

# SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION COMMISSION 2004 SAFETY AWARDS

The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission introduced its annual Safety Awards in 2001 to further the objective of achieving continuous improvement in injury prevention. In 2003, the Commission broadened the award categories from two to three to also recognise the importance of injury management.

The three award categories for 2004 are

- **Workplace Safety Innovative Solutions Award**
- **Leadership Award for Injury Prevention and Management**
- **Rehabilitation and Return to Work Award.**

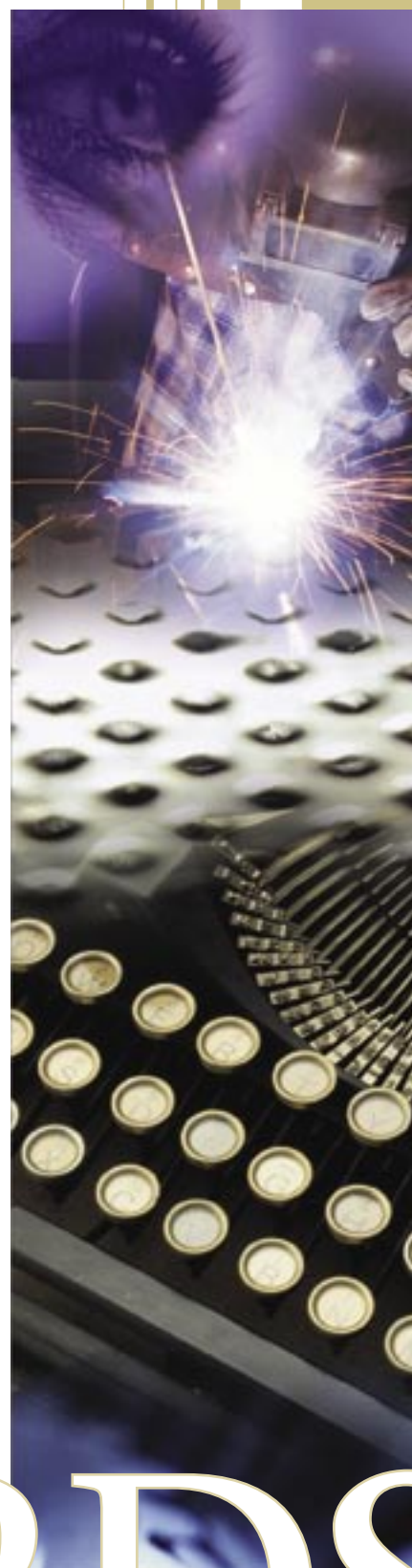
Nominations for the 2004 awards were invited from all agencies covered by the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* and/or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*.

The application process was promoted by sending brochures to all heads of agencies, heads of corporate management, rehabilitation and OHS officers as well as through the Comcare web-site and agency forums. The judging criteria specific to each award category were listed in the brochure.

This year, nine applications were considered for the Workplace Safety Innovative Solutions category, seven applications for the Leadership Award for Injury Prevention and Management and three applications for the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Award.

This booklet contains case studies of the finalists in each category. The approaches taken may be useful in other organisations or contexts.

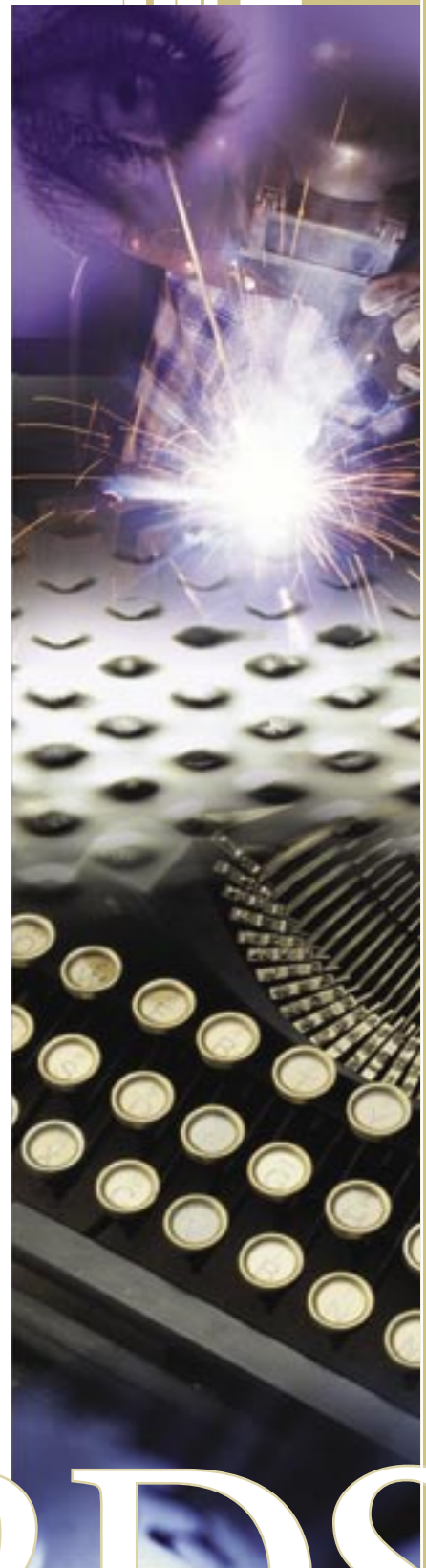
Nomination forms for the 2005 Safety Awards will be sent out in November 2004.



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**FINALISTS IN THE WORKPLACE  
SAFETY INNOVATIVE  
SOLUTIONS CATEGORY**

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# THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

## RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

### About the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

The TGA is a unit of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing and is the regulatory authority for medicines, medical devices, blood, blood products and tissues in Australia. It currently employs between 450-500 staff.

