

MONITOR

Official publication of the
Mining and Resource Contractors Safety Training Association

Editorial

Welcome to OHS in the contracting sector of the mining industry in 2009. As I was writing this, I was conscious of the high risks emergency services workers and volunteers were facing in the Victorian bushfires, and that sometimes circumstances unfortunately dictate a variation in normally acceptable levels of risk. Our hats go off to them, and our thoughts are with those who lost loved ones in the fires.

The *State of the Work Environment* publication produced recently by WorkSafe shows information gathered on workplace fatalities in Western Australia over the last 20 years.

During that time the mining sector has moved significantly toward reaching its objective of a fatality free industry as evidenced by the trend lines on the graph below.

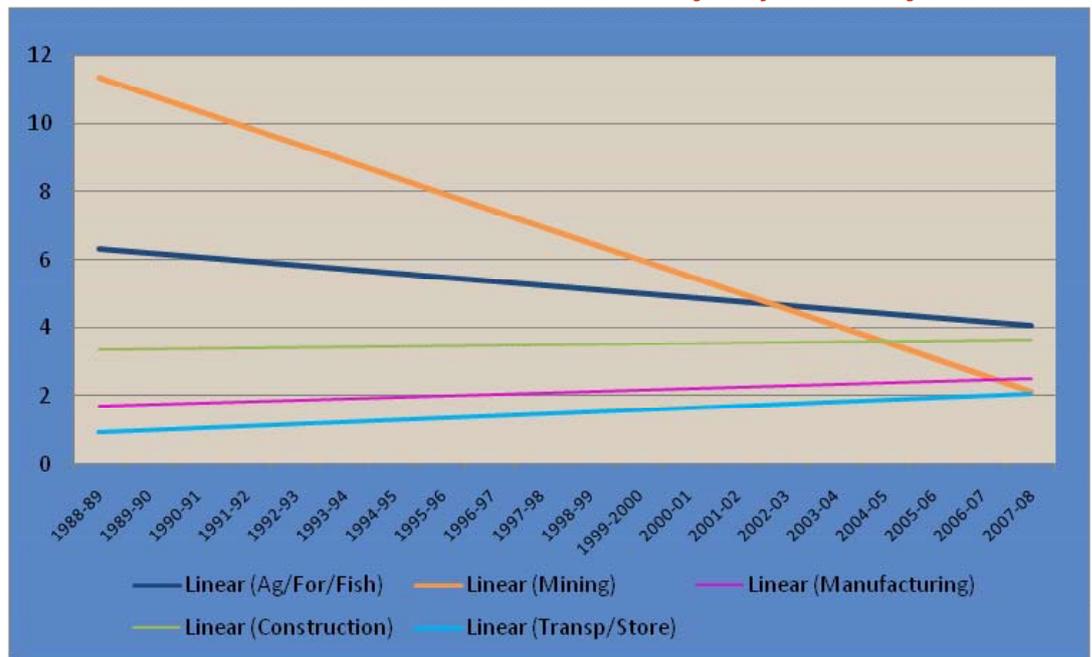


Monitor Editor,
Geoff Taylor

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**Work Related Fatalities in Western Australia
1988/89 to 2007/08, Linear Trend Lines by Major Industry Sector**



MARCSTA is a not-for-profit Association. All proceeds are reinvested into the industry for future development of safety and training.

MARCSTA training packages...

As a Registered Training Organisation, MARCSTA delivers occupational safety and health units of competency for the following national training packages: (Applications for recognition of prior learning may be lodged for all training programs)

