssinet and SAGE Automation, was formed to undertake significant maintenance works on Sydney's ANZAC Bridge. In response to these unique challenges BSA developed the Custom Engineered Bridge Access System to provide a safe means of access and material transport to undertake the project works.

Boral Construction Materials Concrete (ACT/NSW)

One of the biggest safety issues for the heavy construction materials industry is the rolling of concrete agitator trucks. With the concrete in the barrel constantly rotating, the shifting load results in a two per cent higher chance of rolling compared to similar vehicles. Boral developed an Agitator Stability System eliminating the risk of a concrete agitator truck rolling over on a public road.

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Cerebral Palsy Alliance Work Health and Safety and Injury Manager Tracy Mellor has implemented a safety awareness program throughout the disability services sector. The Alliance took part in WorkCover's small business mentor program and Tracy has been instrumental in helping others develop solutions to health and safety issues in a high risk job with unique challenges.

CSR Viridian

Viridian's Work Health and Safety Manager Mark Peagam has given generously to his own industry to share his 20 years of experience in the glass

industry to educate businesses about the risks that can arise and how to manage them. Mark developed an industry-wide safety guide and a range of cut-resistant gloves, resulting in a cut reduction within Viridian of nearly 70 per cent.

Origin Energy/Eraring Power Station

Origin Energy/Eraring Power Station is one of the largest and most diverse electricity generators in Australia, employing 440 people across seven locations in NSW. They also have a long term commitment to achieving leadership in work health and safety through safety forums, extensive safety benchmarking, employee engagement, safety development days and annual health expos.

GJ & MM Burch Avocados

Fruit picking is a seasonal operation, with new workers arriving on site each year creating safety challenges. For a small business with only three permanent staff, GJ & MM Burch Avocados introduced a new safety system based around induction and training, safety policies and the safe use of plant and equipment. Since the new system was introduced only one minor injury has occurred.

Hunter Region SLSA Helicopter Rescue Service

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (VRHS) is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity contracted by the NSW Ambulance Service. More than 1.2 million people live within the 132,000km squared region of NSW serviced by four helicopters, based in Newcastle and Tamworth. The Service implemented a high-tech approach to safety that includes a web-based system incorporating a hazard register and a stand-alone hazard reporting and online WHS training smart phone app.

James Clark – Western Earth Moving

James Clark has been the safety officer on complex development projects worth millions.

James has taken a lead role at site audits, organising site inductions and toolbox talks and organisation-wide safety training, recently pioneering the use of iPads for storing safety data onsite.

Rocky Wolters – Lend Lease

Rocky Wolters introduced a number of initiatives, including an employee safety recognition program, a 'global minimal requirements' initiative and extensive risk modelling and benchmarking.

At the Port River Expressway project, Rocky designed 'Aqua Deuce', an emergency management exercise to test response times to worker injuries.

Rod Cook – North Coast TAFE

Working in a number of high risk areas at TAFE campuses across the north coast of NSW, Rod Cook has gone above and beyond his job description to make his workmates safer. Rod set up a workshop and store area, for which he developed a standard operating procedure for the machinery, as well as a detailed induction procedure that has since been made mandatory for all participating students.

Douglas Giffin – Baulderstone

Doug Griffin developed a young workers awareness campaign across all Baulderstone NSW and ACT construction projects. Doug's 'Look after your workmate' message incorporates a series of initiatives such as a yellow hard hat worn by young and less experienced workers – identifying them to their workmates and ensuring they are given extra supervision and guidance where needed.

Brian Chandler – Transfield Services

Brian Chandler, Health and Safety Environment Coordinator at Transfield Services developed the 'Hi Viz Kids' program to target kindergarten students in the Western Sydney. The project involved the development of a backpack made from fluorescent material with reflective stripes.

Sean Redmond – TOT Transport

TOT Transport uses a significant owner driver fleet. As manager of business improvement and safety, Sean Redmond is passionate about ensuring that every worker returns home safely day after day.

Sean has amassed an impressive list of individual contributions to the organisation's safety. He designed and implemented an extensive range of safety and return to work initiatives such as improved worker inductions, safer driver timesheets, vehicle safety audits, industry-best protective equipment and increased incident reporting.

TOT Transport

The organisation developed a safety 'road map' dubbed 'Target Zero'. This included increased consultation with staff, enhancing safety systems, better risk identification, encouraging a reporting culture amongst staff and recognising and celebrating safety milestones. They have also created a

business that is 91 per cent safer in terms of their KPIs and a business that has grown by 33 per cent in the 12 months since implementing this methodology.

State Water Corporation

To make workplace safety an integral part of their culture, improvements were initially made to the induction and orientation of new starters, more audits and continual improvement initiatives adopted. As a result in the shift in focus, lost time injuries have dropped, as has the number of claims and the cost of premiums.

Veolia Environmental Services New South Wales

A new safety system 'Always Safe – No Compromise' was put in place through visible leadership activities, an emphasis on hazard and risk mitigation and increased safety training. Veolia has since seen an increase in hazard near misses reported and a significant reduction in injuries. Furthermore, this year saw their lowest ever rolling lost time injury frequency rate of zero.

Zetco Valves Pty Ltd

Zetco is a nationwide distributor of valves, specialising in the importation and distribution of heavy metal valves for plumbing and industrial applications. The company's safety committee developed extensive list of improvements including a motorised packing line and a vacuum lifting system to aid with manual handling, anti-fatigue rubber mats and roof ventilation to improve the working environment, a forklift warning system, and work assist vehicles to reduce the risk of working at heights.



SafeWork Awards

And the winners are...

Best workplace health and safety management system (private sector)

Veolia Environmental Services

Best workplace health and safety management system (public sector)

State Water Corporation

Best solution to an identified workplace health and safety issue

Bridge Solutions Alliance

Best workplace health and safety practices in a small business

Zetco Valves Pty Ltd

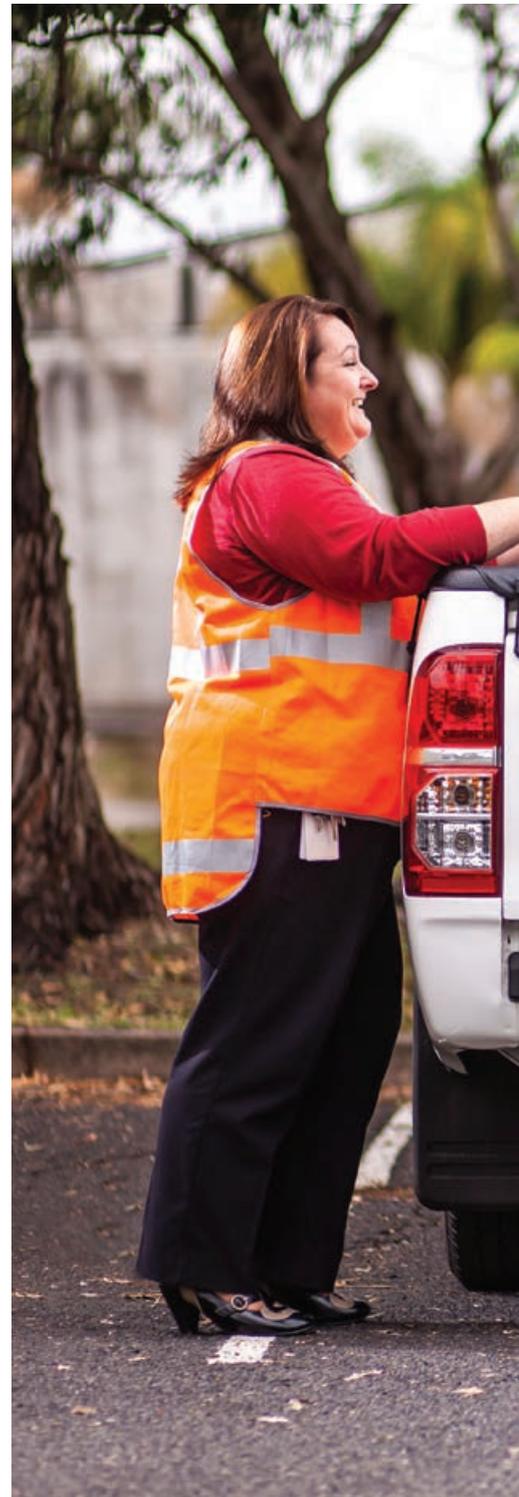
Best individual contribution to workplace health and safety

(employee) *Rod Cook, North Coast TAFE*

Best individual contribution to workplace health and safety (WHS manager) *Sean Redmond, TOT Transport*

Return to work achievement award for workers *Adam Forsythe, AH Beard Bedding Pty Ltd*

WorkCover NSW Safety Leadership Award *Cerebral Palsy Alliance*





Jen Ringor (Aristocrat Technologies Australia) discusses safety with mentee, Sean Redmond (TOT Transport).

