



the work health and safety **monitor**

keeping all with an interest in OHS informed of developments in occupational health and safety nationally and internationally

Issue 3 Vol 18 July 2014



The impacts on health of air quality in Australia seminar

The decline in the occupational health discipline and, consequently, the health of the workforce is not unlike the circumstances that led to the appointment of the Robens Committee in the UK in 1970. That Committee was tasked with elevating the status of safety and health at work and seeing it eventually command something like the degree of interest and attention accorded to other subjects such as industrial relations. The problems may be more controversial but are often less real and important in terms of human well-being.

The Robens Committee determined the most important single reason for accidents at work was apathy.

Today's decline in interest in occupational health is identical – a lack of interest, enthusiasm or concern.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of occupational and environmental exposure to a range of toxic substances and particulates.

A current glaring example is the failure to react to the classification of diesel particulate as a human carcinogen which, in earlier times, would have occasioned a range of initiatives by business, health authorities and regulatory bodies to eliminate or reduce public and workplace exposures.

Air pollution, through its health impacts, is now predicted to become the major cause of environmentally related deaths world-wide by 2050.

In Australia in 2013 more than 150 organisations representing health, environmental, local and state government and business concerns lodged submissions with the Senate Community Affairs Committee generally deploring the lack of adequate exposure standards and the considerable health impacts of exposure.

We have yet to see any significant action taken to address their concerns.

It is estimated there are approximately 3,000 deaths in Australia due to urban air pollution annually – more than the national road toll.

The Occupational Health Society of Australia (WA Branch) will conduct a **seminar** to discuss air pollution and its health consequences on **Thursday, 11 September 2014** at Technology Park, Bentley.

It is recommended that all health and safety professionals attend to ensure currency of their professional development.

Please contact the Society on **safety@marcsta.com** if you would like a copy of the program and registration form.

Joyce Blair
Chairperson



WELCOME

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OHS legislative/regulatory matters

Australia updates Dangerous Goods Code

The National Transport Commission (NTC) of Australia has released the latest edition of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, edition 7.3.

The latest edition of the code will affect a wide range of companies and people in the industry including dangerous goods shippers, heavy vehicle drivers, companies that use and transport dangerous goods and companies which provide training programs on dangerous goods transportation.

An electronic version of the current Code can be downloaded from www.ntc.gov.au

Source: Chemwatch, 24 July 2014



Fact Sheet on Managing Psychological Injury

SafeWork Australia has issued a Fact Sheet – *Preventing Psychological Injury under Work Health and Safety Law* which provides employers with information on how to address psychological risks under the Work Health and Safety Act.

The key word “health” is defined under that Act as both physical and psychological health.

The Fact Sheet provides an excellent description of what is involved in managing risks associated with psychological hazards and should be carefully perused by OHS professionals working in those states that have adopted the harmonisation model.

Source: SafeWork Australia, May 2014

OHS harmonised laws – rights of health and safety representatives under scrutiny

The Federal Office of Best Practice Regulation has released an *Issues Paper and Consultation Regulation Impact Statement* addressing “*Improving the Model Work Health and Safety Laws*”.

The purpose of the review process is to investigate ways in which model WHS laws could be improved to reduce red tape and make it easier for business and workers to comply with their work health and safety responsibilities.

Stakeholders’ comment was sought by 1 August.

The Victorian union movement sees the issues paper as having the potential to remove most of the rights of HSR’s and point out that the HSR activities referred to have never been a problem in Victorian workplaces.

Although the model legislation has not been adopted in Victoria they anticipate an eventual flow-on effect.

The same effect could be felt in Western Australian workplaces if the model legislation is adopted.

Source: OHS Reps SafetyNet Journal 10 July 2014

SAFETY



UNSAFE WORK COMMON AND CONTAGIOUS

The authors of an Australian study report that nearly seven in 10 workers admit to ignoring workplace safety rules, and their behaviour is contagious.

Carried out by SACS Consultancy, the study of more than 1,000 workers employed in a range of different organisations and employment sectors found that three in four workers (73%) have taken sick leave when they are not unwell, 88% have broken their employer's "rules" and 55% have taken property from their workplaces.

Some 87% admitted to ignoring or snubbing colleagues they didn't like and 67% have been intentionally rude to co-workers. More than 55% have left jobs because they didn't get along with others at work.

According to the study, employers can identify "potentially toxic employees" by using personality and value assessments during the recruitment process.

