



# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (WA BRANCH) INC.

## The INSIDE STORY

### FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

Welcome to the third edition of the "Inside Story". Things have been moving at a cracking pace and it doesn't look like its going to slow down! The Hot Topic over Dinner - "Your Home, Your Workplace, Your Risk" which was held at Frenchy's restaurant in Como was a resounding success. The food was delightful, the setting was spacious, warm & peaceful and the speakers were well versed in their respective topics. Our sponsor for the evening was Flexliner Australia. Murray Freiberg for those of you who have not already made his acquaintance, is the managing director and went out of his way to demonstrate his ergonomic furniture and provide a brief run down on services available. Thank you once again Murray for rising to the challenge and supporting this type of professional development for our members. Our special reporter Lou Beckwith has summarised the evening for those of you who were unable to attend (see p6). Just a quick reminder to all members that subscription renewals were due as of the 1st of July, 1998. We are giving members up till the 1st of September to renew their subscriptions before all further correspondence ceases. Our next function is in collaborate- ion with Cancer WA who have provided us with an exceptional

The INSIDE STORY is proudly



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speaker in Professor Hugh Taylor who will be versing us in the acute and cumulative effects of the varying forms of radiation (UV, IRR, halogen etc). I look forward to catching up with all of you at Royal Perth Yacht Club for another stimulating session and a few post talk drinks and nibbles. Our major seminar for the year is also progressing nicely with 6 formidable speakers being booked to present the "Lessons from the School of Hard Knocks" - outcomes, learning points & implications for other industries arising from Crown Law prosecutions. See page 2 for further details. Till next time - *Play Safe* everyone.

*Ali Martins*



Have you  
Paid Your

**1998 / 1999 Subscription**

**Renewal Yet ??** Just a gentle

reminder to all members that Renewals were due as of the 1st of July 1998. Membership entitles you to receive 6 Newsletters per year, Discounted entrance prices to our seminars, Professional Information Sessions and Hot Topics over Dinner, Free entry to the AGM, Free directory of members and many other benefits received through the Networking forums provided.

Members are reminded that our standard member rate is \$30 not \$20 and our student rate is \$20 not \$15!! I don't think that any one will find better value for money. We want to continue to be the largest Occupational Health and Safety Professional group in WA that is active, dynamic & member driven.

**ACT NOW !!!!**

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## The 1998 COMMITTEE

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**Vice President Peter Rohan**

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### Non-Executive Position

**Membership Officer Nicole Wood**

☎ (08) 9371 0733 / 0500 88 4404

### Committee Members

**Louise Beckwith**

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**Kerry Butler**

☎ 9321 4255

### Co-opted Members

**Adrianna Jones**

☎ 9242 2919

**Phil Jamieson**

☎ 9478 5244



### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome to following new members to the Society:

#### CORPORATE

Laubman and Pank

#### INDIVIDUAL

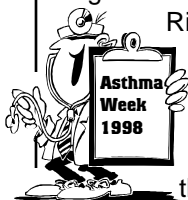
Kenneth Anderson, Rae Barrett, Sandi Cloughessy, Peter Connaughton, Fred Easton, Alan Harris, Pauline Light, Jodi Linto, Peter Luobikis, Scott Molloy, Neil Munslow-Davies, Steve Perrett, Kathryn Stephens, Peter Tynan, Joyleen Winter

## COMING EVENTS

### "Burning Eye Issues"

(refer to flyer for more details)

The OH Society in collaboration with Cancer WA, proudly present a "Laubman & Pank Industrial Division" sponsored professional information session. The basis of the talk is on practical case studies involving the acute and cumulative effects of UV and infra red radiation on vision as well as the effects of halogen lights. Other topical and relevant eye protection issues will be discussed followed by light refreshments in an informal environment ripe for networking. August 10th at Royal Perth Yacht Club. Ring Ali Martins on 9371 0733.



### "Occupational Asthma"

The Asthma Foundation & WorkSafe WA will focus their attention on this problem during Asthma Week in October 1998. Leading International researcher on Occupational Asthma, Prof. Leo Fabbri and a panel of local experts will provide practical information and resources at a seminar for Occupational Health Workers to be held at the Freeway Motel on Wednesday the 14th of October, 1998.