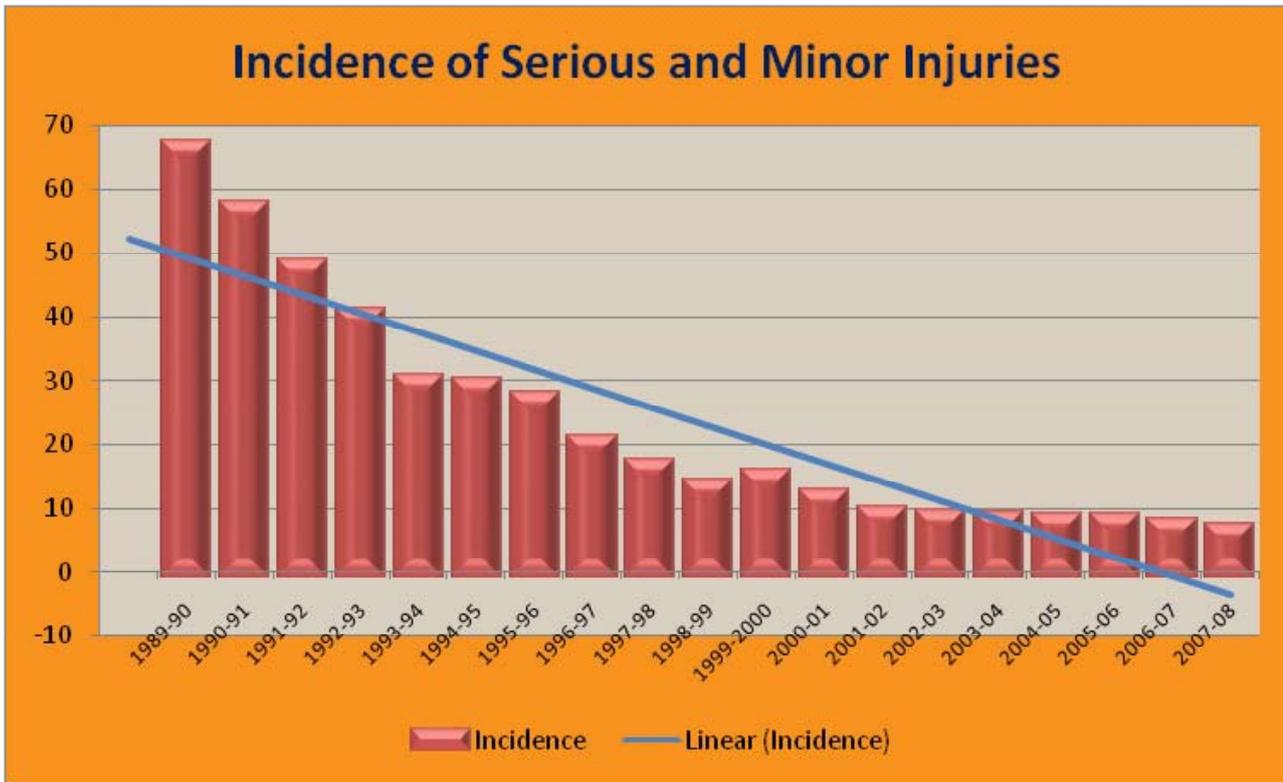
- Metalliferous Mining**
- Transport and Logistics**
- Business Services**
- Resources and Infrastructure Skills**
- Safety Awareness Training (Construction)**

Editorial, continued from page 1

A similar reduction in the all injury incidence has been achieved.

AXTAT statistics released by the Department of Mines and Petroleum confirm that the mining industry in Western Australia continues to set the global benchmark for occupational health and safety.

Graph: WA mining industry trend line



Source: AXTAT

The remarkable performance by the industry has resulted in a reduction in workers' compensation premiums of more than 70% in the 20 year period. The all injury incidence rate of 6.6 (injuries per 1000 employees) achieved in 2007/08 is the lowest rate ever recorded and is clear evidence that the legislative framework under which it operates is both relevant and appropriate.

The proponents of national harmonised OHS laws would do well to take account of the WA model which has been demonstrably successful.

Falls from heights in the WorkSafe statistics are not separated by industry sector, but serve as a warning to do better. In spite of a better falls protection code, better regulations requiring for example better edge protection, and better fall arrest and restraint equipment, fatalities from this source are on an upward trend, based on the five year moving average, and in the last year of the survey accounted for 11% of deaths.

On another note, there must be a better way for

the Department of Commerce to achieve the 3% cost cuts other than shutting the WorkSafe library from next year.