Source: OHS Alert, 12 June 2014

OHS COMMITMENT ON THE WANE IN THE UK

The British Trade Union Confederation released a report in early April on the UK Government's hostile policy towards health and safety at work.

The report shows that funding of the Health and Safety Executive has, over the past three years, been cut by 40 per cent resulting in a fall in staffing levels from 3,702 to 2,769 or almost 25 per cent. The HSE has also been requested to halt pro-active inspections in a wide range of industries including transport, electricity, health and social care.

The report also criticizes the government for trying to change the law to put large numbers of self-employed workers outside the Health and Safety Act.

Source: TUC, Toxic, Corrosive and Hazardous – the Government's record on health and safety, April 2014.

Vehicle related incidents responsible for two-thirds of workplace fatalities

The 2014 Annual Fatalities Report advises that 191 workers died from injuries at work in 2013.

Distressingly, the fatality rate of self-employed workers of 4.39 deaths per 100,000 workers was three times higher than the fatality rate for employees.

Safe Work Australia says that this may be partly due to the high fatality rate in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Transport, Postal and Warehousing industries, both sectors having a higher than average proportion of self-employed workers.

Other key findings:

- Over the 11 years of the series, one-third of workers who were killed died in vehicle collisions on public roads, one-third in vehicle incidents at workplaces while the remaining one-third of fatalities did not involve a vehicle.
- Sixty-six members of the public died as bystanders to work activity in 2013.

Source: Safe Work Australia Media Release 15 July 2014

Hazardous noise not exclusive to the workplace

In an article in OHS Magazine, Dr Theresa Y. Schultz, the Hearing Conservation Manager for Honeywell Safety Products, suggests that employers can reinforce a worker's awareness of noise hazards by encouraging workers to take home and use their hearing protection.

Every day activities such as alarm clocks (75dB), hair dryers (80dB) and blenders (85dB) start the day and later on vacuum cleaners (74dB), power lawn-mowers (94dB), chainsaws (118dB) and sound systems (which can exceed 100db).

Most of these levels either approach or exceed the noise exposure standard in Australia of 85dB(A).

Dr Schultz says that workers at home often take the home noise for granted because they are not at work. She recommends that safety managers take the opportunity to encourage workers using hearing protection to take that protection home and wear it, specifying which hearing protection is freely available for home use.

A spin-off benefit is the increasing awareness this would create for others at home to also protect their hearing.

Source: OHS Online, 1 June 2014



HEALTH - DEPRESSION



Stress can lead to heart disease for women

Researchers in the USA have found that young and middle-aged women with depression are more than twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or die from heart disease as their mentally healthier peers.

The relationship between mood disorder and heart disease in younger women is unclear although it could be that younger women have neurobiological differences or hormonal differences that make them respond to acute mental stress differently than men or older women.

Source: MedicineNet.com, Journal of the American Heart Association

HEALTH

No link between insomnia and high blood pressure

A study of some 15,000 Americans has found that those persons with insomnia are not at increased risk of developing high blood pressure.

Dr Nicholas Vozoris, a respirologist from St Michael's Hospital, Toronto, said that there has been growing concern among patients and health care providers about the potential medical consequence of insomnia, especially on the cardiovascular system.

He said that by showing there is no link between this very common sleep disorder and high blood pressure physicians can be more selective when prescribing sleeping pills and refrain from prescribing these medications to deal with cardio problems.

Source: Chemwatch, 24 July 2014

Legionnaire's linked to windscreen wiper fluid

Legionnaire's disease may be able to grow in windscreen washer fluid and was isolated from nearly 75% of school buses tested in one district in Arizona according to research presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in May 2014.

The results suggest that automobiles may serve as a source of transmission for legionella infections, say the researchers.

The study is the first to detect high levels of legionella in washer fluid spray and points to the fact that people can be exposed to pathogens – particularly those occurring naturally in the environment – in previously unknown and unusual ways, said Otto Schwake, the lead researcher.

Source: Safety Solutions, 21 May 2014

Way too little

In a publication "Way too little" of the Friends of the Earth, Australia, the authors highlight the emergence of nanomaterials in the Australian food chain and in agrochemicals being used without any assessment of the possible environmental health and safety consequences.

An appendix lists some of the products containing nanomaterials.

The authors suggest that it is up to regulators to "act and demand what they have promised – an assessment of the environmental health and safety of these nanomaterials."