Small business rebate expanded

WorkCover has expanded its small business rebate program to allow businesses with up to 50 workers eligible to apply.

WorkCover's Small Business Rebate Program offers rebates of up to \$500 to help small business owners and sole traders purchase and install safety improvements. Previously only small businesses with up to 20 workers were eligible.

The rebate can be used to assist with the purchase and installation of eligible safety equipment that addresses

safety issues including:

- manual tasks
- hazardous noise
- slips, trips and falls
- injuries from moving objects
- chemicals and dangerous goods

To be eligible for a rebate a small business must attend an eligible WorkCover safety workshop, webinar, program or event, or receive an advisory visit from a WorkCover staff member. Call 13 10 50 or visit the website for more information.





The Kempsey Bypass and the longest road bridge in Australia

Imagine working two million hours on a huge construction project with heavy machinery without anyone being seriously injured. Well that's what WorkCover celebrated recently with the completion of the \$618 million Kempsey Bypass project.

This was a huge accomplishment and was the result of the safety alliance that was signed and implemented between WorkCover, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and the companies contracted to carry out this project.

Roads and Maritime Services formed the Kempsey Bypass Alliance with Leighton Contractors, AECOM and Coffery Cotechnics to build the bypass.

The project delivered innovative solutions to major engineering challenges, greatly enhanced scope for the same

budget, created significant safety and travel time benefits, and used a collaborative procurement approach that fostered partnerships as all levels.

The recently-completed \$618 million Kempsey Bypass project on the north coast of NSW started in June 2010 and includes Australia's longest bridge, which spans 3.2km across the Macleay River floodplain.

The bypass of the town of Kempsey included 2.6 million cubic metres of earthworks, five overpass bridges and four twin highway bridges, flood mitigation works including house raising and building a new levee at Frederickton.

As well as improved road safety, this bypass and new bridge near Kempsey will mean less highway closures due to major flooding caused by heavy rain in the vast

upstream catchment area of the 'Mighty Macleay River', as often referred to by locals.

The existing two lane narrow bridge over the Macleay River at Kempsey has also been a major bottleneck, causing significant delays for motorists, especially during peak holiday times.

"When in flood, the scene is truly an awesome sight that has often been described as an "inland sea", with flood water covering an area downstream from Kempsey as far as the eye can see to the mouth of the river at South West Rocks," WorkCover Inspector Colin West said.

"When the heavy rains come, it should be a very interesting experience for motorists driving 'over' the floods now the bridge and road is completed.

But before this massive project got



Macleay River and Floodplain bridge December 2012.



Kempsey bypass Frederickton Interchange looking south across the Macleay River November 2012.



Roads and Maritime Services won the 2013 NSW Premier's Public Sector Award for Building Infrastructure for the Kempsey Bypass project.

into full swing, it was clear that a safety plan had to be in place.

"That's why WorkCover initiated the Pacific Highway Upgrade Safety Alliance and it's been a fantastic success," Mr West said.

"The families of these workers want to be confident that their loved ones will return home safely at the end of the working day.

"From the beginning, the Alliance Agreement committed all parties involved in this project to working together to achieve effective and sustained work health and safety.

"Working with heavy machinery on projects like these can be dangerous, but throughout the project everyone worked to develop practical solutions to each specific safety challenge."

As a result, there were no days off work due to serious injuries throughout the life of the project. This is the equivalent of nearly two million work hours, a huge achievement.

The Alliance developed over 70 specific safety solutions which were implemented around the site to bring about

this great result. Some of them included:

- Large-scale monthly mass tool box talks with all contractors including demonstrations of mobile, plant collisions and presentations by guest speakers.
- Conducting more than 3000 onsite inspections and observations
- Conducting more than 2200 Personnel Inductions
- Constructing purpose-built walking tracks for workers to get around the very large worksite so they were away from the many heavy vehicles.
- Conducting skin cancer check-up and sun safety days.
- Printing large 'My mummy and daddy work here' signs to remind traffic to slow down
- Building an onsite gym

Mr West said this Safety Alliance is one of more than 20 partnerships, alliances and inter-agency agreements WorkCover has developed with a range of industries.

"WorkCover recognises that those dealing with risks on a daily basis are best placed to help create work health and safety solutions," he said.

What is the Kempsey Bypass?

The \$618 million Kempsey Bypass was one of the biggest road-building projects in Australian history and is the first stage of the 40 kilometre Kempsey to Eungai Pacific Highway upgrade.

It involved building a 14.5 kilometre four lane divided road bypassing the towns of Kempsey and Frederickton, including the 3.2 kilometre bridge.

The 3.2 kilometre bridge across the Macleay River floodplains is the longest road bridge in Australia.

Preliminary work started in December 2009 with major work starting in June 2010.

The key features of the bypass include bypasses of Kempsey and Frederickton, interchanges at South Kempsey and Frederickton and local road overpasses at Old Station, Inches and Crescent Head roads.

The upgrade improves road safety, increases reliability and reduces travel times.

All in a day's work

An interview with WorkCover NSW Assistant State Inspector Sarah Nicholson provides an insight into the extremely challenging and rewarding experiences of a workplace safety inspector.

"There isn't really a typical day with this job - no two days are the same," explained Assistant State Inspector, Investigations, Sarah Nicholson. "You always need to be prepared in case there is an incident, so you have to be flexible and adaptable with your approach."

WorkCover NSW inspectors help employers and workers to understand their rights and obligations under work health and safety workers compensation and injury management laws. Responding to safety complaints, helping a business develop a return to work plan, resolving a dispute or attending an incident or fatality are all possibilities in an average working day for Inspector Sarah Nicholson.

During her seven years as a workplace safety Inspector, working with multiple industries and different regions across NSW, Sarah Nicholson has completed more than 70 investigations, some resulting in prosecution. Having conducted more than 100 workplace visits she has helped rectify an array of safety and workers compensation issues.

"Some of the most common issues I see on worksites are unguarded machinery, poor housekeeping, falls risks and psychosocial hazards as well as under-insurance," Inspector Nicholson said.

"I remember an incident, when I was a new inspector where a person was badly injured after using the wrong blade on an angle grinder. The blade dislodged hitting the worker in the face and this was an incident that could have easily been prevented," she recalls.

Although Sarah explained that selling the safety message is often difficult, she finds that interacting with people onsite at their workplace gives her a better understanding of the actual challenges they are facing. If the interaction between an inspector and a business owner can deliver solutions that may prevent tragedy, then its particularly rewarding.

"We understand not all businesses are resourced the same way and safety is not always seen as a core function, particularly when operators are dealing with a number of regulatory requirements to keep their business afloat," Inspector Nicholson explained.