### "Are Your Workers' at Risk"

Topics to be discussed include:-

- ◆ The major causes & triggers of occupational asthma;
- ◆ Work practices & occupational asthma;
- ◆ Your legal responsibilities & obligations;
- ◆ Tips on how to adopt an Asthma Friendly Workplace;
- ◆ Workers' Compensation;
- ◆ Asthma 1st aid & Crisis management; and
- ◆ The use of respiratory protection equipment.

A multidisciplinary panel of experts will be assembled to field questions on legality, medicine & the environment. Reserve booking essential. Cost \$20. Phone the Foundation on 9382 1666.



### "WorkSafe Week 1998"

is now in its 4th year and promises to provide more practical information on complying with Occupational Safety and Health legislation. The week offers the South West & Great Southern Regions 6 half day workshops, 3 information sessions, a Safety and Health Expo and numerous training options. For more information contact Wendy Merritt at WorkSafe WA on (08) 9791 7211 or for local information contact the Cathy Reed on the hotline - 9327 8781.

### "Seminars on AS/NZS-1269:98"

The Occupational Noise Management Standard has been revised and re-released. Curtin Consultancy are holding one day seminars to update your knowledge. These will be held in Perth on the 22nd of Sept (\$245), in Karratha on the 29th of Sept (\$475), in Kalgoorlie on the 1st of Oct (\$405) and in Bunbury on the 2nd Oct (\$405). Contact Marijke Leeuwangh on (08) 9266 3288 for more details.

### "Noise Effects '98"

The 7th International Conference on Noise as a Public Health Problem (ICBEN) will be held in Sydney, 22-26th November, 1998. Topics for discussion will include NIHL, noise & communication, non-auditory effects, effects on performance & behaviour, community response to noise, noise & animals, combined agents & regulations and standards.

For further information call (02) 9262 2277 or Fax on (02) 9262 3135 or Email on noise98@tourhosts.com.au.

### "Noise Officer Refresher Training"

Curtin Consultancy are holding a one day refresher course for noise officers seeking renewal of

**Noise Officer Refresher cont...**

certification. This seminar is in Perth on Sept 23rd and costs \$650. Contact Marijke Leeuwangh on (08) 9266 3288 for more details.

**CHANGES TO 1st Aid Protocols**

St John Ambulance are revising their resuscitation protocols to align with those of the International Liaison Committee of Resuscitation and the Australian Resuscitation Council. The changes are unlikely to be implemented in WA until the beginning of 1999, to allow for policy development and updating of teaching aids and first aid books. The procedural changes will increase the effectiveness of first aid given whilst simplifying techniques for first aiders. It must be stressed that existing first aid procedures in use and being taught by St John Ambulance until 1999, are still effective resuscitation practices.

The major changes relate to when to call for an ambulance, initial ventilation rates (2 effective breaths within 5 breaths), where to check for a pulse and for how long (all pulses including the carotid for up to 10 seconds) and the same compression rates for adults/children and infants (100 compressions per minute). For further information, contact St John Ambulance on (08) 9334 1222.

**FOR SALE - HEARING Booth**

Laubman and Pank Industrial Division has for sale a "Fixed Hearing Booth" (ex SECWA). The booth can easily be relocated and assembled to meet WorkCover's requirements for audiometric testing. For further information please contact Evelyn Roberts on 08-9424 2800.

**RESEARCHING OHS - WANT A GRANT?**

The Australian Occupational Health & Safety Trust requires all applications for 1999 OSH education or personal study grants by September 30th, 1998. Ring (02) 9221 6374 for further details.

**MORE ON NOISE ..**

The directory of Noise and Vibration Control Services is now on the Internet at:

[http://www.wt.com.au/safetyline/d\\_pub/s/noised/noised1.htm](http://www.wt.com.au/safetyline/d_pub/s/noised/noised1.htm)

**OHS Rep. Subsidy Cut**

The \$200 metropolitan / \$250 rural subsidy to the cost of training OSH representatives through accredited providers, has been cut by the WA Government as from July 1st 1998. Training of elected representatives is still required by law, but will now cost employers full price.