Source: Friends of the Earth, Way Too Little

Linking opioid usage to workplace accidents

The National Centre for Education, Training and Addiction is to investigate the relationship between prescribed opioid use, workplace injuries and return-to-work ability after work-related accidents in South Australian workplaces.

The study aims to determine:

- whether workers who use prescribed opioids are more susceptible to workplace injuries
- if opioids impact a person's ability to return to work following a WorkCover claim.

The study will look at the patterns of prescribed opioids over a 10 year period, and compare user profiles with a range of other data to identify links between opioid use and injury and other adverse outcomes.

Professor Ann Roche, the Centre Director, says that Australia's reliance on prescription painkillers has increased significantly in the past decade and will continue to rise with an ageing population.

Source: Safety Solutions, July 2014



Way too little:

OUR GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO REGULATE NANOMATERIALS IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

May 2014



HEALTH – NOISE

The severe health effects of traffic noise

A new report from Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden titled *Quieter Cities of the Future – Lessening the Severe Health Effects of Traffic Noise in Cities by Emission Reductions* shows that health effects of traffic noise are severe and constitute a threat to public health.

Key concerns:

- Traffic noise can result in severe health effects such as high blood pressure, cardiac infarctions, strokes and diabetes causing much suffering and also premature deaths.
- According to the WHO it is the second major environmental health problem in Europe after air pollution.
- It is estimated that in the EU high income countries, the number of premature noise-related deaths is above 60,000 annually, with most cases in moderately exposed groups.
- Close to 30 million EU citizens exposed to road traffic levels above the WHO short term intermediate targets live with 20-40% increased risk for severe diseases and premature death due to the traffic noise.
- The environmental noise problem is extremely complex and must be managed in a fundamentally new way.
- There was a total consensus that nobody has or takes the responsibility and authority to really decrease the health effects of traffic noise.

Source: *Safety Solutions*, July 2014

Hearing loss and healthy ageing

Some important findings concerning hearing loss and healthy ageing were reported at a workshop conducted recently by a number of national academies in the USA.

- Only about 15 per cent of people with a hearing impairment in the USA use a hearing aid and the rate is only slightly higher in England and Wales (17%) even though hearing aids are fully covered by national health insurance there. The prevalence of hearing aid use has not changed substantially around the world for decades.
- Hearing deficits can be associated with other forms of physical and cognitive decline.
- Hearing aids, implants and listening devices- although greatly improved in recent years – still fail to meet the needs of many older adults.
- Hearing applications built into smartphones have tremendous potential to help people hear better.
- People with poor hearing have a twofold increased risk of falls.
- Women with moderate or greater hearing loss have a 31 per cent greater risk of disability compared with those with normal hearing.
- Age-related hearing loss is poorly understood and also stigmatised not only among patients and consumers but also among the research community and providers.

The workshop summary is a must read for OHS professionals.

Source: *National Academies Press*, July 2014



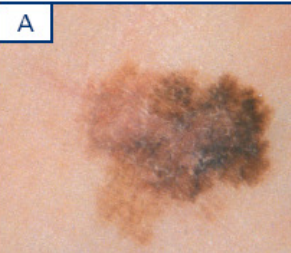
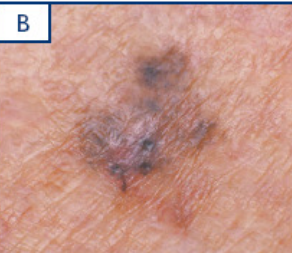




MELANOMA –

THE MOST COMMON CANCER FOR MEN

The report of the WA Cancer Registry issued in April 2014 confirms that in 2012 melanoma of the skin – as in most years since 1982 – was the most common cancer and cause of cancer-related mortality in males in the 15-39 years age range, and the second most common incident cancer in females in this age range.

MELANOMA The ABCD of Melanoma Detection. Check your body for the following:

<p>A</p> 	<p>B</p> 	<p>C</p> 	<p>D</p> 
<p>ASYMMETRY If the spot or lesion is divided in half, any two halves are not a mirror image.</p>	<p>BORDER A spot with a spreading or irregular edge.</p>	<p>COLOUR A spot with a number of different colours through it.</p>	<p>DIAMETER A spot that is growing and changing in diameter or size.</p>

Source: WA Cancer Registry, April 2014

HEALTH - AIR QUALITY



Further reductions in the air pollutant, sulfur dioxide, would lead to greater health benefits

Policies recommended by the European Commission in the early 1990's aimed at reducing levels of air pollutants, including sulfur dioxide, have been successful in achieving more than 80% reduction in that pollutant.