### The problem

Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control are important elements in the safe operation and management of the TGA and in particular the Laboratories Branch (TGAL). A need was identified for a versatile, yet standardised method of conducting its formalised risk assessments.

### The approach

Research was undertaken into risk assessment procedures and tools used by other government and non-government organisations. None were found to address all of the features that TGA identified as essential. It was then decided to develop an existing model, in use in the TGA Microbiology area, by including additional features and then linking it into a central database. Ease of use was seen as an important feature of the tool including step by step instructions.

### The outcome

The outcome has been a quite unique computer based risk assessment method which remains easy to use and is versatile enough for conducting both simple and complex risk assessments across a broad range of occupational environments. The tool is accessed via TGA's intranet and takes the user through the four steps of hazard identification, risk assessment, risk control and review. While developed specifically for laboratory environments the tool allows use by professional and non-professional staff. Indeed the tool has been favourably received by staff.

### Benefits include

- risk assessments now being handled in a more organised and systematic team approach
- a much improved awareness and compliance with the need for formalised risk assessments within the laboratories and the wider workplace
- staff now have a standard method for risk assessment which is an integrated part of the overall TGAL Quality System.

### Ongoing

While the tool was designed specifically for workplaces that undertake complex processes requiring appropriate risk management, the TGA tool is seen to be easily applicable to use across many workplaces, for both basic as well as the more complex risk assessments.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Phil Burge, OHS Manager, Therapeutic Goods Administration, Ph (02) 6232 8447.



## AUSTRALIA POST NSW/ACT

### MOTORCYCLE SAFETY SYSTEM

#### About Australia Post NSW/ACT

The NSW/ACT region of Australia Post has 106 Delivery Centres in total from which operate approximately 2200 motorcycle postal delivery rounds. The current motorcycle used is a Honda model CT110 which has been specifically adapted for Australia Post operations and has been in use for approximately 14 years.

#### The problem

Due to a flattening out of trend injury data in 2000 Australia Post realised that they needed to approach motorcycle safety in a different way to reduce the risk of injury.

#### The approach

A Motorcycle Safety System was developed to control risks and reduce injuries associated with the use of motorcycles for delivering mail to the public. The system incorporates a "safety team" philosophy as one of the key drivers for researching, experimenting and implementing motorcycle risk control initiatives. Additionally, the Motorcycle Safety Team has been given the authority to carry out routine monitoring, auditing and incident investigations with regular reporting to appropriate management personnel and the State OHS Committee.

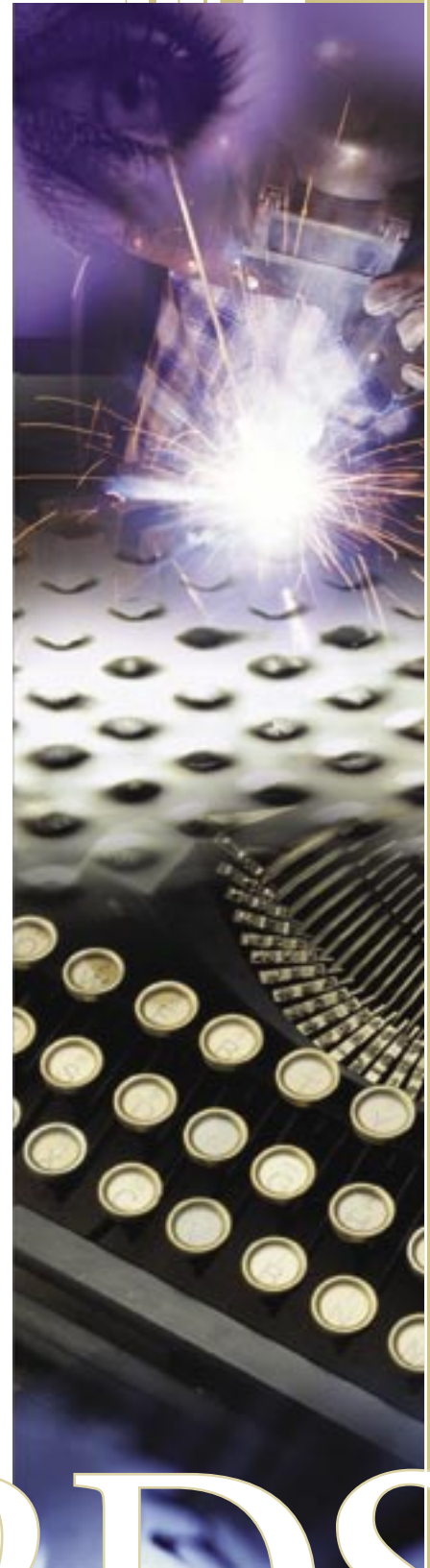
#### The outcomes

Since the introduction of the Motorcycle Safety System, and the establishment of the Motorcycle Safety Team, a number of positive outcomes have been realised. The Motorcycle Safety System has been instrumental in achieving continuous reductions in motorcycle incidents and injuries for the NSW/ACT Delivery Networks. This is despite a work environment that is extremely complex and difficult to control. Not only has there been fewer motorcycle incidents/injuries but also a greater understanding of the multiple factors that lead to these incidents.

#### Ongoing

The Motorcycle Safety Team will strive for further incident reductions by continuing its current strategies and by focusing on "best practice" postal delivery officer behavioural safety programs, safe driving stickers and other initiatives which rely on peer acceptance to build individual safe behaviours. Because of the success of this program to date, a national rollout to all Australia Post delivery centres is also being considered.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Sam Russo, Senior OHS Adviser  
Australia Post, Ph (02) 9202 6444.