**Mining Fatalities**

The terrible continuance of mining fatalities is under review by differing bodies. The Minerals Council of Australia annual report reveals, that there were 33 deaths in the 1996-97 year, the third worst year for fatalities in the past decade! On a more positive note, the mining industry has made a 77% improvement to its LTI rate. The report includes three analyses:- a review of Australian mine safety performance 1987/88 to 1996/97; an international benchmarking comparison and a review of health incidence data for the mining industry, provided by Worksafe Australia. View this report at: [http://www.minerals.org.au/media/safety\\_report.pdf](http://www.minerals.org.au/media/safety_report.pdf)

**MORE ON Working FROM HOME**

WorkCover NSW publish a brief guide to the OSH, workers' compensation and rehabilitation requirements relating to employees who work at home. Whilst this guide refers to NSW OSH laws, it is a handy reference and a free copy (one only) is available - ring 02 937 05000.

**LEAD PAINT CONCERNS**

Standards Australia has released AS 4361.2:1998 which details how householders and tradespeople can effectively manage lead paint. The standard gives guidance on how to determine if lead paint is present in a building, how much is present and appropriate management strategies. Lead paint poses a health risk if lead particles are swallowed or inhaled, and may occur when the paint flakes, peels or is disturbed during renovations. As many pre 1979 homes and buildings may contain lead paint, this is a health hazard that employees need to be made aware of and the risks managed.

**FUNDING INCREASE FOR ASBESTOS RESEARCH**

The Court Government has recently announced a \$1.1 million funding increase over 5 years for research into asbestos related diseases at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital.

**Useful INTERNET Addresses**

Here are some useful Internet addresses to assist you to find useful health and safety information:

Safety News Magazine  
<http://www.safetynews.com>

Mens Health  
<http://www.menshealth.com>

Seniors Site  
<http://www.senior.com>



## COMPETENCY BASED MANUAL HANDLING TRAINING

In this day and age, training is a buzz word. Whether it be special training programmes for the unemployed, university courses or on the job training for employees.

There has been considerable concern that training has not always been as effective as it should be. As a consequence, there is now a concerted effort being made throughout Australia to incorporate 'Competency Based Training'.

A Western Australian company, Health Dynamics, has recently become the first local organisation to gain national accreditation for its competency based manual handling training programme.

Manager of the company, Kerry Butler, explained the benefits of this new approach to training. "In economic terms, labour represents a significant if not the greatest cost to an employer. For any company, productivity and output are significant issues in overall return on investment. So if an employee is injured at work, it has enormous effect on productivity and therefore profitability. Prevention of injury therefore has potential savings of \$000's.

Unfortunately, manual handling training in the work environment in the past has by and large been unsuccessful. We have not seen any significant improvement overall in the number of manual handling injuries in industry. Therefore our conclusion is that all the training performed has had little positive effect. It has not encouraged a change in work behaviours nor any improvement overall in injury rates"

Ms Butler says that this is where competency Based Training comes into its own. "In manual handling, the aim is to have employees performing tasks in such a way as to minimise the stresses and strains on the back which might otherwise lead to injury. The competency based training method is designed to ensure that the trainee has the necessary attributes to perform a skill to a particular standard."

The Health Dynamics competency based Manual Handling Training Programme ensures the desired standards of manual handling are met and is designed to suit the specific worker within a specific company. The employer sets the standards required for them. In training, the employees must then attain the set standard in order to pass the course. Employees undertake both theory and practical sessions that incorporate the particular manual handling tasks that have been previously identified as those of major risk within the workplace.

The training also meets the company's requirement under the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Code of Practice on Manual Handling. This new approach to manual handling offer the best opportunity yet for effective training and a reduction in manual handling related injuries.