Finally, Jonah Lehrer in his recent book *How we Decide* has taken a new look at decision-making based on actual experiments in neuroscience. There are many insights, among them the fact that most of us desire certainty – fear takes over when uncertainty increases. Contrary to the popular view that good decision-making must

take place without emotion, Lehrer has found that deprived of emotion, people cannot make rational decisions about simple things. As he says: " Even when we try to be reasonable and restrained, these emotional impulses secretly influence our judgment" and "a brain that can't feel can't make up its mind". Dopamine, a

brain chemical associated with feeling, helps keep us safe. That is because in high crisis situations, where there is no time for logical analysis, the dopamine rush can help people use intelligent intuition even though it might provide solutions which defy accepted practice. Food for thought!

Here's to more safety improvements in 2009, remembering that the effects of the global economic downturn on people personally may affect their concentration at work.

Geoff Taylor, Adj. Prof.

The editor can be contacted at Work Safety and Health Associates. Tel: 08 9457 6487 or at wsha@iinet.net.au

Chairman's AGM address

In his address to the Association's Annual General Meeting in December 2008, Chairman Ross Graham noted MARCSTA's inception in 1996, and the increased focus on occupational health, not just safety, which is now a feature of the General Safety Induction.

The WA mining industry has set an international benchmark for mining OHS performance, Ross said. MARCSTA training has been a part of this achievement, but it is to be hoped that the current financial cutbacks will not be applied to training.

Ross noted the tenfold decrease in WA mining injury incidence over twenty years, and that this has been achieved through the Robens principles of a general duty of care, workforce empowerment and safety representatives, employer commitment, a technically competent inspectorate and education and training at all levels. This approach has been emphasised in MARCSTA's submission to the national review of OHS laws.

The Jim Torlach awards to support selected OHS students fees at Curtin University now see Cassandra Prideaux starting her final year and Janaya Patterson her second year. Another award will be made early in 2009.

Ross noted the additional boost to MARCSTA that Sheryl Henley has brought as the training manager, and the return of mines inspection to a department dedicated to mining.

Finally he expressed the Management Committee's appreciation to all those who have helped MARCSTA during 2008.

Silicosis - a major concern

The September/November 2008 edition of the Chamber of Mines of South Africa magazine "Mining" contains an article titled "The Dust of Death" which reports on the alarming rise in the prevalence of silicosis in the country's gold miners. The paper refers to a South African National Institute for Occupational Health report which claims that the rate of silicosis in gold miners had increased from 191 per 1,000 miners in 2000 to 216 per 1,000 miners in 2005, to 316 per 1,000 miners in 2006.

Industry researchers have gone as far as describing the high prevalence (almost 20%) of silicosis among older in-service black mineworkers as a "significant epidemic" in the South African gold mining industry. In former miners living in villages in Botswana and the Eastern Cape the prevalence of silicosis is as high as 31%.

Silicosis continues to be a major occupational disease in many other parts of the world e.g. China, India, Brazil, Rwanda, Columbia and the USA.

In Western Australia the absence of silicosis in the mining industry corresponded with the implementation of the respirable crystalline silica exposure standard of 0.2 mg/m³ in the mid 1970's.

The contribution of the occupational health medical profession to the elimination of dust related diseases in the Western Australian gold mining industry was recently acknowledged by the WA Branch of the Australian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine with the creation of an annual award for the most outstanding student in the Occupational and Environmental Elective in year four at the University of Notre Dame.

The prize honours Dr Jim McNulty and the late Dr Fred Heyworth, the pioneers in occupational medicine in WA.

Mike Rowe, the Director Health Management Branch, Department of Mines and Petroleum, reports that there have been no new cases of silicosis attributable to the WA mining industry for at least 35 years.

Graphic courtesy BryanChristieDesign

Discussion paper on safety requirements for design, manufacture and conformity assessment of plant

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) on February 11 announced a three month public comment period for a discussion paper on Safety Requirements for the Design, Manufacture and Conformity Assessment of Plant.

See ascc.gov.au

Fatality results in significant fine

The death of an Ausdrill employee in 2006 when a utility collided with a parked truck carrying drill rods at a Kalgoorlie gold operation has resulted in a \$240,000 fine plus costs is a clear indication of a more punitive approach emerging for breaches of workplace safety.

The mine operation is expected to face similar charges in May.

Proposed national harmonisation laws, if introduced, could result in imprisonment when employers have been adjudged grossly negligent.