A new study, supported by the Commission, involving 20 European cities has shown an overall positive association between daily concentrations of SO₂ and mortality in those cities.

An increase of 1 microgram of SO₂ per cubic metre had the same impact on mortality in the late 2000's as in the early 1990's, confirming the previously identified relationship between levels of SO₂ and rates of mortality. The results imply that SO₂ concentrations have a consistent and direct relationship with mortality at both high and low concentrations which suggests that reducing emissions further will result in even greater health benefits.

Source: Science for Environment Policy, European Commission DG Environment News Alert, 5 June 2014, Issue 375

Exposure to fine particles linked to cancer

In a study published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, led by Harvard University, researchers estimated exposures of 103,650 women to three sizes of airborne particulates.

They calculated how many women contracted cancer – 2,155 – between 1994 and 2010 and analysed the pollution levels near their homes for the previous six years.

All sizes of particle pollution, particularly the smallest (PM_{2.5}) were linked to an increased risk of lung cancer.

The research doesn't prove air pollution causes lung cancer, but it is the latest of multiple human health studies that have linked fine particles to lung cancer.

Source: Chemwatch Bulletin Board 11 July 2014

Time may not fully attenuate solvent-associated cognitive deficits in highly exposed workers

People who are exposed to paint, glue or degreaser fumes at work may experience memory and thinking problems in retirement, decades after their exposure, according to a new study by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

The research found that people with high, recent exposure to solvents were at greatest risk for memory and thinking deficits. For example, those with high recent exposure to chlorinated solvents were 65 per cent more likely to have impaired scores on tests of memory and visual attention and task switching than those who were not exposed to solvents.

The results remained the same after accounting for factors such as education level, age, smoking and alcohol consumption.

The lead author, Erica Sabbath, said that what was really striking was that the results also saw some cognitive problems in those who had been highly exposed much longer ago, up to 50 years before testing. This suggests that time may not fully lessen the effects of solvent exposure on some memory and cognitive skills when lifetime exposure is high.

Source: *Cos Mag*, 15 May 2014

HEALTH - SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Increasing trend in prescription-drug abuse

There is growing evidence that prescription-based medicine usage is on the rise and indications that drugs of this type are being used for illicit purposes.

The Australian Crime Commission's Drug Data Report 2012-13 shows detection of amphetamine-type stimulants at the Australian borders are the highest on record.

The prescription medicine, oxycodone, is now one of the most abused prescription drugs with the amount prescribed nationally by doctors increasing from 95.1 kg in 1999 to 1270.7kg in 2008, a 13-fold increase.

Source: *SafetySolutions*, 12 June, 2014



HEALTH - SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug and alcohol testing pays off for Australian Railway Association

Data released from a review conducted by the Australian Railway Association (ARA) has shown a decrease in the rate of positive results among employees over the two years 2012 and 2013.

In 2012 the rail industry undertook 240,394 employee drug and alcohol tests, 284 or 0.12% of which returned positive results.

The following year there was a significant increase in the number of tests conducted by the same 22 companies to 371,148 with 311 or 0.08% returning positive, a decrease of one third in the rate of employees returning positive tests.

An average of 98% of tests conducted in both years were random, with the remaining 2% comprising pre-employment, post-incident or upon suspicion tests. Tests were taken by swab, breath or urine samples.

Source: SafetySolutions, 30 May 2014

Amphetamine usage now of epidemic proportion in Australia

Australia is in the midst of an amphetamine epidemic with the drug being linked to crime and seizure at our borders.

In recent months even the Prime Minister has admitted the war on drugs may be unwinnable.

A survey by the Australian Institute of Criminology has shown that large numbers of people arrested have amphetamines in their system and that the drug was of good quality and easy to obtain.

Drug researcher, Associate Professor John Fitzgerald, says that he doesn't think Australia was prepared for the amphetamine epidemic and it was impossible to say when it would end.

James Pitts, the CEO of drug and alcohol rehabilitation organisation Odyssey House, pointed out that you can't communicate with people who use amphetamines – they are off in another world.

Source: Perth Now, News, 4 June 2014

New drug testing technology breakthrough

Researchers at the University of South Australia have developed an innovative drug testing technology which could transform police roadside and workplace drug testing.