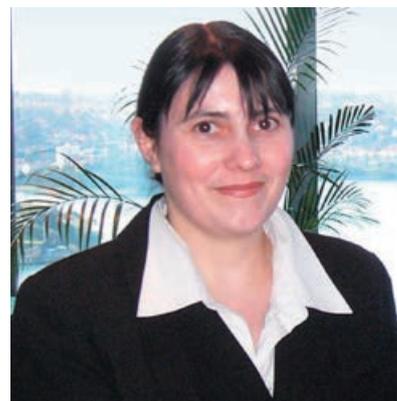
"Every interaction you have with our customers can make a difference. I

like working together to identify solutions to problems. Every interaction, even if it is the result of an injury or incident, is an opportunity to positively influence workplaces across wider industries providing a mutually beneficial outcome – and that is what I find most rewarding"

Witnessing first-hand the devastation of serious incidents and fatalities, Sarah's message is that workplace safety should be everyone's business.

"Workplace injuries can leave people permanently impaired and emotionally scarred and it can take a long time to rebuild lives. Fatalities and incidents impact everyone involved, not just the workplace, but family friends and colleagues.

"Work health and safety doesn't have to be complex. Every incident is one too many and we all have a moral obligation when it comes to staying safe on the job."



Sarah Nicholson joined WorkCover NSW through its 2006 inspector intake. Since then, she has worked in a variety of inspector roles in investigations, audits, manufacturing, health and community services. Sarah has worked as the Team Coordinator for roles in construction, manufacturing and as part of the North West regional response team. As well as working as a guidance officer with WorkCover's Female Inspector Network, Sarah has taken part in WorkCover initiatives such as being appointed a member of the judging panel for WorkCover's annual SafeWork Awards and participating in small business mentoring programs and industry initiatives.

Inspectors visit workplaces to:

- provide advice or conduct a workplace risk assessment
- investigate an accident or breach of legislation
- respond to a complaint
- carry out a random workplace inspection
- target hazards as part of a specific campaign
- resolve workplace health and safety disputes
- establish a workplace injury management program

In certain circumstances, inspectors have the power to issue notices that:

- require employers to remedy unsafe working conditions or hazards
- prohibit work from continuing until a hazard is fixed
- require employers to provide proof of correct workers compensation insurance
- impose an on-the-spot fine for breaches of workplace safety laws



Keeping young workers safe

With thousands of young people entering the workforce for the first time this holiday season WorkCover is reminding workers and employers of the importance of staying safe on the job.

At this time of year many school leavers commence their working life and induction programs, supervision and safety training for new and younger workers form an essential part of a safe workplace.

Because of their inexperience, young workers may potentially be at a higher risk of being injured on the job than other age groups.

In NSW there are more than half a million workers aged under 25, and while starting a new job can be an exciting experience for young people entering the workforce, it is important that workplace safety remains the number one priority.

An injury to a young worker can have a life-changing impact. Educating younger and inexperienced workers about safety can prevent tragedy.

Some new and young workers are keen to impress their employers, so it is essential that these workers understand they need to comply with all safety policies and procedures.

Help your young and inexperienced staff

Employers, in consultation with their workers should:

- provide adequate training and supervision in all tasks
- provide a comprehensive induction
- identify safety risks and put in place procedures to reduce and control the risks
- encourage open communication about safety issues.

Businesses should also pay particular attention to high-risk areas such as working at heights, using electrical equipment, plant and machinery, device guarding and working with chemicals and dangerous goods.

Make sure you work safely

All workers have obligations under work health and safety laws to follow their employer's safety policies and practices, including wearing any safety equipment, whether they are undertaking casual or permanent employment.

If you are uncertain, ask

Saying something and asking questions is essential if you are unsure about something



at work. Talk to your supervisor, colleague or safety representative. You can also call WorkCover on 13 10 50.

Always ask about safety procedures and if any personal protective equipment or training is required.

It is equally important to speak up if you think something looks unsafe. It is better to speak up about a hazard or query than for an injury to occur.

If you are injured on the job

When a worker is injured at work, the employer, injured worker, insurer and treatment provider have responsibilities to ensure that the injured worker is provided with benefits and assistance to recover and return to safe, durable work.

If you are injured at work seek appropriate medical treatment immediately and notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

Information on work health and safety and injury management is available from the website or call 13 10 50.



Are you paying the right workers compensation premium?



The NSW Workers Compensation Scheme provides protection to workers and their employers in the event of a work related injury or disease. The scheme is funded through the premiums paid by employers and provides medical

and financial support to injured workers. There are currently more than 250,000 workers compensation policies in NSW.

The annual workers compensation premium paid by an employer will depend on the industry the business operates in, their wages and claims history, as well as a dust diseases levy.

To reduce the likelihood of under-insurance and ensure all of an employer's workers are covered by the policy, it is important that the premium is accurate and reflects the correct amount of wages paid.

When a workers compensation policy falls for renewal it is important to submit the actual wages declaration from the previous period. This is because if the actual wages paid differs from the estimated wage total, then the employer may be eligible for a premium adjustment.

Employers with a basic tariff premium between \$10,001 and \$30,000

Did you know?

- WorkCover performs wage audits on hundreds of businesses each year and as a result some employers receive a premium adjustment in their favour; for paying too much
- all records relating to wages and contracts should be kept for five years
- superannuation paid or payable must also be included in a wages declaration
- directors fees and trust distributions must be declared

More information on workers compensation premiums and available advisory services is available the WorkCover website or call 13 10 50.

are classified as small employers and benefit from stable and predictable premiums as well as safety and return to work incentives.

Protect your business from being under-insured

Do you know the difference between a worker and a contractor? This can impact your premium. WorkCover's Worker Status Service is available to assist employers understand who they should include on their workers compensation policy. Call 13 10 50 for more information.

Do you know what to declare? WorkCover's Wages definition manual, available on the website, outlines what

should be declared. Examples include:

- salaries/wages/overtime
- superannuation
- shift and other allowances
- over-award payments
- bonuses and commissions
- payments to working directors (including directors' fees)
- payments for sick leave, public holidays and the associated leave loadings

- value of any substitutes for cash including FBT

Do you employ apprentices? You may be eligible for a discount through the Apprentice Incentive Scheme that provides a premium reduction for NSW employers of apprentices.

What if your wages change during the policy period? Contact your scheme agent as your policy may need to be adjusted.

Take care working in the heat

With most of the State already experiencing an early summer with higher than average temperatures, WorkCover is issuing a reminder to workplaces to factor in hot conditions to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

Fatigue and heat stress can affect a worker's health, reducing their performance and productivity, and increasing the chance of a workplace injury through reduced ability to concentrate, recognise risks and communicate effectively.

In the three years to July 2011 there were 497 claims for workplace fatigue and heat stroke at a cost of \$4.3 million to the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme.

- Provide and maintain equipment and shelter to protect workers from the sun
- Provide sun safety information, instruction, training and supervision

- Rotate tasks to lessen exposure to the sun as well as mental and physical fatigue, and schedule work at cooler times of the day if possible
- Use rest periods in addition to scheduled meal breaks if possible
- Provide personal protective equipment such as:
 - clothing with UPF 50+ rating, loose shirts with long sleeves, collars and long pants
 - broad spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30+)
 - sunglasses which meet Australian Standards for UV protection
- Understand and act on the symptoms of heat stress.

Further information on heat stress management and working safely in the sun is available from the WorkCover website. Other sun safety resources are available from the Cancer Council www.cancercouncil.com.au



WorkCover scientists keeping workers safe as they fight cancer

Statistics show cancer will probably touch every family in Australia, at some time.

Around one in three Australian women, and about half of all Australian men, will be diagnosed with some form of cancer before they are 85 years old.

These figures can seem very disheartening, however there are things that can be done to reduce the risk of cancer and improve the survival rate of a cancer diagnosis.

One of the biggest improvements in beating cancer has been the discovery of new and improved drugs that have been developed to fight the disease, which have dramatically improved remission rates - however the drugs themselves can be harmful if not handled correctly.

WorkCover's TestSafe Australia laboratories have been working on ways to keep workers safe while administering these life-saving, cancer-fighting drugs.

"WorkCover has been focusing on the safe handling of cytotoxic drugs, which are hazardous materials widely used in the treatment of cancer," TestSafe Australia Manager Dr Martin Mazereeuw said.