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 31 January 2009

Construction safety awareness - increased interstate recognition of training

With regulations making safety awareness training for construction activities mandatory in Western Australia from 1 January 2007, the decision by the OHS Commission to recognise similar training conducted in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland comes as some relief for national construction organisations.

It is to be hoped that training carried out in the remaining states will soon receive similar approval.

MARCSTA members

ORDINARY MEMBERS

Ausdrill Ltd
Barmingo Limited
BGC Contracting Pty Ltd
Cemex Australia Pty Ltd
Cooks Construction Pty Ltd
GFR Group
GR Engineering Services

GRD Minproc
Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd
Komatsu Australia Pty Ltd
Roche Mining Process
Engineering
Skilled Group Ltd
Terex Materials Processing and
Mining Australia

Thiess Pty Ltd
Total Corrosion Control
Westrac Equipment Pty Ltd

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AVELING
Jako Industries Pty Ltd
Mandurah Safety and Training
Services Pty Ltd
Mine SafeGear
Safety First Risk Management
Strudwick HR

NANOTECHNOLOGY

US review of strategy for nanotechnology related research

A review of the USA Federal Strategy for Nanotechnology-Related Environmental Health and Safety Research has concluded that a robust national strategic plan is needed that builds on the following five categories of research to support risk assessment and management and should identify:

- specific research needs for the future in such topics as potential exposures to engineered nanomaterials, toxicity, toxicokinetics, environmental fate and standardisation of testing;
- the current state of knowledge in each specific area;
- the gap between the knowledge at hand and the knowledge needed;
- research priorities for understanding life-cycle risks to humans and the environment;
- the estimated resources that would be needed to address the gap over a specified time frame.

Nanomaterials used in a wide variety of industrial and consumer products

- targeted drugs
- video displays
- remediation of groundwater contaminants
- high performance batteries
- dirt repellent coatings on building surfaces and clothing
- high end sporting goods
- skin care products

To come - 5 to 10 years time

- medical treatments
- super strong lightweight materials
- food additives
- advanced electrics

Source: Science Daily December 2008



Canada requires companies to report on use of nanomaterials

Canada is poised to become the first government in the world to require companies to provide information about their use of potentially harmful nanomaterials.

The information gleaned from the request is to be used to evaluate the risks that these ultra-tiny materials pose to the health of people and the environment.

The move by Canada would be a significant step for consumer and environmental protection says the Chief Science Advisor for the Washington DC based Project on Emerging Technologies.



Safety concerns over high-tech sunscreens

The ABC 7:30 Report recently raised concerns about the safety of nanotechnology in products rubbed directly on to human skin which included the extent to which sunscreens containing nano ingredients could actually cause long-term injury.

A particular concern was what happens when the nano particles penetrate the dead skin on the outer surface of the body.

A practical example given was a report that Bluescope Steel, noticing hand and finger-related damage to the coating of their metal roofs, concluded that nano-sunscreen worn by installers had caused the equivalent of 15 years worth of weathering in only six weeks. Scientists say that the mixture of sunscreen, sun and workers caused the production of free radicals.

The CSIRO say that more research needs to be done but advises people to continue using sun-screen.

MARCSTA reaches 200,000



State Mining Engineer Martin Knee presented Bill Gosling from GR Engineering with the 200,000th MARCSTA general induction certificate at the AGM on 5th December 2008.

L to R: Bill Gosling, Martin Knee

Electronic copies of the Monitor

Copies of the *Monitor* are now available via email to those subscribers who wish to receive the publication in this electronic format. Subscribers are also able to download and print a copy of the *Monitor* from the MARCSTA website www.marcsta.com

This will enable existing subscribers to circulate the *Monitor* to their employees should they so wish.

Should you wish to take advantage of this service please complete and return the Form which has been inserted in this edition of the *Monitor*.

Need for re-design of workplace equipment and products

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) has released a research report on the occupational health and safety implications of accurate data for the design of Australian workplaces.

Essentially the research investigates whether the measurements of the human body being used by designers for workplace equipment and products is still valid with more than 7 million Australians aged 18 years and over who are overweight and obese.

It appears that our dimensions have changed due to improved nutrition, increasing rates of obesity, ageing and different migration patterns.