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# AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (ANSTO)

## THE JOURNEY TO CONTRACTOR SAFETY

### About ANSTO

ANSTO has a salaried staff of approximately 850. Its main site is located at the Lucas Heights Science and Technology Centre, 40km south west of Sydney's CBD. ANSTO is a multi-purpose scientific research organisation with responsibility for the operation of Australia's only nuclear reactor as well as diverse research activities.

### The problem

ANSTO has always had a system for supervising the safety of contractors on site. This involved selected personnel taking on the responsibility of being a Contractor Supervisor. However, there were gaps in the procedures. A review of incident data for 1998/99 indicated that contractor safety was an issue for the organisation.

### The approach

Once the shortfalls in the existing system were identified, review of the existing ANSTO documentation was undertaken. World's best practice solutions were researched with networking taking place with organisations dealing with major hazards. All involved staff were included in a consultative process. A systems framework was developed looking at all facets of contractor safety including safety arrangements, supervising contractors, safe work permits and excavation procedures. Induction videos were made and mandatory induction was introduced for all contractors before coming onto site. Contractor Supervisors were nominated from across the site and fully trained. In addition, training for all staff was provided on relevant parts of the system through a series of talks delivered at their workplaces.

### The outcomes

The system is now fully operational with 133 Contractor Supervisors having responsibility for interfacing with contractors on safety. Contractor Supervisors have taken ownership of the system and are now suggesting improvements. Key performance indicators for safety were established for divisions and individuals and reports against progress are regularly reported. The increased awareness by staff of responsibilities towards contractors and the requirement for reporting has led to more "near misses" being identified, reported and investigated. This ensures continual improvement in the safety of all people on site.

Not every organisation runs a nuclear reactor, however elements of the system introduced at ANSTO can apply to any other workplace.

### Ongoing

Continual improvement is sought by a process of researching trends and adapting and integrating recommended changes.

**Contact for further information:** Ms Karen Wolfe, Leader, Occupational Safety Services, ANSTO, Ph(02) 9717 3571.



# AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE (AIMS)

## SAFETY INDUCTION SERIES

### About AIMS

AIMS undertakes research and development to generate and transfer the knowledge needed for the sustainable use and protection of the marine environment. AIMS staff carry out their duties in a wide range of environments – from offices, laboratories and workshops to coastal estuaries and the open ocean. AIMS has around 160 staff members and a constant flow of visiting researchers and volunteers.

### The problem

Whilst AIMS had a comprehensive induction program it lacked flexibility. Workplace practices at AIMS are constantly changing in line with staff movements and developments in technology. Such an environment required a responsive and flexible safety induction system that could be readily adapted to accommodate such developments.

### The approach

The Safety Induction Series had to address three workplace environments

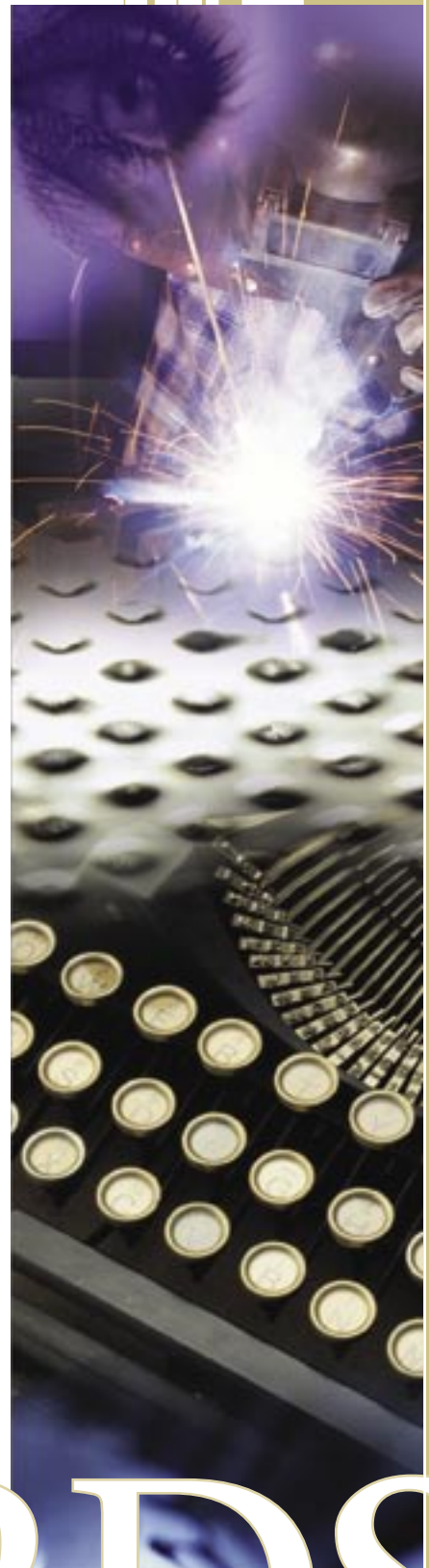
- general areas such as offices, library and workshops
- laboratories for conducting analytical chemistry and biological research
- fieldwork which extends throughout the tropical areas of northern Australia and overseas.

Two of the main objectives of the project were that induction could be completed from remote locations, including on board research vessels and that current technologies were used to allow flexibility in tailoring or updating the material quickly.

The approach was to devise a novel induction process that uses a mixture of DVD and web based technologies to deliver the induction. The material on the disc is viewed in conjunction with on-line manuals and questionnaires.

### The outcomes

The outcomes derived from the Safety Induction Series include the ability to provide new recruits and visitors with the flexibility to complete their induction either before they arrive at AIMS or from remote locations such as AIMS' research vessels at sea. The system provides a consistent message and training that is automated, auditable, time-saving and cost-effective.