"Cytotoxic drugs are used in pharmacies, hospitals and veterinary clinics to help people fight cancer, however if not handled correctly can also cause potential illnesses and/or injuries.

"As part of our verification programs, WorkCover is currently visiting suppliers, pharmacies, hospitals and veterinary clinics where we collect surface swabs that are then brought back to Testsafe for testing.

"Testsafe's latest detection equipment can then detect the smallest amount of these potentially dangerous chemicals," Dr Mazereeuw said.

If the tests come back showing there are traces of cytotoxic drugs on the surfaces of workstations, then WorkCover can assess the workplace hygiene and risk of worker exposure to cytotoxic drugs and provide solutions to improve safety.

"This makes the working environment safer for those people carrying out this potentially life-saving work without risking their own health."

Principal Inspector-Toxicology, Mahinda Seneviratne, said the lab's work is vital.

"The lab's analysis is critical to the success of our inspections. It not only provides information to the inspector on which to base their opinions, but it also gives the workplace critical information to improve safety and manage their site hygiene effectively on an ongoing basis."



WorkCover's TestSafe Australia facility, located in Thornleigh in North West Sydney, helps reduce workplace injuries and illnesses by carrying out more than 150 different commercially available tests for the monitoring of chemical exposure in the workplace.

To be able to do this, the lab has an impressive range of sophisticated technology and processes, which is managed by a group of 12 experienced staff.

The lab is unique in Australia and has been recognised as a true powerhouse in occupational hygiene analysis in Australia and around the world.



Worker samples taken during a visit at WorkCover's TestSafe laboratory in north west Sydney.

Work, health and safety prosecutions

WorkCover provides information and support to businesses before an incident occurs to reduce the possibility of a worker being injured while on the job.

WorkCover conducts investigations into the cause of incidents with a view to preventing a recurrence. This work is undertaken by Inspectors and informs the development of WorkCover's prevention programs.

WorkCover takes breaches of the Work Health and Safety and Workers Compensation legislation seriously and will in a proportional manner apply responses such as a prosecution when a breach is identified during an investigation.

The community expects appropriate penalties be imposed when work health and safety legislation is ignored, evaded or breached, or fraudulent behaviour is detected on the Workers Compensation Scheme, and WorkCover will take businesses or individuals to court if the case demonstrates a serious breach of the legislation.

WorkCover recently completed a number of successful prosecutions. They included:

- \$330,000 in fines for a number of companies when a 54-year-old labourer sustained serious head and

brain injuries by falling almost four metres between two floors at a building site in Auburn.

- Two residential construction companies pleaded guilty and were fined a total of \$147,000 after an electrician fell through a hole in a townhouse being constructed in Western Sydney, causing serious injuries.
- The Director and General Manager of an engineering company pleaded guilty and were fined a total of \$116,000 after a 26-year-old fitter/machinist was killed at their workshop in Western Sydney suffering fatal head injuries consistent with him being struck by a chain or similar object when he was working underneath a coal shuttle car.

General Manager of WorkCover's Work Health and Safety Division, John Watson, said these fatalities and serious incidents could have been prevented had the employers involved implemented appropriate health and safety systems.

"Every fatality has an immeasurable effect on families, friends and communities, and this incident highlights the need for businesses to have safe work systems in place to prevent death

and injury," Mr Watson said.

A Western Sydney woman has also been found guilty of workers compensation fraud, and sentenced to a 12 month Intensive Corrections Order after a WorkCover investigation found she was working four different jobs while claiming she was totally incapacitated and unable to work.

The woman was also ordered to repay \$71,221 to the Workers Compensation Scheme, which includes monies she was not entitled to, and medical expenses.

General Manager of WorkCover's Operational General Manager of the Workers Compensation Insurance Division, Geniere Aplin, said workers compensation fraud was a serious offence.

"WorkCover, and the workers compensation system, helps injured workers usually at times of great need," Ms Aplin said.

"It is essential that all who participate in the Scheme act honestly so that it remains affordable, and injured workers are cared for appropriately.

"WorkCover will take the steps that are necessary to protect the workers compensation system from abuse by anyone dishonestly claiming benefits."

2013 Safety Show another success

Thousands of people visited the 2013 Sydney Safety Show during September. The Sydney Safety Show and Conference is the State's most comprehensive workplace safety event allowing businesses, individuals and industry representatives to see cutting edge solutions to health and safety issues.

During the Safety Show, more than 700 people took part in a series of free interactive workshops on a range of topics including asbestos, falls from heights, mental health in the workplace and workers compensation.

The 2013 Sydney Safety Conference – *Safety in Action* was held from September 3-4 to coincide with the Show and provided extensive discussion on safety and risk management.

The conference brings together regulatory bodies from across jurisdictions, industry professionals and academics to work together to discuss issues and develop solutions to work health and safety across Australia.

WorkCover NSW was the major sponsor of the Sydney Safety Conference for the 11th consecutive year.



NSW bushfire clean-up: take care with asbestos

NSW is experiencing one of the worst fire seasons in 10 years with hundreds of homes across the state damaged or destroyed. The resulting clean-up after a fire can create risks.

Following a series of devastating fires that hit the Blue Mountains in October, WorkCover inspectors visited the area to provide advice and assistance around how to identify and safely removal asbestos.

WorkCover encourages those residents impacted to seek out information on the potential risks of being exposed to asbestos debris and how to safely manage the material when cleaning up after a bushfire.

Visit www.asbestosawareness.com.au for information on the types of the asbestos materials commonly found in homes.



WorkCover insurance premiums deferred for bushfire affected businesses

In October the NSW Government announced the deferral of workers compensation insurance payments for businesses affected by the bush fire crisis to help businesses get back on their feet.

Eligible business affected by the

bush fires who have an insurance premium due to be paid from between 14 October 2013 and 31 March 2014, will have that payment period extended until 30 June 2014.

The initiative will have the potential

of helping more than 15,000 businesses in the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury, and more than 24,000 businesses across the entire State.

Combined, these businesses represent approximately \$154 million in insurance payments.

The deferral will apply to businesses which have been directly impacted by the fires under these circumstances:

- Premises or facilities destroyed or damaged
- Unavailability of staff due to their volunteering or having been impacted themselves
- Restricted trade due to business location

As well as these businesses, others within the immediate surrounding area that may be impacted by the unavailability of staff will also be considered. WorkCover will consider any other circumstances.



Before tackling the cleanup of fire affected properties:

- Avoid disturbing asbestos materials and keep any asbestos debris wet until it can be safely removed
- Be aware of asbestos materials in your surroundings. A person conducting demolition of residential premises must ensure that all asbestos that this likely to be disturbed by the demolition is identified and safely removed
- Notify WorkCover of any emergency demolition work involving asbestos before the work is commenced
- Use only a qualified asbestos removalist licensed by WorkCover to ensure asbestos is safely and properly removed. Asbestos removal licence holders can be found on the WorkCover website or by contacting WorkCover on 13 10 50
- Fire damaged asbestos materials can only be cleaned up by holders of a Class A asbestos removal licence
- Air monitoring, clearance inspections must be carried out by an asbestos assessor licensed by WorkCover
- All fire damaged asbestos material to be removed needs to be notified to WorkCover (in emergency clean-ups the period may be waived)

Inspectorate works hard to reduce injuries and improve safety

WorkCover values building two way proactive relationships with workplaces to foster a culture of safety. When an inspector visits a workplace they primarily look to provide advice and assistance on how to make a workplace safer and more productive, help prevent a serious injury or fatality, or in some cases undertake investigations.

In April 2010, an inspector observed work from heights being undertaken in a dangerous manner, and while taking photographs was intimidated by a person by way of threats and verbal abuse. The offender was prosecuted by WorkCover, convicted by the NSW Industrial Court and fined for his behaviour.



While most workplaces work well with WorkCover's 300 plus strong inspectorate, there have been situations where inspectors have been obstructed or intimidated in the course of their duties.