## ARTHRITIS AND WORK

Arthritis can be a painful and debilitating condition for anyone, but the symptoms may also be exacerbated by the working environment. Up to date information on treatment, health information and support groups can be obtained from the Arthritis Foundation. By donating to the Arthritis Foundation, you can receive their quarterly magazine "Arthritis Today", or further advice and information can be found by ringing (08)9388 2199, Email: [afwa@ca.com.au](mailto:afwa@ca.com.au)



## NEW RELEASE-

### "DISEASE WATCH"

The WA Communicable Diseases Bulletin has been revamped into the new quarterly publication *Disease Watch*. This publication contains recent epidemiological data from the infectious diseases surveillance system, there are also articles and up-dates on communicable disease issues including immunisations and outbreak investigations, as well as information on the injury control and hereditary disease programs run by the Health Department's Disease Control Service.

If you would like more information, or wish to subscribe to this FREE publication, contact Disease Control Services on Ph: (08) 9388 4999, Fax: (08) 93884848, or send your details to:

Mailing List - *Disease Watch* Health Department of WA Disease Control Service, PO Box 8172, Stirling Street, PERTH WA 6849.

## PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT AS 1270-1998

A draft revision on part of AS 1270-1998: Acoustics-Hearing Protectors - *DR98347-Acoustics - Methods for measurement of the Real-Ear Attenuation of Hearing Protectors*, was released for public comment on July 1st, 1998 by Standards Australia. Copies can be obtained from Standards Australia at 1274 Hay St, West Perth, Ph: (08)9321 8797 and comment closes on 31st August 1998.

The Eighth Edition of the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) publication "*Attenuation and Use of Hearing Protectors*" was released in March 1998. It contains new attenuation results for protectors tested by NAL, a class rating and more comprehensive guidance on the use of all listed protectors. Copies are available for \$25 from Robyn Proctor, Ph: (02) 9412 6824.

## SENIOR OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE POSITION

An international chemical company is looking to recruit a *Regional Industrial Hygiene & Product Stewardship Coordinator* for the Asia-Pacific region, probably located in Singapore.

The responsibilities will be to coordinate in-house and contract occupational hygiene services throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The duties will include provision of training and advice to industrial hygienists/product stewardship contacts in the region; liaison with regional regulatory agencies; ensure operation of MSDS and other product information services.

Requirements include an MSc/MPH and 1-7 years experience in industrial hygiene. Fluency in English is required and competency in Mandarin is strongly preferred. The position offers a dynamic career growth opportunity and a competitive remuneration package.

For further details, contact Bill Rhodes - Bench International  
Los Angeles, USA on (310) 854 9900  
Tel or by fax on (310) 652 2081 or by Email  
brhodes@benchinternational.com

## SAD FAREWELL TO THE MANUAL HANDLING CENTRE

Yes it's TRUE. The Manual Handling Centre in Leederville is closing down as of Friday July 24th, 1998. Apparently their grant from the WA Occupational Safety and Health Commission has come to an end. On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Wayne and his staff for allowing the Society to use their premises for our monthly meetings. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours & fully acknowledge your respected role in the prevention of MH Injury.

## BREACHING OHS Policy - NOT UNFAIR DISMISSAL

A miner in Queensland who failed to follow his employers' health and safety policies was fairly dismissed, according to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The worker had been reprimanded over refusing to wear safety glasses in a designated area, over performance issues and was dismissed after an underground incident where his truck collided with another.

This case highlights the potential consequences for employees who breach their Duty Of Care obligations.

## OH&S Diploma

The Australian Centre for Work Safety has now produced distance education materials to allow for completion of the National Diploma by students who have gained Certificates 3 and 4 of the ANTA national curriculum in OH&S. The Diploma consist of five modules which are risk management, safety engineering, research profile, safety programs and work placement.

## ANNUAL FUN RUN

Have you got a work team in training? The annual Channel 9/FILA City to Surf Fun Run is on again on Sunday 30th of August. This is a great way to encourage fitness, team building and morale within your company - and your entrance fees support charity. The 12km run/walk starts from St Georges Terrace at 0830 and the 4km walk (only) starts from Perry Lakes at 0930. The finish line is at City Beach Oval. Admission prices are \$14 for adults and \$7 for kids. Special rates apply for corporate teams. For more details, ring 1800 770555 or get on the internet at their website  
<http://users.wantree.com.au/~activ/>