The technology works by detecting illicit drugs directly from saliva as well as explosives from fingerprints.

Although commercial realisation of the new technology is still some time away, researchers say it could increase the safety both on our roads and in workplaces.

Professor Voelcker says that the technology is based on a nanomaterial that is a special form of silica with a very high surface area. This material can basically extract from the saliva the molecules that you want to be tested.

He said that they are currently testing for different classes of drugs from cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines, MDMA and ecstasy to benzodiazepines and opiates.

Field testing of the technology is currently being undertaken.

Source: SafetySolutions, June/July 2014



Taryn Guinan from the University of South Australia with the "Lab on Chip"

Medical marijuana – the Canadian situation

Canada is only the second country in the world with a government run marijuana health program which allows the possession and personal use production of marijuana by people who, with their doctors, could show a legitimate medical need. Permit holders were previously permitted to grow medical marijuana for personal use at home or designate others to grow it for them.

A new program operating from 1 April 2014 allows patients to access medical marijuana directly through their doctors, who will be able to issue a medical declaration that will allow the patient to place an order for dried marijuana from a licensed producer.

The Canadian Medical Protective Association recognises that prescribing marijuana will be difficult for doctors as there is relatively little scientific study of the drug given its long history of being illegal. Additional training is required for doctors so that they better understand dosage and side effects and can make recommendations for accommodation.

Based on the latest statistics from Health Canada the number of Canadians authorised to possess medical marijuana is 37,359 and expected to grow to 450,000 in the next 10 years.

Source: Cos Mag, 19 March 2014

Health experts to study effects of marijuana on workplace health and safety

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) has announced plans to collaborate in a study of workplace health and safety issues associated with worker impairment from the use of marijuana and other drugs.

Citing changing societal attitudes towards marijuana – including its increasing use for medicinal purposes and new state-decriminalisation laws – the two groups said the occupational health professional can play an important role in helping the US workplace prepare for the potential impacts of these trends.

The President of AAOHN, Pam Carter, said “Both of our associations believe it is time to address workplace health and safety concerns when workers have impaired functioning from marijuana and other drugs”.

ACOEM President, Dr Ron Loeppke, said that “marijuana is being viewed as a relatively harmless substance but this may be a misconception by those who are unaware of workplace safety issues that can arise when workers are under the influence of marijuana or other drugs. To compound the issue, there is a dearth of scientific studies to support the nature of current marijuana products and their effects on workers”.

Both organisations will work together to examine current science and determine evidence-based education and recommendations that can be offered to support occupational and environmental professionals who consult with employers regarding workplace policies.”

Twenty states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to legalise medical marijuana and two states have approved its recreational use by adults.

How much do Australians spend on illegal drugs?

The National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre’s director, Professor Jan Copeland, has drawn attention to an ABS Information Paper on the ‘non-observed economy’, the technical name for the black market. The ABS estimates that in 2010 Australians spent \$3.639 bn on cannabis which accounts for more than half of the total expenditure on illegal drugs of \$6 bn.

Source: National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre E-news, 20 May 2014

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH



Financial rewards for mental health strategies for employers

A study commissioned by Beyondblue and the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance has found that employers who introduce mental health strategies see benefits.

These include improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and presenteeism (coming to work when ill) and lower numbers of workers' compensation claims.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers report recommended a number of 'targeted actions' for employers to consider.

Source: OHS Alert, 21 May 2014

Mental health can reduce life expectancy more than heavy smoking

Serious mental illnesses can cut life expectancy by 10 to 20 years, research has found, yet there is generally far less funding of mental health services compared to anti-smoking campaigns, say the researchers.

The study looked at 20 review papers, which involved more than 1.7m individuals and over 250,000 deaths. It reported on mortality risk for a range of disorders, including mental health problems, substance and alcohol abuse, dementia, autistic spectrum disorders and childhood behavioural disorders.

It found that the average reduction in life expectancy in people with bi-polar disorder is nine to 20 years, and that reduction is similar for people with schizophrenia and depression, but increases to between nine and 24 years for people who abuse drugs and alcohol.

Heavy smokers have their life expectancy reduced by between eight to 10 years.

There are many possible reasons behind the discovery – including suicide and those with mental problems being stigmatised and less likely to receive sufficient medical treatment.