General Manager of WorkCover's Work Health and Safety Division, John Watson said threats, intimidation or obstruction of an inspector will not be tolerated.

"WorkCover NSW prefers to work collaboratively with NSW businesses and workers to create productive, healthy and safe workplaces," Mr Watson said.

"To ensure the best possible safety outcomes, inspectors may also be required to take action to secure compliance with work, health and safety or injury management legislation.

"This is particularly the case where a serious work health and safety risk exists or where a serious potential breach of work health and safety laws has occurred," he said.

"Abuse, threats, intimidation or harassment of our staff as part of their job is not acceptable and where this occurs, it will be investigated and where warranted serious offences will be prosecuted.

"We urge NSW business operators and workers to support us in our efforts to create productive, healthy and safe workplaces so that your workers,

customers and yourself can return home safely to your family at the end of the working day," Mr Watson said.

In August 2011, two inspectors conducting a follow-up site visit to a retail outlet were obstructed and intimidated by two males associated with the business by way of verbal abuse and threats of physical violence. The men were convicted by the NSW Industrial Court and fines were imposed.

Inspectors should be able to undertake their duties without fear, threat or violence

Corporations or individuals who threaten, intimidate or obstruct an inspector can face fines of up to \$250,000 or two years imprisonment. Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) the maximum penalty for obstruction of an Inspector (section 188) is \$50,000 for a corporation and \$10,000 for an individual.

The maximum penalty for an intimidation offence (section 190) by a corporation is \$250,000, and for an individual is \$50,000 or imprisonment for 2 years, or both.

Mind the gaps on amusement rides

WorkCover has issued a reminder to amusement ride operators about the potential risks of children falling through unprotected gaps. The warning comes after an incident where a young girl fell three metres from a stationary caterpillar-type amusement ride last year. The girl fell through an unprotected opening between two cars when she was boarding the ride.

It is important that operator ensure

any unprotected gaps or holes do not pose a risk that a child may slip through, particularly as small children may not see or understand hazards when they are boarding a ride. Operators should provide a safe method of entry and exit where there is a falls risk, including an edge, surface or other location where someone could fall.

Control measures include a secure fence, edge protection or cover that will

remove the risk of a patron falling while entering or exiting an amusement ride.

Under work health and safety laws operators have a range of obligations for amusement devices that include registration maintenance, storage, testing and log books. Certain amusement devices also require design and item registration. Visit WorkCover's website or call 13 10 50 for more information.



Case study: Getting back to work after an injury

Williams Group Australia, Murwillumbah, NSW

An interview with Kristy Barlow, Return to Work Coordinator, Williams Group Australia (WGA) tackled its return to work challenges by facing them head on, re-engaging with injured workers, and creating a positive, safety-conscious workplace and slashing its premium in the process.

The Murwillumbah-based mixed business, which focuses on supporting agricultural and building industries, has overhauled its return to work program in the past 18 months by putting a strong focus on interacting with its injured workers.

WGA's management team decided a fresh approach was needed to address ongoing issues with its return to work strategy.

"As a result, we have seen a measurable reduction in our premium and in the number of injured workers off work," Kristy Barlow, WGA's return to work coordinator, said.

"When I first started in this role we weren't completely up-to-date with the work health and safety legislation, and had a few people off unfit on a long-term basis, as there hadn't been a lot of contact with injured workers.

"These staff absences were costing us a lot of money, and leaving us short-staffed within the business.

"Between the insurer and WGA management we made a lot of appointments to see why these injured workers, who had been off for long periods of time, were still unfit and off work.

"We also brought in a third party, a rehabilitation provider, which helped to smooth the way and educate workers about changes to work health and safety legislation.

"Then we worked to regularly engage with those injured workers, arrange suitable duties and integrate them back into the workplace – and we got pretty much everyone back to work."

Being a mixed business, Williams Group Australia was able to accommodate injured workers with manual labour-focused jobs by giving them lighter duties in the office until they were able to transition back to the manufacturing area.

The rewards were almost immediate for Williams Group Australia, which has seen a substantial reduction in its premium.

The company's Employer's Claims Cost Rate (ECCR – claims divided by wages) was at 2.66% in 2010-11,

dropping to 1.56% in 2011-12, and this year projected to slide to 1.14%, heading towards the industry average of 0.61%.

Re-engaging staff has also transformed the company's culture, refocusing everyone on the responsibilities of staff and the employer, which has contributed to a happier, safer workplace.

"A key ingredient was the face-to-face contact with the doctors, and making frequent contact with the injured workers," Kristy said.

"Doctors are now respecting our role in the process and are used to seeing employer representatives at appointments, and they check we have suitable duties for the injured worker.

"Doctors can see now we're interested in getting our workers back to work.

"Employees also prefer us to attend. They're getting more answers than they might otherwise get on their own, and because we're there we can help speed up the process with further scans, tests and treatments, it speeds up the whole process.

"It has been an education for everyone involved – us, the doctors and the injured workers. It's been positive from every angle. And we have saved a lot of money in the process."





Volunteers, Geoff and Karen Wicks, were honored for their commitment to helping the community understand the potential dangers of asbestos when undertaking DIY around the home at the WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards.

Volunteer husband and wife team recognised for raising awareness about asbestos

A retired couple have been the first volunteer duo to be recognised for their commitment to raising community awareness of working safety with asbestos.

Geoff and Karen Wicks received recognition at the 2013 WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards on the eve of National Asbestos Awareness Month, for their travelling educational road show with 'Betty' The ADRI House'.

An initiative of the Asbestos Education Committee (AEC) and the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI), 'Betty' is a purpose-built mobile model home the size of a caravan that shows where asbestos may be present in homes built or renovated before 1987.

The volunteers were honoured for their commitment to helping the community understand the potential

dangers of asbestos when undertaking DIY around the home, by WorkCover CEO Julie Newman, at the agency's annual awards ceremony in Sydney on October 31.

"I commend Mr and Mrs Wicks for their contribution to safety and their dedication as volunteers to help others reduce the risks associated with working with asbestos," Ms Newman said.

Earlier that week, Geoff and Karen also won the 2013 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards winning Team of the Year for the City and East regions.

The 'Betty', an initiative unique to Australia, is designed to educate everyone about where asbestos might be found in homes built or renovated before 1987, so homeowners and renovators can safely address its removal.

Geoff, a retired Qantas Avionics Engineer and his wife Karen, a retiree from the hospitality industry, have played a vital role in the Asbestos Awareness Campaign by acting as volunteer curators, drivers and spokespeople for 'Betty'.

The couple have driven 'Betty' more than 5000 kilometres across NSW as far north as Lismore and as far west as Condobolin, and visited 50 communities across Sydney ensuring the safety message got to thousands of homeowners.

Between them, the couple have volunteered more than 2000 hours and participated in events including Australia Day Celebrations, Sydney's Royal Easter Show, the Housing Industry Association Home Show and Holroyd City Council's CityFest.

'Betty' was also present during the filming of the DIY renovation series *The Block* and *The LivingRoom* where the couple met asbestos awareness ambassadors Don Burke, John Jarratt, Scott McGregor, Lindsay Farris and Scott Cam and Cherie Barber

Geoff and Karen have also been integral in identifying improvements and managing 'Betty's' care to keep her road-worthy and in immaculate condition ready for each community appearance.

Humbled at receiving recognition, Mr Wicks said that when he and his wife were looking to do some voluntary work after they retired and jumped at the chance to undertake this unique role.

"We saw the statistics on the increase in asbestos-related diseases because people hadn't managed asbestos safely during renovations and we were keen to be involved even though we don't have a personal connection to the issue," Mr Wicks said.

"Neither of us has ever been outgoing and although we were experienced in towing and renovating we also underwent asbestos training with WorkCover NSW.

"In accepting the role we knew that our greatest challenge would be overcoming our fear of talking to VIPs, people and to the media.

"It's an ongoing challenge but we're dealing with it because raising awareness of the dangers of asbestos in and around homes and how to manage it safely, particularly for DIYers is vital in minimising the number of Australians affected by asbestos-related diseases," he said.