## CONVEYING OHS PRINCIPLES TO THOSE WITH LOW LITERACY LEVELS

A new Training Resource Kit developed by WorkCover SA to address the issues of poor English literacy and conveying the principles of OHS, has been released. The kit uses a common sense, practical and pictorial way to impart the OHS message. Whilst this relates to SA OHS laws, it would be a worthwhile tool to assist any employees with low English literacy skills. The kit can be obtained from the SA WorkCover Corporation (loan or purchase for \$55), or can be downloaded from WorkCover's internet site:  
<http://www.workcover.sa.gov.au>

## 12 HOUR DAY OSH CONCERNS

A recent report by ACIRRT (Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training) entitled "The Twelve Hour Workday : Emerging Issues" has concluded that there is a lack of adequate research into the OSH effects of 12 hour shifts and extended work hours. Issues such as sleep duration, psychological effects, productivity and safety impact, require more research. Additionally, the potential hazards and liabilities related to extended work hours must be considered by employers operating 12 hour shifts.

Twelve hour shifts certainly present many benefits to companies and employees, in terms of cost effectiveness, shorter working week and more social time. The effects upon health and safety are not necessarily detrimental, but this needs to be considered on the nature of the work performed and hours worked per week. Further research will determine the true implications of this trend.

## REVIEW of Hot Topic over DINNER - "Your Home, Your Workplace, Your Risk"

The Hot Topic over Dinner was sponsored by Flexliner Australia, who organised an excellent display of their ergonomic products and provided specialist information.

The first speaker, Bob Horstman from Edith Cowan University (School of Management) spoke on the trends for home based work, or teleworking as it is known, focussing on the employee. The benefits include increased productivity, flexibility and assistance to workers with family responsibilities. Companies benefit from reduced costs from less office space usage, and associated energy, parking and catering costs, decreased staff turnover and absenteeism. Also, lower overheads, increased morale, less interruptions for workers and better time management. Societal benefits include less road congestion and infrastructure, maintenance, decreased pollution and increased home security. Initially, teleworking is non productive, but then generally delivers a 10/20 up to 60% increase!

It is estimated that by 2015, that one third of the workforce will be teleworking for at least one day, if not 2-3 days per working week, due to the responsibilities arising from changing family structures and an aging population. Currently only 1-2% of the Australian workforce telework.

Some barriers to working at home include the costs of home offices (from \$2000-\$10000 for furniture, communication and VDU links), employee isolation and "invisibility" - (less promotion chances, poor performers not focussed on), difficulty separating work and family and unsupportive management or

organisational culture and trade union opposition.

How to implement successful working at home: 1. Develop a formal policy, 2. Assess OSH risks, 3. Ensure Workers Compensation and appropriate insurances, 4. Review cost effectiveness, 5. Assess suitable characteristics - job/task set, employee, home (inspect with 48 hrs before and after work commences), organisation and supervisor, 6. Security issues - lockable office, computer/disk etc, 7. Communication with the main office and others, 8. Trial for 3 months.

More information on setting up for teleworking is available at two websites: European telework online at [www.eto.org.uk](http://www.eto.org.uk) and at Gil Gordon & Associates at [www.gilgordon.com](http://www.gilgordon.com)

John Langton from the Insurance Commission of WA then outlined the Workers' Compensation perspective, looking at the issues of running a business from home, teleworkers and contractors.

1. Assess what insurance is needed using risk assessment and the "what if" model: What if someone is injured, what if equipment breaks, what if employees can't work, what if you go broke?

2. Need Workers Compensation cover. Remember the Duty of Care, as an insurer may not accept a claim if it is not a safe workplace, thus it needs inspection. The insurer must know there is telework occurring and accept risk for the home as there can be different safety standards at the workplace vs home.

3. Contractors must be considered. Those employed to work on home issues are different from those contracted for the business and must have appropriate cover.

4. Household insurances. When running a business from home, normal public liability from house

insurance is exceeded if someone is injured and so the insurance policy should be amended.

If it is a "Pty" company, then it needs all its own insurances and cannot use domestic policies as they do not cover the same risk. Office contents should be insured separate from household items.

5. Professional indemnity insurance should be considered.

6. Public liability insurance should be taken out to cover both home and away situations.

7. A working director only requires personal accident insurance and does not need Workers' Compensation for a sole trader.