Perhaps the rate of increase in take-away food venues also has had something to do with it.

Source: Media Release ASCC 19 January 2009



New publications

Taylor, Easter and Hegney (2009): *Advancing Safety, a Workplace Guide 2*, 4th ed. Perth, WestOne Publications.

Scaffolding video. Web: www.nasc.org.uk

Ending the Scandal of Complacency – Road Safety Beyond 2010 (including at-work road safety). www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtran.htm

WorkSafe WA. *Guide to Testing and Tagging Portable Electrical Equipment and Residual Current Devices at Workplaces*, November 2008.

Vision testing - a blind spot in OHS



A few years ago the New Jersey State Safety Council in collaboration with the Society to Prevent Blindness offered vision screening to firms that underwent training in forklift operations and safety.

The results showed that where screening was conducted there was a 25% referral ratio, that is, reference to a follow-up eye care program. They found industrial truck operators being driven to work because an eye disease process had made driving a motor vehicle too risky. Once at work they climbed on a forklift. They found statutory crane operators with no depth perception.

Fleet operators were asked:

- did they have vision requirements at all?
- did they check drivers' vision?
- who they checked, when, by whom, how often?

Most claimed they photocopied the employee's driver's licence. If employees needed corrective lenses most had no provisions for ensuring the corrective lenses were worn. If a licence did require corrective lenses, no employer asked for documentation of a recent eye exam or prescription. To make matters worse, most of those drivers got their licences and their only eye tests 20-25 years earlier.

Wellness and health fairs offer blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and hearing testing. Why not vision? Cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, stroke and trauma can and do alter the visual abilities of employees.

Most regulatory authorities have requirements for visual inspections of parts and components yet no requirement that those carrying out the inspections can see properly!

Fleets have drivers who consistently report backing collisions, side swiping etc. and they are drug/alcohol tested but they are not tested for depth perception or full fields of view. Few, if any employers test the vision of employees after a mishap. Often the amount of damage done by a crane operator or forklift operator is written off as "operator error" when the root cause is visual.

Eye related injuries in Australia

A national overview of eye health in Australia has provided the following key findings:

- Generally eye injuries are more common for males than females
- 46% of presentations were associated with a foreign body in the eye
- 80% of presentations involved males; with more than 50% of those presentations due to a foreign body in the eye
- More than two thirds of hospitalised eye injury cases involved males
- Fracture of bones around the eye and superficial injury around the eye were the most common first occurring eye diagnoses, constituting more than half of hospitalised eye injury cases
- Falls, assault and transportation were the main types of mechanism for injury of eye-related hospitalisations
- The most common diagnosis for eye-related injury and disease compensation claims was a foreign body in the eye
- The median time lost from work because of a foreign body in the eye in 2004-05 was 1.5 weeks
- The most common mechanism of injury for work-related eye injury was being hit by moving objects

Source: ohsonline, February 2009

WorkSafe initiatives for young workers

WorkSafe WA has launched a new and updated version of SmartMove - WorkSafe's Safety and Health website for young workers.

The package aims to give young adults starting their first job a good general background on their rights and responsibilities in relation to safety and health in the workplace.

Source: Media Release Department of Commerce WA





Issue 1/2009

Worker Health and Well Being

Sleep - definition of fatigue

Circadian 24/7 Workplace Solutions has issued a clarifying statement concerning the definition of human fatigue which is extremely useful.

Fatigue is an impairment of mental and physical function manifested by a cluster of debilitating symptoms, usually including excessive sleepiness, reduced physical and mental performance ability, depressed mood and loss of motivation, which may result from a variety of causes including:

- sleep deprivation
- sleep disorders
- illness or disease
- therapeutic side-effects
- heavy stressful physical or mental exertion
- stimulant drug usage

Source: The Definition of Fatigue, Martin Moore-Ede, White Paper, Circadian

Medical residents working tired

In the USA a panel of experts at the Institute of Medicine have recommended that medical and surgical residents should work no more than 16 hours without taking a mandatory five-hour sleep break. They should get one full day off a week and at least two back-to-back days off a month.

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education currently sets the maximum work week at 80 hours with shifts to last no more than 30 hours.