Peter Dunphy, Chair of the Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities

Working Group said Geoff and Karen have played an integral role in the asbestos awareness campaign.

"Their contribution to raising awareness of potential asbestos exposure through DIY by driving to communities all over the state is immeasurable," Mr Dunphy said.

"Their work will carry a legacy far into the future and the HACA and AEC are grateful for their tireless dedication," he said.

During Asbestos Awareness Month 2013 Geoff and Karen Wicks will continue to play a lead role in the campaign by driving 'Betty' to thousands more communities across Sydney, the Illawarra, Hunter and Blue Mountains.

Asbestos Awareness Month 2013 November 1-30

Don't play renovation roulette Australia!

Visit asbestosawareness.com.au to learn where asbestos might be in your home and how to manage it safely, because it's not worth the risk! During Asbestos Awareness Month Australians are being urged to learn where asbestos might be and how to manage it safely.



'Betty' The ADRI House' a model of replica 1950s house tours NSW as part traveling road show.



Mentor program delivers results for large and small businesses

Small businesses are being offered the opportunity to learn from their larger counterparts so they can improve their workplace safety by taking part in a WorkCover NSW mentoring program.

The program offers industry-specific advice on how businesses can meet their workplace safety, injury management and workers compensation obligations.

WorkCover CEO Julie Newman said actively mentoring businesses helped them to create safer and more productive workplace cultures.

"We want to make it easier for employers to do business in New South Wales," Ms Newman said.

"Larger companies often have more resources to carry out their workplace

health and safety requirements, whereas some small businesses can struggle due to their size.

"This program is about connecting businesses so they can share knowledge and make the work environment safer for everyone.

"Small businesses get some additional support they might be looking for, and larger businesses get to network and pick up new safety tips and solutions. It's a win-win."

One business that is already reaping the rewards of a mentoring partnership is Ichor Constructions, a Sydney-based construction company that employs around 30 people and specialises in refurbishments and fit-outs, and building

commercial and industrial complexes, sporting complexes and schools.

Nick Merianos, the man responsible for workplace health and safety at some of Ichor's largest and most prestigious projects, was keen to learn from one of Australia's biggest construction companies, Lend Lease.

"I'd heard on the grapevine about the Mentor Program and thought it would be a great way to look at ways we can improve our work health and safety systems," Mr Merianos says.

"We have a lot of contractors that do business for us and keeping track of them all and which ones had adequate safety training was a big task. But together, Lend Lease helped us to



Joshua Axford (Compass Cabling Services) discusses safety with his mentor, Steven Leonair (K-Mart Tyre & Auto Service).

develop a set of minimum criteria for contractors on site, and build a database of contractors that met these minimum requirements."

This has helped Ichor Constructions manage contractors on site and have confidence in the contractor's safety know-how.

When asked to sum up Ichor's experience on the program in one word, Mr Merianos couldn't keep it short.

"Practical, effective, and a great advantage to our business" he said.

"The wealth of knowledge at Lend Lease has been great to tap into and it's been great to have our mentor as a safety 'sounding board!'"

Another company that has seen dividends from the Mentor Program is Sydney-based Zandt Building Pty Ltd (Zandt).

Employing around five staff, Zandt's operations involve architectural homes, renovations, carpentry and joinery.

Zandt's Director Stefan Zandt, said he joined the Mentor Program because

although his business is relatively young and hadn't had any safety issues, he wanted to improve the company's safety management.

"Our business uses a number of contractors at any one time and we wanted to make sure Zandt and our sub-contractors' businesses were meeting their responsibilities.

Zandt worked with Leighton Contractors to make sure safety was at the forefront of everything Zandt did.

"Leighton's has helped us to embed safety into what we do every day, from site inductions, to toolbox talks and safe work method statements. I'm more than happy with the assistance we received.

"I've been surprised by how easy it is to implement safe systems of work. It's amazing how something so simple can work so well for your business."

The iconic Sydney Fish Market (SFM) in Pyrmont, Sydney, is another example of a NSW-based business reaping the benefits of the Mentor Program.

SFM sells more than 14,000 tonnes of

seafood annually from local and international stock, making it the largest market of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

SFM is also the principal controller of the fish market site that hosts more than 30 independent retail/wholesale businesses, the acclaimed Sydney Seafood School, and the adjacent waterfront wharves on which the locally caught 'catch of the day' is offloaded from Sydney's fishing fleet and other visiting fishing vessels.

"It is a unique workplace," Craig Murray, OHS and Environmental Systems Manager said. And we have a duty of care not only to our 50-odd employees but also to our tenants, visitors, contractors, suppliers and wholesale buyers.

"Because of this, SFM worked with our mentor, Allied Mills, to refine our skills and knowledge with respect to work health and safety. Every day has been a lesson."

Allied Mills is recognised as one of Australia's largest manufacturers and distributors of bakery products with



Zandt – John Naoum from Leighton Contractors and Stefan Zandt from Zandt Building talk safety as part of the Mentor Program.

operations in all mainland Australian states, whose diverse customers include major independent and multinational food manufacturers, supermarket retailers and foodservice operators.

Allied Mills helped us identify our strengths, as well as areas where there was opportunity to improve," Mr Murray said.

"Allied Mills offered constructive feedback on our already strong work health and safety and as a result, we have started evaluating those recommendations with the desire to further boost our work health and safety compliance.

"Being able to share information on successes and gather solutions for current challenges is priceless."

Crestway Building Services (Crestway) is another company that has found the program immensely beneficial to their business.

Crestway employs 10 workers and

provides a diverse range of building services in occupied premises, from minor ad hoc repair to maintenance, refurbishments and upgrades totalling as much as \$2 million to properties across Sydney.

This means that the company needs to continually tailor its work health and safety system to individual premises.

Crestway Director Mike Roach said the company's initial interest in the Mentor Program was to seek help with the challenges of working at different locations, on jobs that can vary in classification from 'low risk' to 'high risk'.

Crestway's principle objective was to work with its mentor Lend Lease to put in place a new safety management system that allowed the business to approach its risk assessments consistently as it identified and addressed safety issues.

"While working on that system we found the easy-access, impartial

and relevant industry experience and information of our mentor invaluable," Mr Roach said.

"Working together we found a remarkably simple yet effective solution."

"The whole program has been very beneficial to us as a small business and has been a springboard for far-reaching beneficial changes across many areas of our commercial decision-making and operations, including a cultural shift to continuous improvement."

Southern Cross Painting Services Pty Ltd (Southern Cross) is another company that has used the program in previous



Construction industry mentors and mentees (L-R) David Wrench Nick Merianos, Mike Roach, Glenn Quince.

years with positive results, including successfully landing large contracts.

Southern Cross has been based in the Northern Rivers for the past 40 years and currently employs six people and frequently recruits for larger contracts.

Owner Rob Taylor said he entered the program just as changes to the workplace health and safety (WHS) legislation were being implemented.

"We have a strong background in all aspects of painting and pride ourselves on keeping abreast of all aspects of painting, and keeping up-to-date knowledge of all products and safety requirements as per

the WHS legislation," Mr Taylor said.

"We entered into the Mentor Program because WHS legislation was in the process of changing, which meant we were undergoing change and were not fully equipped with resources to be able to learn and implement the changes.

"We were at a stage where we wanted to grow our business and enter into more industrial type work, and to be successful in that meant we had to fully understand the WHS legislation and to develop a WHS management plan that would enable us to competitively tender on the larger jobs.

"We were set up with Allied Mills as our mentor and from the very beginning developed a great relationship. We were able to develop a WHS management plan which we used to tender on a very large job and won that tender.

"The engineer of that large company commented that 'this is the best WHS site specific management plan' he had seen.

"I don't believe that we would have been able to accomplish this without the mentor program, and several years later we are still winning large jobs.

"The program has been very beneficial to our business."