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It is flexible and can be tailored and updated quickly and easily. AIMS' staff have taken ownership of the induction process through their involvement in the production of the DVD and manuals.

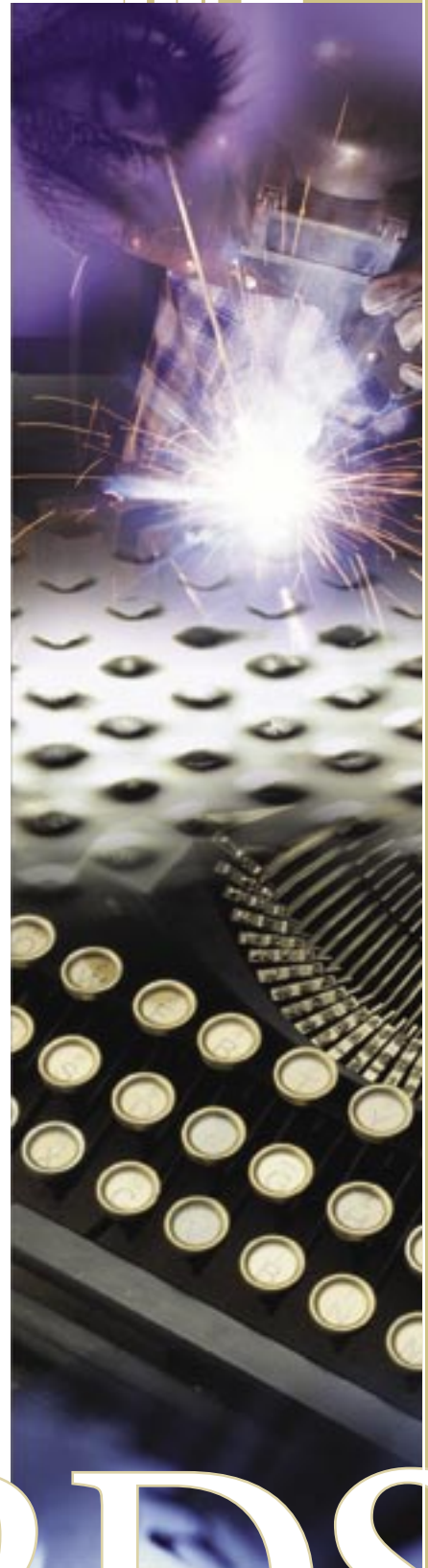
Most importantly, feedback indicates that the information gained from the Safety Induction Series is far superior to that achieved through the old paper-based system.

### **Ongoing**

Revisions and enhancements are currently being planned. Options are being explored to utilise the internet more effectively, particularly to assist those people with differing vision abilities.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Liam Dee, OHS&E Coordinator, AIMS,  
Ph (07) 4753 4304.

FINALISTS IN THE LEADERSHIP  
IN INJURY PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT CATEGORY



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# COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

## SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT AT CSIRO MINERALS

### About CSIRO Minerals

CSIRO Minerals works strategically with companies in the minerals processing and metal production industries to provide solutions to industrial processing problems. It has over 280 employees spread across four locations (in four states) and works in and around major chemical and engineering facilities. Headquarters are in Clayton, Victoria.

### The problem

This approach was a response to identified deficiencies that included lack of consistency in practices across sites, differing safety cultures, changeable work environments in response to changing industry needs and differing inputs from senior management into OHS issues.

### The approach

CSIRO Minerals revitalised its approach to OHS, aiming to show leadership in injury prevention and management by

- commitment to best practice
- senior management leadership
- strategic integration into the management system
- employee involvement
- involvement of health and safety representatives
- improvement in performance at all levels.

These changes were driven by strong management commitment (beginning with the Chief of Division), a change in OHS personnel and the formation of OHS committees with a mandate to provide the best available standards for health and safety. Resources – both financial and people – were allocated to make safety part of core business. Major improvements were made to the workplace, plant and equipment.

### Outcomes

There is a clear, effective, prevention program and accountability at all levels of line management. All employees are now involved in risk reduction, and better job safety procedures are being developed. Incident data is reviewed by senior management both for corrective action, and proactive decision-making. This demonstration of commitment had a profound and positive effect on employees' attitudes. The Division now enjoys active commitment to OHS from employees at all levels with OHS principles part of everyday business activity.

**Contact for further information:** Dr Angelica Vecchio-Sadus, Divisional OHS&E Manager, CSIRO Minerals Clayton Victoria, Ph (03) 9545 8500.



## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

### TRAINING AUTHORITY – SUBMARINES

#### About Training Authority – Submarines

Based near Perth, the Training Authority – Submarines (TA-SM) is responsible for the training of submariners crewing the Collins Class submarines. Staff are a mix of Defence Force and civilians, and handle an annual throughput of about 300 students on a variety of training from initial to continuation training.

#### The problem

As part of the organisation's commitment to pursue excellence, it instigated an initial audit in 1999 of the OHS management system. A number of shortcomings were identified which formed the basis for continuing improvement, providing at the same time for the achievement of realistic goals and objectives. Regular ongoing audits have recognised steady improvements in performance.