Australian research would suggest that medical and surgical residents working 30 consecutive hours would be performing at a level expected of a seriously intoxicated person with a propensity to put patient lives at risk.

Source: Washington Post, 3 December 2008

Benefits of training shift workers

Scientists have known for years that shift workers suffer from both sleep loss and weight gain to a greater degree than the general population. Given these studies, sleep loss may partly explain why shift workers are prone to weight gain.

Overweight people tend to utilise the health care system more frequently than those of normal weight and with health care costs escalating with no end in sight, the issue is worth attention.

It's a good idea to train workers periodically on nutrition, exercise and (for night shift workers) how to get sufficient rest during the daytime. Emphasise that even simple exercise, such as walking 30 minutes a day a few times a week, will help workers keep their weight down. A company might even offer financial incentives such as refunding a portion of workers' membership fees at a health club. Offering sleep disorder screening programs could be a wise investment as well.

Source: Circadian 24/7 Workplace Solutions

Loud music damaging young ears

A study by the European Union's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks says that up to 10% of users of personal MP3 or CD players may suffer permanent hearing loss because their music is too loud.

The scientists say those people who listen at high volumes for as little as one hour a day over five years risk doing severe harm to their hearing.

If they listen for only five hours a week at more than 89 decibels, they would already exceed EU limits for noise allowed in the workplace.

The largest group at risk from "leisure noise" is young people. Since the early 1980's the number of young people with social noise exposure has tripled to around 19%.

This view is supported by a study last year by the British Royal National Institute for Deaf People that found more than half of young people who use MP3 players listen for longer than five hours a week and at levels near 85 decibels.

WorkSafe WA issued a Safety and Health Alert 9/2008, *Personal Music Players in the Workplace*, in December 2008.

Source: ABC Science October 2008

The need to maintain medical research

The Swedish Scientific Council for Medicine has, in its publication *Advances in Health Research*, expressed grave concern that conditions for clinical research in Sweden have deteriorated and noted that a similar decline has occurred in many other countries.

The Council is responsible for promoting and supporting research of the highest quality in medical, pharmacology, dentistry and care sciences. Many of the following research areas relevant to occupational health have been identified in the overview of research contained in the report:

- molecular medicine
- brain and psychiatric disorders
- cancer
- diabetes and obesity
- epidemiology and public health and care sciences
- systems biology, imaging technology, nanomedicine
- global infectious diseases
- cardiovascular diseases
- rheumatic diseases
- allergies and asthma
- stem cells and cell therapy

The report is easy to read and of great interest to all those concerned with occupational health.

Source: *Advances in Health Research*, Swedish Research Council

Australia's health, the good and the bad

- Australians enjoy one of the highest life expectancies in the world, at 81.4 second only to Japan.
- Australian males can now expect to live to about 83 years and females to 86.
- Cardio vascular diseases, cancers and respiratory diseases remain the leading causes of death although death rates are falling for all of them.
- Diabetes incidence has doubled in the past two decades.
- The level of smoking is among the lowest for OECD countries.
- Rates of sexually transmitted infection are generally increasing.
- About 7.4 million Australian adults were overweight in 2004/05 with over a third being obese.
- The most common causes of death in people aged 25-64 years are coronary heart disease for males and breast cancer for females.

Source: *Australia's Health 2008*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Sleep alertness education of learner drivers

Last year an Australian study found what most of us already know, that around half of Australians don't get enough sleep.

The RAC of WA reports that while it is difficult to accurately measure the impact that fatigue has on accident statistics the Road Safety Council considers it is one of the biggest killers on Australian roads.

In Western Australia it plays a part in up to one quarter of all fatalities and serious injuries on our roads.

It is time that there was an initiative, preferably led by the RAC, to require learner drivers to complete a short course - carefully designed - to educate future generations of drivers on the consequences of inadequate sleep, the role played by circadian rhythm in human alertness and the negative effects of alcohol on our ability to make decisions and respond appropriately.

Reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our roads will only occur when we ensure better and relevant education of our future drivers.

Source: RACWA News January 2009

Insomnia and your immune system

The traditional theory is that we need sleep to conserve energy to lay down new memories and consolidate learning, but this lacked adequate scientific evidence.