Fresh approach puts safety in spotlight for small business

WorkCover introduced a new initiative in October to make it easier for small businesses to improve work health and safety and become more competitive. The strategy Small business and WorkCover: making it easier will enable WorkCover to better service businesses while helping them comply with their regulatory obligations

The initiative is outcome of the NSW Government's *NSW 2021: A plan to make NSW number one*, which aims to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore accountability to government, and strengthen our local environment and communities.

The strategy is a direct result of working with industry and businesses and the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, and will allow WorkCover to provide tailored support to small businesses.

As well as improved communication and service delivery, the strategy will help those small business operators that have limited time and resources, better manage work health and safety and returning injured workers to work.

The strategy is designed to help small businesses embed a risk based approach to their everyday operations through a series of initiatives that include rebates, advisory programs, mentoring and dedicated

business support officer to assist industry.

As part of the strategy, WorkCover has established a dedicated small business service in its award-winning customer service centre.

WorkCover acknowledges the efforts of our industry partners in developing this strategy

- Australian Industry Group
- Australian Retailers Association
- Housing Industry Association
- Master Builders Association
- NSW Business Chamber
- NSW Farmers
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- Restaurant and Catering Association.

You spoke	We listened
You want us to understand small business better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will establish a Small Business Reference Group to give us ongoing feedback on how to make things easier. • We will do further work with small business to understand their differing needs.
You want us to give you help in the areas you need it most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop policies for how our people should support small businesses, and make sure we stick to them. • We will provide targeted support to small businesses, based on their levels of risk.
You want us to transform our culture and increase our focus on small business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake a program to change our culture, to focus on the service needs of small business. • We will introduce community relationship officers to work with small businesses on local issues. • We will run mentor and coaching services for small business.
You want us to simplify things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will set up a specialised small business service in our Customer Service Centre. • We will take steps to reduce red tape for small business, including working with other government agencies. • We will design and test products with small business.
You want us to give you relevant and tailored information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be clear about our expectations for how small businesses should manage health and safety risks and return to work responsibilities. • We will restructure our small business website based on the needs of small businesses as they grow and develop. • We will appoint a small business officer to work closely with key stakeholders.
You want us to reflect, apply lessons learnt and communicate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will reflect on lessons learnt from the Small Business Reference Group meetings. • We will communicate change and improvement to the small business community.

"The Small Business Strategy and the establishment of a Small Business Stakeholder Reference Group, marks a significant and positive change in the way WorkCover will interact with industry to ensure better service delivery for all small businesses across the state.

"By setting realistic expectations for small business WorkCover is making sure that operators can put in place solutions which are practical and will work for them.

"These initiatives demonstrate a commitment that through collaboration we are able to deliver small business friendly strategies which will make it easier and safer for small businesses to do business in NSW"

*Yasmin King
NSW Small Business Commissioner*



Helping small businesses from all industries

"NSW Business Chamber supports WorkCover's commitment to improve their engagement with small and medium sized businesses in NSW.

By providing clearer and more effective communication, WorkCover is actively seeking to make it easier for businesses to comply with work health and safety requirements to support safer workplaces."

Craig Milton, Policy Analyst, NSW Business Chamber

"Restaurants and Catering Australia was pleased to be centrally involved in the formulation of the small business strategic plan with Workcover NSW.

Mr Parkes said the restaurant and catering sector would benefit from the initiatives in the plan including targeted communications tailored to small business owner needs."

Greg Parkes, Workplace Relations Director, Restaurant & Catering Australia

"NSW Farmers commends WorkCover NSW on their commitment to change their organisational culture to one that partners with industry, particularly WorkCover's latest initiative to tailor their services and communications to small businesses.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, they make up 97.8% of the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry sector and create 85.7% of employment in the sector.

Small business owners are time and resource poor, it is encouraging to see WorkCover tailoring their services to support small businesses. The launch of the strategy plan is certainly a step in the right direction and it is most welcomed by our industry."

Fiona Simson, President, NSW Farmers' Association



Paralympian speakers program welcomes recruits

Two talented athletes joined the WorkCover NSW Paralympian Speakers Program in June.

Wheelchair basketballer Brett Stibners and sprinter Scott Reardon were proud to join the popular program, now in its 12th year. Under the program, WorkCover engages eight athletes who, despite suffering permanent disabilities,

have gone on to achieve outstanding success after a workplace injury.

The partnership continues to be a major success in helping industry, business and the wider community understand the significance of workplace safety and the physical, emotional, social, and financial costs of workplace injuries.

Drawing on their experience, the

athletes spread a strong and emotive message about workplace safety, injury prevention and their personal journey to recovery, return to work and success as professional athletes.

The program reaches thousands of workers each year and during 2012 athletes raised awareness of workplace safety at more than 160 businesses across metropolitan and regional New South Wales.

The Paralympic ambassadors personalise an emotive workplace safety message and are also proof that people can return to work and life after sustaining a serious injury – but also send a sobering message about what may have been done to avoid it.

WorkCover and the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) remain committed to supporting Paralympic athletes achieve their goals through a balanced approach to sport, education and work.

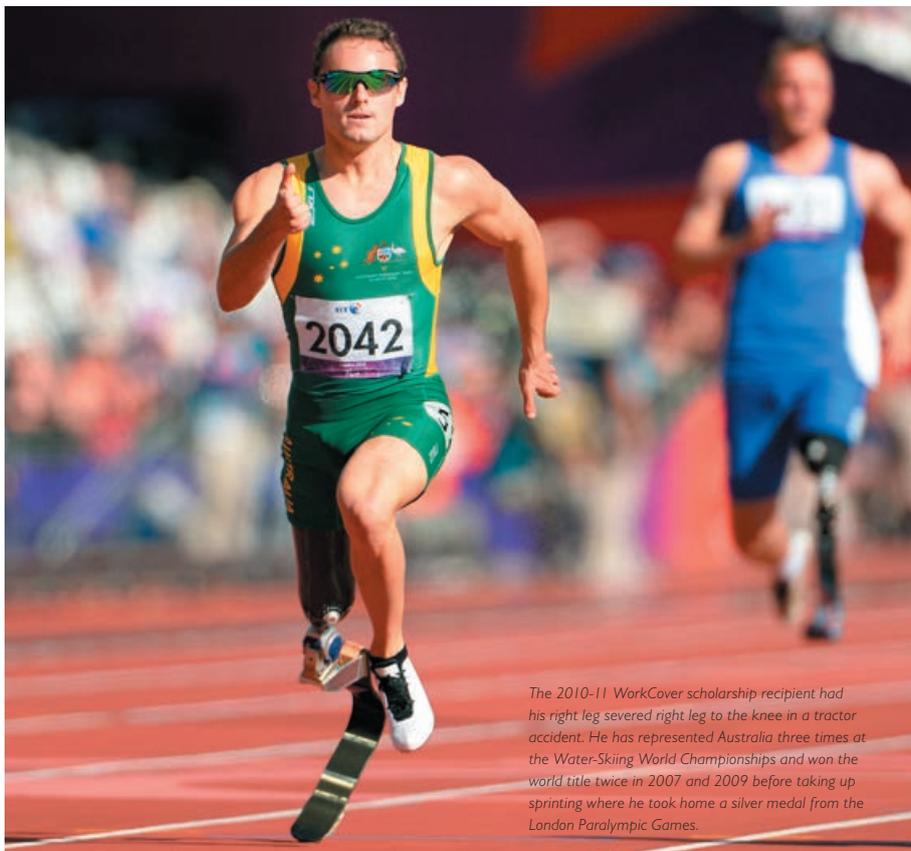
In August last year, WorkCover commenced a new four year partnership worth \$1.62 million, between WorkCover NSW and APC to help improve attitudes to workplace safety and to meet growing demand for the program.

Under the new arrangements the program can provide up to 175 workplace visits by Paralympic athletes each year.

Already both Brett and Scott are proving to be sought after speakers with businesses impressed with their powerful stories.

“Many workers approached Scott to tell him how much his story had affected them and would take his safety message on board - such was the impact of what he had to say.”