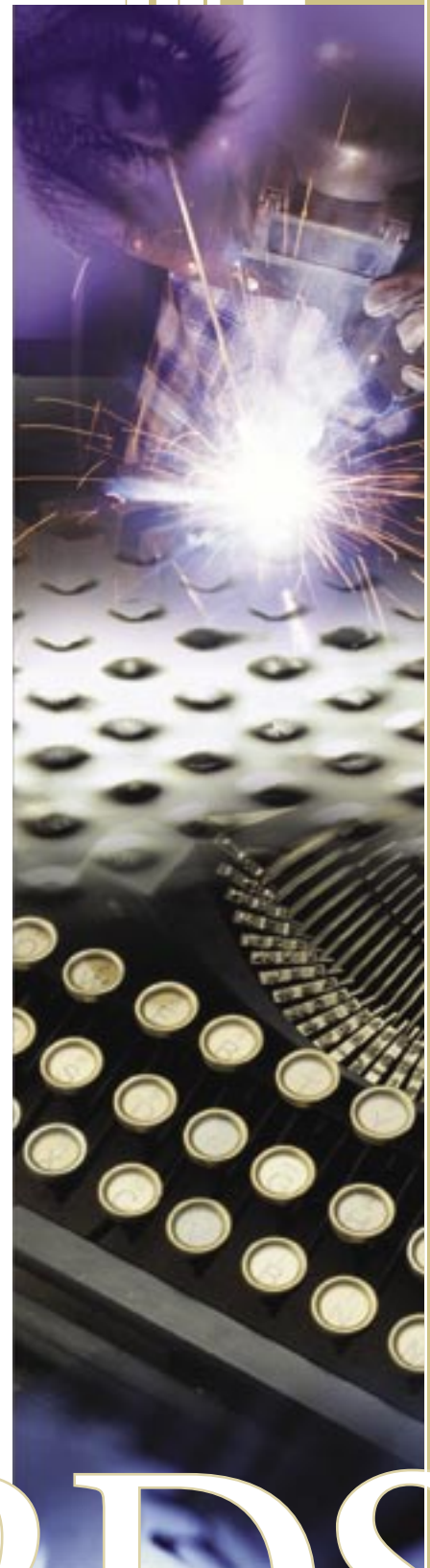
#### The approach

It was important to have a highly sustainable system that did not rely on individuals for success, particularly given the Defence approach of rotating staff. It was also important that this system reflected the importance of a safety culture in the workplace through TA-SM's training programs. This was achieved through clear articulation of senior management commitment, establishment of safety as a core value in business planning and OHS awareness training for all staff. There were also improvements to the risk management process through improved control of specific work risks, establishment of a desk-top hazard and defect system which allowed managers and employees to be actively involved in risk mitigation, and establishment of a quality management system.

#### Outcomes

The presence of a highly visible occupational health and safety organisation, an accredited quality management system and a dynamic business plan ensure that the OHS management system is fully integrated into all other management systems. The system has been awarded an Outstanding Performance Award by the National Safety Council of Australia and has also achieved its five star rating.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Bill Clifton, Safety Coordinator, Submarine Training and Systems Centre, HMAS Stirling WA, Ph (08) 9553 3700.



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# CENTRELINK

## CALL CENTRE BENDIGO

### About Centrelink

Centrelink has about 27,000 staff nationally providing a range of social services to its client groups. Included in these services are 27 linked call centres, Bendigo being one of them. This call centre deals with issues about benefits for disabled people and students. There are about 100 staff at this centre who deal with callers through screen-based information systems.

### The problem

From the establishment of this call centre in 1998, it gradually attracted an increasing number of workers' compensation claims. An exceptionally high level of time and effort was devoted to case management. The rise in claims was a serious concern to management and a project was instituted in 2001 to better understand the magnitude and cause of the claims.

### The approach

The project aimed to

- identify the causes of injury in the workplace
- improve the rehabilitation of injured workers
- develop a comprehensive system of injury prevention and management in the workplace.

As part of the development of strategies, contact was established through senior management with one of the better performing call centres to learn from its approach. The office policy of staff consultation also meant that every person was able to contribute to solutions. The first step was a risk management plan to identify and address the immediate known risks. Team leaders were actively involved in developing and implementing these strategies within their teams and were - and continue to be - provided with training to assist them in their role. Early reporting of injuries is encouraged and managed. Prevention measures now have a greater focus than injury management.

### Outcomes

Networks have been established to allow sharing of advice and solutions. The main impacts have been a reduction in unplanned leave, lower compensation costs and higher staff morale. Staff feel more valued, are actively involved in the centre's management and have a high level of job satisfaction.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Ed Cahill, Manager Bendigo Call Centre, Ph (03) 5430 6230 or Ms Wendy Steele, Health and Safety Representative, Bendigo Call Centre, Ph (03) 5430 6276



## AUSTRALIAN AIR EXPRESS

### 'THE CHALLENGE: DOING ORDINARY THINGS EXTRAORDINARILY WELL'

#### About Australian air Express

Jointly owned by QANTAS and Australia Post, Australian air Express holds a significant share of the domestic airfreight business. It employs around 1500 staff with a smaller number of contractors. It provides door to door pick up and collection by a fleet of over 500 courier vehicles. Major operational sites are located 'on airport' in each capital city, supported by additional 'off airport' facilities in the major states.

#### The problem

Four years ago, the NSW Fleet Manager recognised that the existing way of sorting and handling freight had to change to reduce manual handling injuries. This would ultimately involve a change to long-accepted work practices. Injury rates were high, costs were escalating and both productivity and morale had suffered as a consequence. Freight demands were continuing to increase.