8. Honesty and an Up Front Approach is recommended. This means, tell your insurer everything - as it will be cheaper in the long run. Also, seek further advice from your broker and insurers.

9. Remember to pay your premiums and to adjust them yearly to reflect changes in the business.

In summary, the talk outlined the need for insurances and to consult your company to ensure you are covered if working at home or if you operate your own business from home, consult your broker or insurer to ensure you have the correct cover.

The Hot Topic over dinner was a success with both speakers raising very relevant issues (both positive and negative) about the OSH implications and responsibilities associated with employees working at home, or operating a business from your home.

Should any member want copies of the papers provided at the Hot Topic over Dinner - "Your Home, Your Workplace, Your Risk", these can be posted out to you at a cost of \$10. Please contact Ali Martins on 9371 0733 for further information.



## LATEST ON NON SMOKING REGULATIONS IN WORKPLACES



**Please  
No Smoking**

The total ban on smoking in any workplace due to come into force on August 1st, 1998, is undergoing modifications and bans will not come into effect

until Jan 1st, 1999. Smoking bans on entertainment venues will not be enforced until Jan 1st, 2000.

The proposed changes to the regulations involves covering "workplaces" under the OSH Act and "entertainment/food service venues" to be covered by the Health Act. State Cabinet aims "to adopt a sensible, realistic and balanced view on how the effects of environmental tobacco smoke should be phased out of WA's public places".

The Health Minister, Kevin Prince, has stated that the deferred OSH amendment regulations may be amended further (if required) to ensure that there is no conflict with the regulations under the Health Act 1911, which are designed to protect the public from environmental tobacco smoke in public places.

All new legislation will be accompanied by an education campaign to outline legal obligations.

## Seminar Notes Available on Request for a Fee

Should any member be unable to attend one of our Seminars/Information Sessions/Hot Topics etc, detailed papers on the content of the talk/s are available from the Society at a cost of \$10. Please contact Nicole Wood on (08) 9371 0733 for booking your copies.

## OSH YEAR 2000 Problem

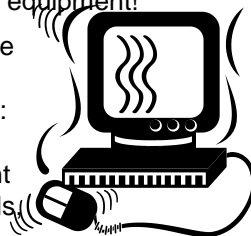
Most companies should now be aware of the complexities of the Year 2000 (Y2K) problem...but how many have assessed the OSH implications from this systems problem?

Some of the Y2K problems may lead to shut down, failure of, unsafe action or lack of action being taken by key systems, plant or equipment!

Areas that may be affected by these problems include: generic process control equipment and control panels, fire detection systems, alarms and automatic fire extinguishers or sprinkler systems, emergency and access lighting, environmental control systems, security systems, transportation control and signal systems, pumps and level control systems, PABX and communications equipment, air conditioning, lift controls and emergency systems! The duty of care principle of not exposing employees to hazards at work, incorporates hazards which arise from failure of embedded systems, thus the Y2K problem poses a duty of care problem for all employers if they don't address such issues.

The action plan suggested by WorkSafe WA involves spotting the hazards, assessing the risk, and making the changes. This will also include developing a contingency plan that will address key problem periods, ensure that trained, experienced people are on duty at these times and cover the restarting of processes after these periods have passed.

For more information to address the Y2K problem, the Health and Safety Executive in the UK have developed a comprehensive publication "Health & Safety and the Year 2000



## YEAR 2000 CONT.

Problem". The WA Government has produced a Millennium Compliance guide - see [www.y2k.wa.gov.au](http://www.y2k.wa.gov.au) - and further information is available from the Institution of Electrical Engineers (UK) at their website [www.tee.org.uk/2000risk/](http://www.tee.org.uk/2000risk/)

## PROMOTING FITNESS in Your Workplace



In case you haven't received notification yet, the Heart Foundation is holding their annual "Climb to the Top" event. This easy to organise health and fitness promotion builds motivation and morale, and importantly teaches people how easy it is to keep fit and reduce the risk of heart disease. Contact The Heart Foundation on (08) 9388 3343 for a registration form.