Importantly, Dr Seena Fazel of Oxford University said that it's important for people not to separate mental and physical illness. "Many causes of mental health problems also have physical consequences, and mental illness worsens the prognosis of a range of physical illnesses, especially heart disease, diabetes and cancer."

Source: Chemwatch Bulletin Board, 27 May 2014

FATIGUE

NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN UNDERSTANDING INSOMNIA

Insomnia affects one in five men and one in three women at some point in their adult lives, making it the world's most common sleep disorder.

Insomnia has been linked to accidents (including work accidents) and poor mental and physical health. It also causes economic damage because of reduced productivity and absenteeism.

While various methodologies and drugs are options they do not offer a long term solution.

The key problem is that we do not really understand insomnia and there is no agreement on whether it is psychological, physical or both.

Now better techniques for measuring sleep –states have shown that insomniac's sleep is fundamentally different from normal which probably explains their subjective reports of being unable to switch off.

Using spectral analysis, a technique used by researchers in fields from atmospheric science to astronomy and geophysics, researchers discovered subtle differences in the EEG's of sleeping insomniacs.

Alpha waves – the signatures of wakefulness that are supposed to show up only in early sleep – were intruding into deep sleep.

A better understanding of insomnia won't necessarily lead to a cure, but knowing that scientists are finally making inroads means that there is one less thing to keep us awake at night.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION



Workers' compensation premium rates for 2014/15

Premium rates for all industries for 2014/15 were published in the Government Gazette of 8 April.

Average rates for the respective industry groupings ranged from 0.696 for Government Administration to a high of 4.277 for the Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing Division.

Industry	Average Premium Rate %
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	4.277
Cultural and Recreational Services	2.982
Construction	2.945
Manufacturing	2.635
Personal and Other Services	2.428
Accommodation, Cafes, Restaurant	2.052
Transport and Storage	1.995
MINING	1.799
Wholesale Trade	1.667
Health and Community Services	1.642
Retail Trade	1.575
Communication Services	1.148
Property and Business Services	1.148
Education	1.013
Government Administration	0.696
Financial, Insurance	0.285
Electricity, Gas, Water	0.075



THE IMPACTS ON HEALTH OF AIR QUALITY IN AUSTRALIA SEMINAR

Thursday, 11 September 2014
Function Centre, 2 Brodie-Hall Drive,
Technology Park, Bentley
8:00 am to 12:00 pm

SPEAKER PROFILES

Dr George Crisp, General Practitioner, WA Chair and National Committee Member of Doctors for the Environment, Australia (DEA)

George Crisp is a GP in a small family medical practice in Shenton Park.

He is the current WA chair and a national committee member of Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA), an independent, public health advocacy group who have an interest in the relationship between human health and environmental damage.

Along with a GP colleague (Dr Richard Yin), he co-developed "Greenpractice" in 2009, an initiative to promote the awareness of climate change as a health issue in general practice and advocate the health co-benefits of taking action. www.greenpractice.org.au

George writes regularly in the local and medical media on environmental health matters.

Professor Lin Fritschi, Professor of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Curtin University

Professor Lin Fritschi is a cancer epidemiologist with a particular interest in occupational causes of cancer.

She has a medical degree from the University of Queensland, a doctorate in epidemiology from the Australian National University and is a Public Health Physician with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

Lin has led many large case-control and cohort studies investigating occupational hazards as well as non-occupational causes of cancer.

She is particularly interested in improving the way we assess historical exposure to chemicals at work and has developed a web-based application (OccIDEAS) to assist in this task (www.occideas.org). She has published over 200 peer-reviewed publications in national and international journals and holds an NHMRC Senior Research Fellowship.

Dr Amanda Wheeler, Senior Research Fellow, Edith Cowan University, Centre for Eco System Management

Dr Amanda Wheeler joined the School of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Health, Engineering and Science at Edith Cowan University as a Senior Research Fellow in August 2013.

Prior to this, Dr Wheeler was a Research Scientist with Health Canada where her research included personal exposures to air pollution from residential and ambient sources, as well as understanding the intra-urban variability of air pollutants. This research builds on studies Dr Wheeler undertook while a Research Fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health where she focused on susceptible populations' personal exposure to air pollution and cardiovascular health effects.

She obtained her Ph.D. investigating children's personal exposure to airborne particulate matter at Middlesex University in London, UK.