Julie Bourke, NSW Health



The 2010-11 WorkCover scholarship recipient had his right leg severed right leg to the knee in a tractor accident. He has represented Australia three times at the Water-Skiing World Championships and won the world title twice in 2007 and 2009 before taking up sprinting where he took home a silver medal from the London Paralympic Games.

Scott Reardon

Scott Reardon grew up on his family's property near Canberra with a love for running and water skiing. The talented athlete has now represented his country with distinction in both sports.

In 2002 Scott got his shoelace caught in the power take off shaft of a tractor and severed his right leg through the knee. He spent a month in hospital recovering and amazed doctors by relearning to walk in just one week. Scott continued to water-ski on one leg, representing Australia three times at the water-skiing world championships and winning the world title twice in 2007 and 2009.

Watching the Australian team compete at the Beijing Paralympic Games further inspired Scott to pursue his talent for running. After juggling water skiing and athletics for a while, he moved to Canberra in 2009 to train at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and focus on his athletics career.

At the 2011 World Championships in Christchurch, Scott finished fourth in the 100m sprint and fifth in the 200m. At his first paralympic games in London he won silver in the 100m and narrowly missed a medal in the 200m, finishing fourth.

Brett “Sticky” Stibners

As a very talented able bodied sportsman, Brett played indoor hockey for Australia at both under 21 and senior level.

As a 21 year old, Brett was driving between jobs after working all night while completing an apprenticeship. However, he fell asleep at the wheel and suffered a severe accident, which resulted in his leg being amputated at the knee.

The severity of the accident meant that he could not return to doing what he was doing before the accident, work or sport. Brett found the motivation to start over again through the support of his employer

Brett began competing in wheelchair basketball in 2003. The former Wollongong Rollers Hawks team member was pivotal in leading the Australian men’s wheelchair basketball team to gold in Beijing and silver in London.

Brett describes his first paralympic games in Beijing as ‘a dream come true.’



Brett Stibners in action at the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

“Brett delivered his personal story in a way that captured attention. Our audience could relate to Brett’s experience in a very real way.”

Julie Bourke, NSW Health

WorkCover Paralympian speaker Liesl Tesch named as a finalist for 2014 NSW Australian of the Year

The Woy Woy school teacher, world-renowned Paralympic gold medallist and humanitarian has not let the mountain bike accident in 1988 that left her a partial paraplegic interfere with her drive to succeed.

Liesl has represented Australia in wheelchair basketball at five Paralympics, captaining the team to win silver in Beijing in 2008. In London, Liesl and her sailing partner Daniel Fitzgibbon won gold in the Sailing Regatta, at her sixth Paralympic Games – and her first competing in sailing.

Liesl has shared her inspirational story as part of WorkCover’s speakers

program having conducted more than 50 presentations at workplaces across NSW. During workplace visits Liesl discusses the importance of reducing injury risks on the job and how it is possible to return to work and life after a catastrophic injury.

Liesl was among a field of four talented finalists that included Professor Michael Boyer AM – Cancer Researcher, Dr Tom Denniss – Entrepreneur and Marathon Runner, Adam Goodes – Football Player and Indigenous Community Leader.



Five times Paralympian Liesl Tesch.

New explosives regulation commenced

From September 1, The Explosives Regulation 2005 has been replaced with the new Explosives Regulation 2013. Most changes are minor and will have minimal impact.



From 1 September 2013:

- You do not need a licence to learn blasting
- You do not need an explosives licence if you store up to 12kg of propellant powder for reloading purposes – and hold a licence under the Firearms Act 1996
- You can get a single-use fireworks licence up to four times a year
- Licence fees and conditions change
- An unsupervised handling licence is called a security clearance

From 1 March 2014:

- You need a safety management plan to hold a manufacturing licence
 - You must notify WorkCover NSW at least seven days before using explosives (except for coal and mining workplaces)
- Disqualifying offences and disposal plan requirements that were proposed in the public comment period, have been deferred to the national review, and will not appear in the Explosives Regulation 2013.

Take care during the festive season

The festive season is here and while most of the workforce is excited about Christmas and New Year celebrations, it is important that workplace safety should remain a high priority.

It is important that workers and employers need to keep their focus on the job rather than the upcoming holiday period. As the year comes to a close, many workers are rushing to complete jobs before celebrating the Christmas holidays.

For others, such as those who work in the hospitality, transport and retail industries, the festive season is one of their busiest times of year. Employers and workers should not cut corners when it comes to safety at work.

During the Christmas period it is just



as important for employers to develop adequate safe work plans in consultation with staff and conduct appropriate risk assessments. Simple things such as ensuring equipment is operated safely and undertaking regular training on occupational health and safety issues can

help prevent injuries.

Inadequate safety training or simple lack of attention can have tragic results. Workplace injuries and fatalities are avoidable and every worker deserves to come home safely to their family at the end of the day.

Keep construction sites safe during the Christmas break



WorkCover NSW has issued a reminder to controllers of construction sites to ensure that locations are adequately secured during the summer holiday period.

It is important that construction sites are fenced off to prevent unauthorised access during the Christmas and New Year shut down.

Site controllers need to address the risks that unsecured construction sites can pose to the members of the public, especially children.

Work health and safety laws require construction sites to have adequate site security, which includes appropriate fencing.

Building sites around residential areas pose a heightened risk, particularly as there are more children in the vicinity due to the school holidays.

Incidents and fatalities

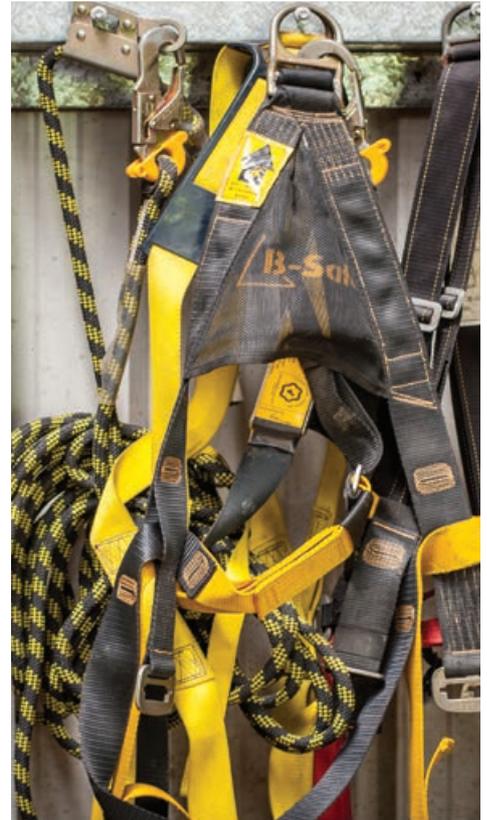
The last three months have seen a range of workplace incidents including a dramatic rescue operation that received live media coverage in August. The incident occurred after a 19-year-old man sustained serious head injuries after a metal reinforcement bar was impaled in the centre of his forehead at a construction site on the North Shore.

The man was clearing rubble with an excavator when a bar snapped, flipped up and speared into the cabin. The man was conscious throughout his rescue, which took some hours and multiple emergency services crews.

Tragically, during September a 47-year-old Essential Energy linesman was electrocuted while removing redundant power lines near live lines. It is understood the man came in contact with a live line and received a fatal electric shock.

Other incidents over the past three months include:

- A zoo keeper at Western Plains Zoo sustained injuries to their arm and hand during a routine handling process with a rhino
- 11 people, including two workers, were treated at the scene of a shop fire at a Rivers Store in Coffs Harbour after an intruder entered the store and set fire to clothing stock
- A 24-year-old farm worker sustained burns to 32 per cent of his body while using a hand pump to spray petrol onto a fire on a Riverina property
- A 40-year-old roofer fell two stories from a building sustaining multiple fractures and internal injuries in north west Sydney
- A Sydney construction worker narrowly avoided death when a stack of concrete sheets landed on his truck after they dislodged and fell from a crane.



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