A large body of evidence suggests insomnia and poor sleep contribute to a range of diseases - from acute conditions like the common cold to chronic diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and heart disease.

The latest evidence suggests sleep is the body's way of recharging its immune system, which is bad news if you suffer insomnia.

Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh USA, studied a group of about 150 poor sleepers and found that lack of sleep blocks the immune system's ability to fight off acute infection.

Source: ABC News Online March 2009

Retrospective health initiatives by Australian company

The first stage of a ground breaking asbestos study by manufacturer Cement Australia and the Australian Workers Union has commenced in Tasmania.

Some 500 former workers from the Railton Cement Plant which housed a factory producing asbestos cement products have been invited to participate in a health screening project consisting of medical screenings for asbestos related diseases. The overall results may be used as part of an independent medical study to assess asbestos-related lung disease.

Source: Cement Australia News Release February 2009



MARCSTA licensed training providers

Dennis Aitken (U)
Jayson Aveling
Graham Bailey
Ron Baker
Carl Berglin
Wayne Berkrey
Danny Bognar
Stacey Clark
Brian Cloney
Dale Cocker (U) (S)
Jim Dandie
Geoff Day

Peter Dowding
Duncan Edwards
Linda Elezovich
Donelle Fraser (C)
Ross Graham
Ray Hargreaves
Sheryl Henley (C)
Jeffrey Hickin
Peter Jones
Ralph Keegan (S)
Joe Maglizza
Les McIntyre

Neil McMeekin
Guy Mead
Katherine Montague
Thomas Mozer (C)
Rodney Pool
John Preston
Kevin Ramsay
Merryn Richards
Jason Roberts
Victor Roberts
Shane Salt (C)
Grant Shearwin (C)

Marcus Taylor
James Titmus
Peter Tynan
Ron Van Baaren (C only)
Micheal White
Graham Williams
Peter Williams (C only)
Paul Willoughby

All training providers listed provide general inductions. C denotes the Construction Safety Awareness program U denotes the underground program. S denotes the extended working hours program.



news and views

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SAFETY,
ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT INFORMATION
FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY

Australian Mining for January 2009 has a very useful product directory. There is a safe beta radiation-based **dust monitor**, hand-held **thermal imagers** to troubleshoot equipment temperature, an inflatable **reusable bin bag**, shaft and void plug to protect personnel in confined spaces during construction and maintenance, an **autonomous drilling system** for surface blast holes, and a **resin firing system** for roofbolting. Then there are the extra low profile (250mm) **telescopic jacks** produced by a Queensland company, the portable LED pixel device for **inspection of high speed equipment** (up to 50,000 flashes/min), a biomix **selfrescuer** with two hour duration, and a **fall harness with aluminium anchor posts** for confined spaces. There is a tie off self-retracting fall harness **lifeline with two independent lines** for better user mobility, a lightning protection product, and a **push-to-talk microphone and speaker** within a hearing protection device.

Safety First Managers OH&S Safety Solutions Guide from Reed Business Information has a useful two page spread on **changes to the fall arrest standard**. A height safety technologist is now required, especially in the purchasing section. See www.fpma.com.au

The RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) *Occupational Health and Safety Journal* for January 2009 notes the information on **road safety for employers**, see www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers.htm, and raising OHS standards for small and medium-sized firms, see www.rospa.com/occupationsafety/sme. There is also an index for the 2008 issues. Lord Jordan of Bournville is the new head of RoSPA. He began as a shop steward at GKN in Birmingham.

The Queensland *Mining Journal* for Spring 2008 describes **SIMTARS' 20 years of achievements** in research, consulting, testing, certification and training to improve mining OHS.

The *Australian Journal of Mining* for November-December 2008 includes Keith Russell on **choosing a maintenance system**, Dmitry Przhedetsky on mine safety and possible effects on it from the **global economic downturn**, and Susan Sorelle-Uebergang on a substantial recent rise in conscious or unconscious **self-harming behaviour** in a range of industries. Luke Holland writes on **legal aspects of mine safety** and Sue Watt writes on the annual **changes in HSE obligations** for miners.