Andrew Chaplyn, Director Mines Safety, Resources Safety and State Mining Engineer, Department of Mines and Petroleum WA

Andrew Chaplyn is the 11th State Mining Engineer, appointed in 2014, as well as the Mines Safety Director at the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP), a position he has held since 2012.

The State Mining Engineer is responsible for administering the provisions under the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994. These include managing the State's mine safety inspectorate, approving key mining submissions and chairing the Board of Examiners and the Mines Survey Board.

Andrew has been a key member of the department's safety management team since 2009, holding the positions of Regional Inspector and District Inspector. He has spent more than 30 years working in the mining industry, from a graduate mining engineer through to senior leadership roles in both private industry and government.

He also has a Bachelor of Engineering in Mining from the Western Australian School of Mines (WASM).

Contact the Society on safety@marcsta.com if you would like a copy of the program and registration form.



AROUND THE GLOBE

Europe

The European Union's Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020

The new Strategic Framework identifies three major health and safety at work challenges.

- to improve implementation of existing health and safety rules, in particular by enhancing the capacity of micro and small enterprises to put in place effective and efficient risk prevention strategies.
- to improve the prevention of work-related diseases by tackling new and emerging risks without neglecting existing risks;
- to take account of the ageing of the EU's workforce.

Seven strategic objectives are identified to address these challenges.

The recognition that small workplaces usually lack the knowledge and resources to implement existing rules is long overdue. Too often, small business is ignored in the development of legislation and regulations with big business dominating employer seats on bodies supposed to be representative.

Source: EU News, 6 June 2014

Asbestos fibre imports to Europe to continue

Since 2004 manufacture, marketing and use of asbestos was banned with only one exception – diaphragms for existing electrolysis cells which could continue until the end of their service life or when substitutes became available, whichever was the sooner.

Pressure on the European Commission and the European Chemicals Agency by Dow Chemicals has resulted in a proposed extension to 2025 and also to allow the asbestos fibres needed to maintain them to be imported into Europe.

Both the Commission and the Chemicals Agency claim that the risks to workers are fully controlled.

Asbestos victim support groups have pointed out that any proposed changes are at odds with the EU's demands for a worldwide ban on asbestos.

Source: ETUI health and Safety News, April 2014

France

French warning about use of nanomaterials in consumer products

The French Agency for Food and Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety has recommended that the European Union step up its legislative framework in order to improve the traceability of all nanomaterials to be incorporated into consumer products. It points out that they can cross physiological barriers such as skin and mucous membranes to spread throughout the body and accumulate in different organs.

Source: European Trade Union Institute News, 27 June 2014

USA

Health implications of Chinese-made drywall (Gyprock)

A May 2014 report released by the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has confirmed that residents exposed to sulfur compounds emitted by drywall (gyprock) manufactured in China between 2005-2006 may have experienced adverse health effects associated with their exposure.

Exposures to the levels estimated from the samples tested may be associated with health effects such as headaches, irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, tenderness, and problems controlling respiratory conditions such as asthma.

"The use of corrosive drywall (gyprock) made in China is the most important new indoor air quality issue we've faced during the last 10 years" said Ed Light, a member of American Industrial Hygiene Association's Indoor Environmental Quality Committee.

Source: The Synergist, July 2014

The US Mine Safety and Health Administration has reported that during the first half of 2014, 22 miners were killed in accidents in the mining industry, an increase that reverses the decline seen in recent years.

Machinery and powered haulage (12) were the most common cause of deaths followed by falls (6), a pattern also evident in the Australian mining sector.

Source: MSHA News Release 28 July 2014



Occupational Health Society of Australia (WA)

Incorporated in 1978, the Occupational Health Society of Australia (WA Branch) is a non-profit association which provides a forum for the wide range of disciplines engaged in the occupational health profession in Western Australia.

The aims of the Society are:

- to develop effective occupational health practice within WA;
- to encourage awareness by individuals, organisations and other bodies, of the role of occupational health;
- to provide a forum for professional contact between persons interested in, and working in, occupational health;
- to express an independent, professional viewpoint on all aspects of occupational health considered desirable in the public interest;
- to seek the improvement or an extension of the existing legislation for the promotion of safety and health at work in order to ensure uniform principles are applied in all occupational activities.

Visit www.ohswa.marcsta.com for more information.

Members

Russell ALLIEX, Orrcon Steel
Anitha ARASU
Joyce BLAIR, Next Health
Linda BRACKEN, Workwise Occupational Health
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