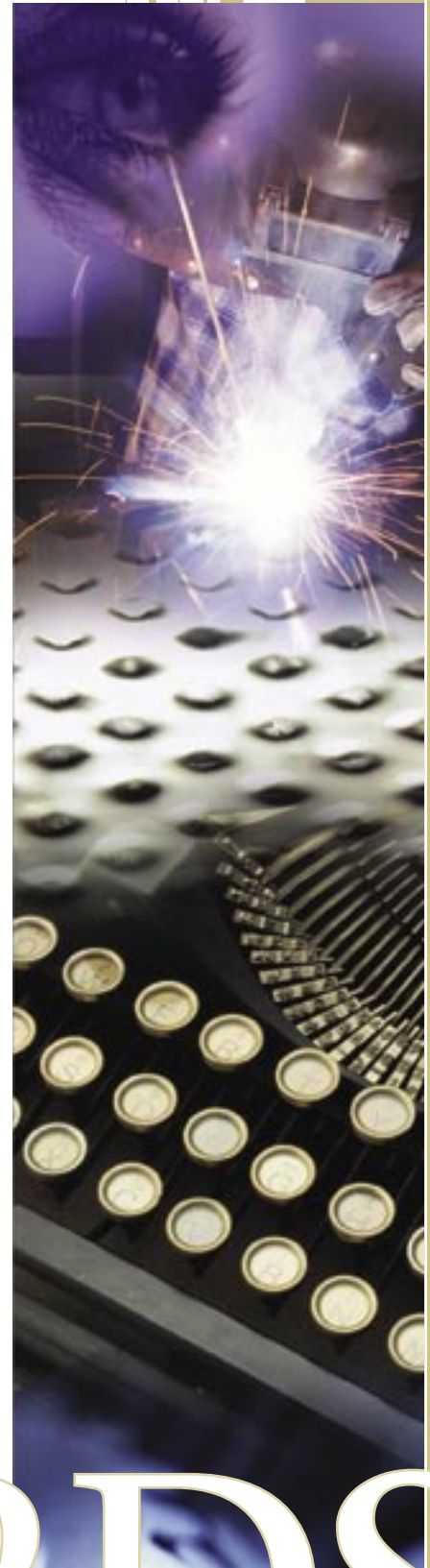
#### The approach

With the support of the State Manager and NSW Fleet Manager, Branch Managers at Alexandria and Auburn, line managers, health and safety representatives and staff began trials in those two branches aimed at raising all freight off ground level. In consultation with staff and the OHS Committee, various improvements were trialled and evaluated for their benefits and change was introduced gradually. It was also necessary as part of the approach to review associated issues such as traffic management within depots. Processes were solution-oriented rather than problem-focussed.

#### Outcomes

A combination of tables, raised cages and roller beds are now an integral part of freight sorting. Bending and reaching movements have been significantly reduced, cutting the risk of back injury. There has been a reduction in the number of incidents, their severity and the cost of workers' compensation claims. There is a more positive morale and a greater sense of involvement in the business. There have been productivity improvements in terms of space, time and efficiency. There are plans to introduce these initiatives into other depots doing similar work.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Dominic Andreacchio, General Manager Human Resources, Australian air Express, Melbourne, Ph (03) 9292 3107.



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# ACT CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

## ACT PUBLIC SECTOR INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT

### About the ACT Chief Minister's Department

The ACT Government is one of the largest employers in the ACT, with over 16,000 employees who perform diverse roles. The Chief Minister's Department provides leadership at a whole of government level for the planning, development, coordination and implementation of key government policies and strategies.

### The problem

This project is a whole of government initiative of the ACT Government. Its objective is to develop and implement strategies and programs that will deliver overall performance improvements in the prevention and management of workplace injuries in the ACT public sector. The Leadership and Commitment Strategy was launched by the ACT Chief Minister in February 2003 when all departmental Chief Executives signed a statement of commitment to the project which focuses on leadership, accountability and responsibility. The project has drawn heavily on Comcare's leadership and accountability material and has adopted its improvement targets for the Commonwealth jurisdiction.

### The approach

While the first year focused on gaining commitment at the most senior levels, the current focus is on particular strategies at a whole of government level. Specific activities currently under development include

- development of an early intervention strategy for the ACT public sector
- further work on a range of interventions for the prevention and management of psychological injuries
- development of a third leadership package for ACT public sector senior and middle managers.

### Outcomes

While a three year project, outcomes to date have included an increased awareness of issues in the areas of injury prevention and management by the Executive, senior and middle managers and a resulting increasing use of strategic plans to address these issues in individual public sector agencies. Performance will continue to be monitored against the project's objective.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Mark McCabe, Project Manager, Work Safety and Labour Policy, ACT Chief Minister's Department, Ph (02) 6207 9244.



# COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

## CSIRO PLANT INDUSTRY CANBERRA

### About CSIRO Plant Industry

Plant Industry is the largest of CSIRO's divisions, with 867 staff and visiting scientists spread over ten locations. Its research aims to make Australian agrifood, fibre and horticultural industries more profitable and sustainable, to develop novel plant products and improve natural resource management.

### The problem

An investigation into systems and procedures in 2002 identified shortcomings and provided the impetus for improvements in the coordination and management of OHS across the Division.