## Special Note from the Executive Committee

In response to a letter received from one of our country members who feels that she is being disadvantaged by being in the country and not being able to attend our functions, we forward this reply. From experience in holding functions, the majority of members would not be interested in attending weekend seminars as it would encroach on their free/family time, therefore this is the basis of why we hold them during the week. Our demographic data on members also does not support holding seminars in regional locations as we do not believe that we would get the attendance (I would be delighted to be proven wrong!) and lastly, the Society can not and will not support the option of discounting membership for our country members as we truly believe that we are an extremely good value for money organisation. If anyone else wants to have their say, please fax your comments to us on (08) 9371 0733

## LONG TERM EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE ASTHMA

Last issue we informed you of Asthma Week 1998, to be held on the 12-17th October, which aims to raise awareness of occupational asthma. A recent US study has shown that occupational asthma is a common condition which accounts for 15-20% of all adult onset asthma in the US with more than 250 substances having been linked to asthma, including solvents, welding fumes and plastic resins. This is a common preventable disease that often is irreversible. The consequences of health and social effects such as unemployment, and decreased quality of life affect the community at large, as well as the employee.

Ask yourself...

1. Are there substances in your workplace known to trigger asthma?
2. What control strategies exist to reduce these hazards?
3. Has there been education for employees on the risk of occupational asthma?
4. Need more information? Contact the Asthma Foundation on (08) 9382 1666, your occupational physician or visit the seminars at Asthma Week.

Recycle your old, used ink jet cartridges. A local Perth firm is in the business of recycling used ink jet cartridges. **"The Ribbon Re-Inker"** is West Australian owned and they want your waste cartridges. So, don't throw them in the bin, call them on **9328 9762** or

Call **Laser Technologies** on **9445 7554** for Free pick up (They also donate \$1 to Princess Margaret Hospital for each cartridge received)

## REVIEW OF FUTURES SAFE 98

Our undercover reporter at FutureSafe '98 was Nicole McLeod. These are her thoughts on the conference that was.....

**FUTURE SAFE 98 CONFERENCE, 14-17  
JUNE  
SYDNEY CONVENTION AND  
EXHIBITION CENTRE**

The theme of the conference was 'People, Performance and Profit'. Each day of the conference was dedicated to a topic. This made it easy to select the days and topics that you wanted to particularly attend or the days that the 'other activities' conducted at the conference (or at Sydney's Darling Harbour itself) had a stronger pull.

Each day commenced in the great hall with the keynote speaker of the day delivering their address. The sound quality was excellent, the visual support spot on and the chairs were comfortable.

The content of most papers presented was readily digestible, adhering to the theme of the day. A strong representation from the mining industry and Government sector. An overwhelming message to shift focus from hanging the individual to reviewing and redesigning the company/organisation safety system. Financial penalties no longer hold their influence, instead the message is being spread to adopt self regulation for the integral benefits of combining the quality, environmental, safety and human resource management systems.

Several presentations discussed the introduction of the American concept of no-blame 'Lessons Learned' databases, yet no papers were presented on such.

The workshop timings made it difficult to attend afternoon presentations, yet those who did attend workshops felt the practical nature of the topic was of

benefit and the sharing of experience reinforcing the keynote address on day one.

The trade exhibition was the largest I have ever attended. The conference coordinators encouraged your viewing of the trade exhibitions by ensuring delegates had to walk through the maze of booths to find the food and coffee served between sessions. It was the quickest queue yet that I have lined up in to obtain lunches at any conference. The longest I had to wait for a meal was literally five minutes. The meals were cleverly presented and tasted delicious. There was lots of food and they catered for vegetarians, vegans and any special requests.

The Dinner dance was an eye-full for the males, but not as thrilling for the women in the audience. The Jamaican theme was bright, energetic and the rhythms encouraged most people to get onto the dance floor by the end of the night. The demonstration dancers were lively, performing the 'fighting-dances' devised to retain the martial skills whilst under domination.

Overall a solid conference. The temptations of the many after hours delights of Sydney made it hard to attend all sessions with 100% alertness, so the conference papers that we paid for will be welcome.



**We want your feedback on the  
'INSIDE STORY' and ways of  
improving this newsletter to  
better serve the needs of our  
members. Please feel free to  
contact the Editors.**

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