Mining Magazine for December 2008 notes the Turkish Las Zirh **tyre protection chains** which Barrick has chosen for its wheel loaders in Peru (they go up to 70/70-57). Wormald now has Standards approval for a **vehicle fire suppression system**, using water spray and AFFF. Carlson Wireless Technologies has introduced Mine Connect **telecommunications radio** with a range of up to 50 km and no wires above or below ground. Paul Moore writes on **large tyre management**, noting Michelin's tyre tag telemetry, and Advanced IP's PneuLogic earthmover tyre electronic probe.



Who's who?

Chairman

Ross Graham, Terex Materials Processing and Mining

Deputy Chairman

Joe Maglizza, Cemex Australia PL

Director Safety and Health

Patrick Gilroy AM

Training Manager

Sheryl Henley

Committee of Management

Warren Claydon
Allaine Coleman
Terry Condidodero
Peter Nicholls
Garry Round
Kim Stewart

MARCSTA Monitor Editor

Geoff Taylor

Update on national harmonisation of OHS laws

Following the decision of the Employment and Workplace Relations Minister not to negotiate on the composition of the proposed national OHS body it is now expected that an executive body will be established outside parliamentary control, which will administer OHS laws.

Given that Parliament must approve the financial allocation required to fund the body it will be interesting to observe how it evolves.

Around the globe

UK

Prosecution results in imprisonment

An employer who ignored the obvious risks in favour of economic gain and had ignored previous warnings in relation to his working practice has been jailed for a year and his company ordered to pay A\$75,000 after being convicted of manslaughter of a young employee who fell to his death through a roof.

Current national proposals in Australia would, if enacted, result in similar penalties for gross negligence by an employer.

Source: hse media release 23 January 2009

Scrap cap on UK work hours

The European Parliament has voted to scrap Britain's opt-out from labour market rules that restrict the working week to 48 hours. Currently British workers can opt out of the 48 hour rules by signing a written request. Different rules apply to a small number of workers, including junior doctors and bus and truck drivers.

Business experts and opposition parties claim that the decision will cause businesses to close and result in increased unemployment.

The issue will be decided at a summit of European leaders later this year and a final decision could be taken leaving Britain without a veto.

Source: *The West Australian*, 19 December 2008

UK inquiry into construction fatalities

In response to the high number of fatalities in the construction sector in the UK, the Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions has commissioned an inquiry into the underlying causes of construction fatalities.

The inquiry will be undertaken in three phases:

- firstly a comprehensive review of existing work to consolidate the understanding of fatal injuries with special reference to vulnerability
- secondly, to carry out a deeper analysis of underlying causes including factors outside the health and safety system and
- thirdly, reporting to Ministers and the HSE Board

Source: DWP Media Release 4 December 2008

USA

Mine deaths at all-time low

The Mine Safety and Health Administration in the USA has released preliminary data showing that mine fatalities in 2008 declined 31% from 2007 to drop to an all time low.

Metal/non-metal mines recorded the lowest number of fatalities since 1910 and in coal mines the fatality level was the lowest since 2005.

Top ten OSHA violations in 2008

The most frequently breached standards found by OSHA in the US for the year ending September 2008 were:

- Construction, **Scaffolding, General Requirements**
- Construction, **Fall Protection**
- General Industry, **Hazard Communication**
- General Industry, **Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout, Tagout)**
- General Industry, **Respiratory Protection**
- General Industry, **Electrical, Wiring Methods, Components and Equipment**
- General Industry, **Powered Industrial Trucks**
- Construction, **Ladders**
- General Industry, **Machines, General Replacement**
- General Industry, **Electrical Systems Design, General Requirements**

Source: Duralabel

Conferences and courses

SimTecT Simulation Conference and Exhibition, Adelaide 2009. Email: exec@siaa.asn.au

Mining the Pilbara, Karratha 17-18 June 2009. Web: www.iir.com/pilbara/ajm3

Australian Centre for Geomechanics, acginfo@acg.uwa.edu.au:

CSIRO Automation Concepts in Mining Development Headings Workshop, Perth, 4 May 2009.

First International Seminar on Safe and Rapid Development Mining, Perth, 6 – 7 May 2009.

Geotechnical Engineering in Open Pit Mines Seminar, Mercure Hotel Brisbane, 9 – 11 June 2009.