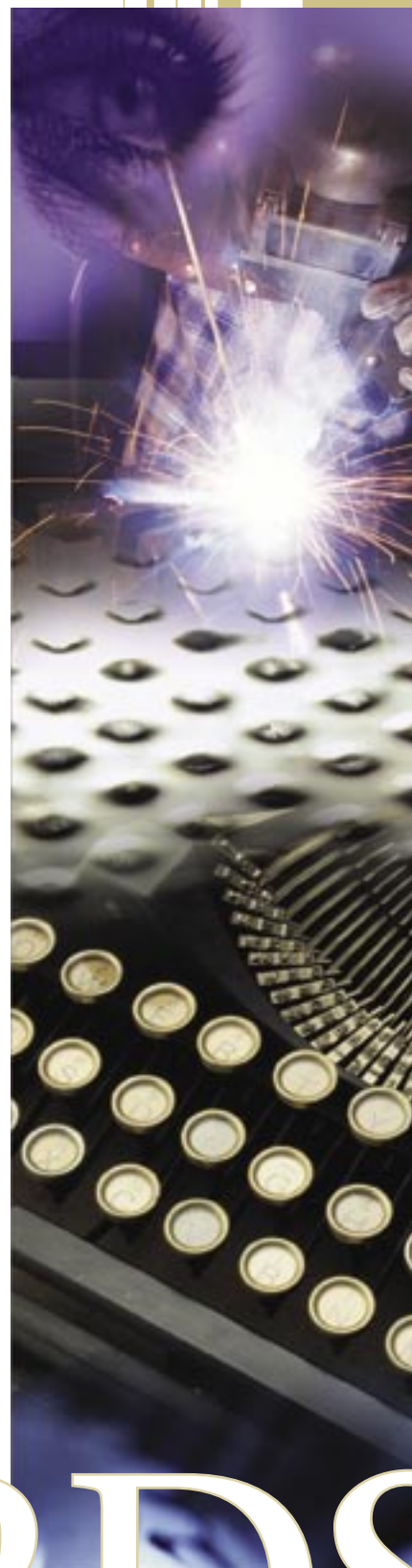
### The approach

Increased communication helped to build up relationships and open up networks across the Division, improving the profile of OHS. High risk areas were targeted and hazard assessments were conducted to reduce identified risks. Procedures were developed and OHS information was distributed to staff. OHS issues were supported at senior management meetings and there was senior management commitment to OHS improvements against stated objectives. Accountabilities and responsibilities were clearly articulated from the Division Head down.

### Outcomes

OHS is well integrated into the business of the Division, with a strong committee network supporting OHS change and improvement. Awareness of OHS is high due to its increased profile and OHS priorities are clearly defined. OHS information is available through the intranet to all staff.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Charles Fletcher, Divisional OHS&E Adviser, CSIRO Plant Industry Canberra, Ph (02) 6246 4964.



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# AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

## OHS INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

### About the Australian Electoral Commission

The AEC conducts federal parliamentary elections and referendums, maintains the electoral roll and provides electoral information and education programs. It has a national staff of about 800. This number swells to around 67,000 when a national election is called.

### The problem

When reviewing claims for compensation and their estimated costs, the AEC considered that there was scope to improve its performance. A national approach to injury prevention and management would provide the necessary coordination for the achievement of this objective.

### The approach

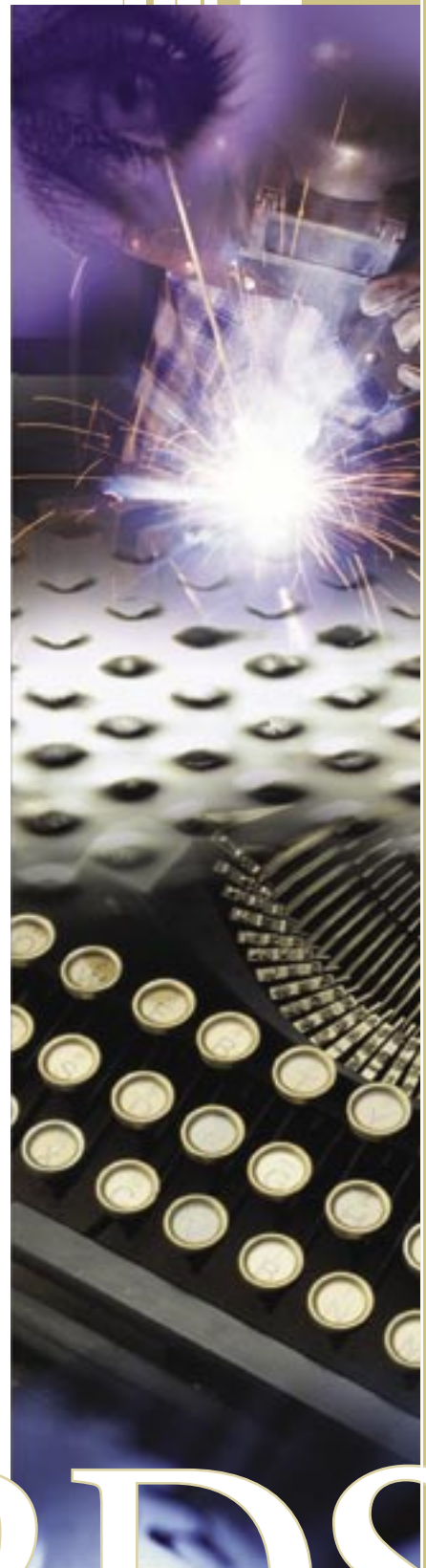
At the most senior level there was clear commitment to this objective with AEC adopting targets consistent with those of the National OHS Strategy. Consultation occurred with a wide range of people – senior management, OHS committees, health and safety representatives - to develop and implement the three year program. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined within the program. Part of the approach included an on-line OHS learning program suitable for induction.

### Outcomes

There is a nationally coordinated, regionally delivered injury prevention and management program. This program delivers OHS to all staff and to support staff during an election. It has reinforced the view that the organisation has the management and safety of staff in mind. This program has also led to a greater understanding of where prevention resources should be aimed.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Chris Vevers, Assistant Director Human Resource Management AEC Canberra, Ph (02) 6271 4609.





FINALISTS IN THE  
REHABILITATION AND RETURN  
TO WORK CATEGORY

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# ACT DEPARTMENT OF URBAN SERVICES

## CITYSCAPE SERVICES BEST PRACTICE RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

### About CityScape Services

CityScape Services provides horticultural and cleaning services for the Canberra community. It employs more than 130 highly trained and qualified permanent employees and more than 100 temporary and contract staff. They are the largest horticultural organisation in the Canberra region. The varying horticultural and cleaning functions that CityScape performs have significant associated risks including manual handling, chemical handling, working at heights, chain saw and mower operations.

### The approach to rehabilitation

In 2001, CityScape recognised that they had significant issues associated with their workforce profile and workers' compensation experience.

In a joint initiative with the ACT Urban Services Injury Prevention and Management Team they commenced implementation of a best practice return to work program.

A sustained early intervention program has been operating since 2001. Some of the keys to this proactive approach are

- CityScape supervisors promptly responding to all injuries or illnesses and investigating these incidents using a risk assessment process
- supervisors notifying the case manager within 2 hours of the injury/incident occurring
- supervisors notifying OHS representative
- the case manager contacting the injured worker on the day of notification of the injury/incident
- prompt activation of claim processing and referral to external allied medical support to facilitate an early and safe return to work
- regular case conferences
- development of return to work programs
- training of all parties to ensure roles and responsibilities are understood
- review of workers' compensation and rehabilitation performance.

This program has been built up over a number of years and utilises a team approach to maximise positive outcomes. Through training and awareness raising sessions, staff and managers have become more aware of their responsibilities.

The objectives of the program are to enable injured or ill employees to remain at work, or to return to the workplace quickly, safely and cost effectively.

There is a strong commitment to rehabilitation and return to work at senior levels and accountability is provided through reports to the senior executive monthly.



## Outcomes

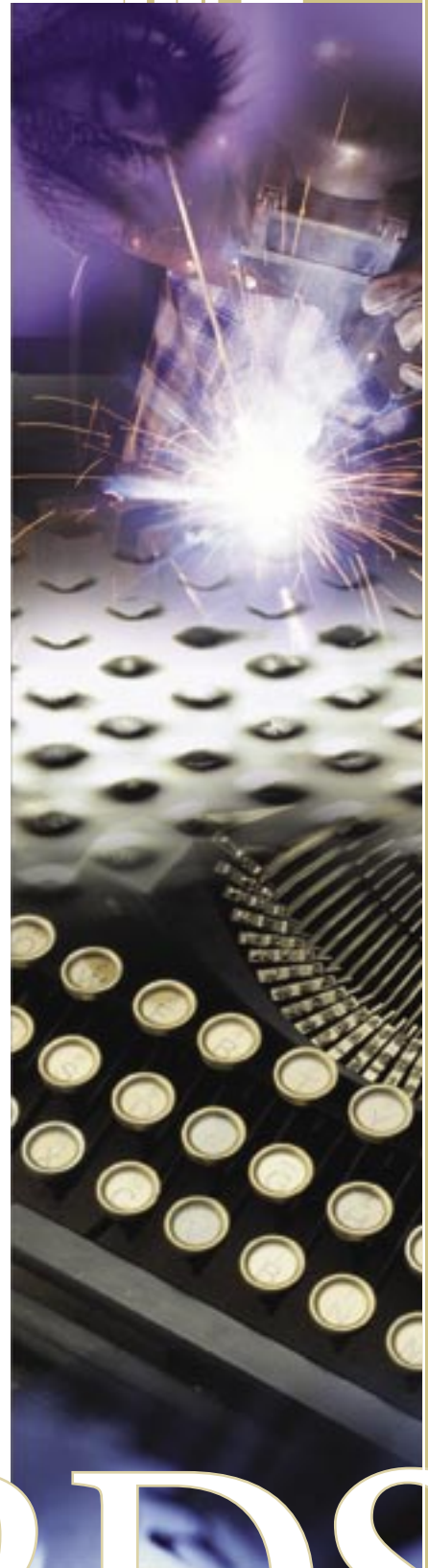
This approach has resulted in a 100% durable return to work rate and a substantial reduction in rehabilitation costs.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of workers' compensation claims, with reduced claim costs and associated workers' compensation premium costs.

## Ongoing

Current activities will continue and be refined and supplemented by further strategies to address issues that emerge.

**Contact for further information:** Mr Tony Bridges, Operations Manager, CityScape, Ph (02) 6207 2840.



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# BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

## REHABILITATION POLICY 2002

### About the Bureau of Meteorology

The Bureau currently operates as an Executive Agency within the Environment and Heritage Portfolio. The Bureau's Head Office in Melbourne serves as both an administrative and operational headquarters. It provides overall national strategic planning, management and coordination of the Bureau's integrated observations, telecommunications and computing infrastructure and its weather, climate and hydrological services.

### The approach to rehabilitation

The Bureau's approach is that occupational rehabilitation is a managed process. The policy emphasises early intervention with appropriate, adequate and timely service based on assessed needs with the overall aim of maintaining injured or ill workers in, or returning them to, suitable employment.

Some of the keys objectives of the policy are

- to ensure the safe and durable return to work of ill/injured employees as soon as possible
- to ensure that all Bureau of Meteorology employees know their roles and responsibilities in the rehabilitation process
- to facilitate increased awareness of the rehabilitation process and its contribution to the lowering of compensation and staffing costs.

While the Bureau's main objective is to return ill/injured workers to their pre-injury duties, it recognises that there may be cases where this is not possible and it will be necessary to explore modified or new duties and/or hours.

### Outcomes

The Bureau currently has an 89% durable return to work rate and has seen a substantial reduction in average weeks' incapacity, incapacity and rehabilitation costs since the introduction of the policy.

### Ongoing

The policy is being kept under constant review and will be updated as necessary.

**Contact for further information:** Dr Phil Brotchie, Assistant Executive Officer (Management), Bureau of Meteorology, Ph (03) 9669 4000.

