



Australian Government

Comcare



Working with You

Issue 46 | Autumn edition

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Working with You

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Working with You*. In this edition, we focus on our activities over the last few months and what they mean for you.

For the first time we have commenced market research to understand injured workers' health outcomes, service experience and expectations of Comcare. Over 400 injured workers within the Comcare jurisdiction will take part in this research and the feedback received will help us to improve our services. You can find more details on the market research in this edition.

Mr Peter Henneken has been appointed Chairperson of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. You can read an interview with Peter in this edition which provides a snapshot of his views on workplace health and safety.

Our *Priorities for Safe and Healthy Workplaces 2009–10* program identifies several major areas of focus to improve safety outcomes. In this edition you will find an update on our work associated with health and safety management arrangements and safe forklift use.

In 2009 Comcare awarded four scholarships for the Certificate IV in Injury Rehabilitation Management to employees in the scheme. In this edition we have included an interview with one of the winners, Chelsea Drewson. Chelsea works for the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

We completed the 2010 National Seminar series in March with close to 1400 people attending the events across Australia. With the theme of the seminars being *Workplace wellbeing—through systems, symbols and behaviours*, the presentations and workshop focused on building a safer workplace culture. You can read more about the seminars in this edition.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the Australian Institute of Marine Science and Australian Air Express who were national award winners at the 5th Annual Safe Work Australia Awards presented in the Great Hall, Parliament House on 28 April 2010. The Australian Institute of Marine Science was recognised for developing a safety system for crew undertaking a baseline environmental study at Scott Reef north of Broome. Australian Air Express was recognised for redesigning its freight handling systems to reduce injuries to workers. This significant achievement demonstrates the exceptional leadership and innovation of these organisations' programs and workplaces. It also acknowledges the valuable achievements to make work health and safety a top priority.

Enjoy this edition of *Working with You*. Feedback or story suggestions are welcomed at media@comcare.gov.au

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AUSTRALIA'S SAFEST WORKPLACES

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National campaign—health and safety management arrangements

Comcare is conducting a national campaign to assess the Health and Safety Management Arrangements (HSMAs) employers in our scheme have in place. We will ensure that employees are consulted in the process of improving workplace health and safety.

All employers in the scheme are required to have HSMAs in place in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*. Since 2007 we have been working closely with employers and providing education and assistance on HSMA development and implementation. We have run seminars, issued guidance material and developed a self-assessment tool for employers.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations review of the Comcare scheme emphasised the importance of genuine consultation between employers and employees on all OHS matters including HSMAs.

Employers need to provide opportunities for employees and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to express their views on health and safety matters. Employees and HSRs should be encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns, propose options, make recommendations and be involved in problem solving.

For more information on this campaign, please contact Comcare's National Compliance Section on 1300 366 979.

Consultation with Case Managers—Comcare is seeking feedback

Comcare thanks case managers and injured workers for their feedback to date on how we do our business. In response, we are working on a number of initiatives that will help case managers work more effectively. These initiatives include developing our online service capability and improving our guidance on effective case management.

It is important we tailor our services to meet your needs. To ensure this happens, we invite you to participate in a workshop. The workshops are designed to capture your thoughts and opinions about these initiatives.

The workshops will include a morning and afternoon session. You are invited to attend one or both sessions.

Morning session—Developing online services: 9.00 am–12.30 pm.

Afternoon session—Return to work handbook for case managers: 1.30 pm–4.30 pm.

Workshops will be held in the Central Business District of the following locations:

- Melbourne—Tuesday 1 June 2010
- Sydney—Thursday 3 June 2010
- Canberra—Thursday 17 June 2010
- Brisbane—Friday 25 June 2010.

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided.

You can register online at www.comcare.gov.au. Registrations will close 19 May 2010. Once we receive your nomination we will send you an online invitation with more details on the workshop.



If you are unable to attend a workshop but would like to provide feedback, you can send an email to mycomcare.access@comcare.gov.au. For more information please call Bruce Norton on 1300 366 979.

Workplace wellbeing—through systems, symbols and behaviours

A wrap-up of our 2010 National Seminar Series

What drives employees to deliver, excel and achieve each day, month or year? What makes employees genuinely demonstrate and express safety in everything they do? The answer is simply through engagement and empowerment. Those organisations that manage to consistently perform safely, whose employees feel safe at work, work in a safe manner and are solid ambassadors for the safety process, have developed a superior safe work culture. Achievement and success stories naturally follow for these organisations.

Given that the development of a safer workplace culture is being supported and driven at high levels, we chose to specifically explore this topic in the 2010 Nationals Seminar Series. The main objective of the seminars was to educate participants on how a positive workplace safety culture can

lead to lower rates of accidents and injuries, a happier workforce, lower insurance premiums and improved productivity. Close to 1400 participants Australia-wide attended the half-day events. The seminars challenged traditional thinking methods and showcased the need for emotional experiences to change unsafe or risky behaviour.

Tony Bradford, Managing Director of Centre for Corporate Health, explored leadership and cultural norms in organisations. He also looked at behavioural patterns and how individual management styles can assist in building a productive workforce through influencing and empowering. Tony demonstrated the Human Synergistics Circumplex tool and its use and application for workplace culture audits. He explained that the ideal workplace safety culture is one





where employees and organisational leaders work collaboratively to both implement and create an organisational belief system that is built on the premise that safety is the top priority. When employees are engaged in 'safety conversations' and have autonomy and ownership, they will view safety as a critical part of their role. This approach also encourages employees to adopt safe work practises because they want to, not because they have to, or because they are told to.

Queensland Rail (QR) shared their journey to achieving a more effective workplace culture based on safety through their Railsmart campaign. They explained that this was an integrated campaign aimed at changing attitudes and opinions and ensuring safety was visibly apparent in all facets of their business. Participants heard how QR's employees, their families and wider community were exposed to the real facts on workplace injury. As part of their campaign, QR used real stories and hard-hitting safety messages told by QR employees who have been involved in or exposed to workplace accidents.

The seminars also included an interactive workplace safety culture workshop. The workshop gave participants the opportunity to use short case studies to explore organisational strategies that could be implemented to influence and measure safety culture. Participants shared approaches that aim to cultivate safe and productive workplaces and build a sustainable and healthy organisation.

You can view all seminar presentations and associated guidance material at www.comcare.gov.au/events

We are also calling for topic suggestions for our next seminar series. If you have an idea, please email us at comcare.seminars@comcare.gov.au

"Well presented and very useful and informative content."

"All very informative, useful and relevant topics."

"Wow factor! Excellent!"

Five minutes with Chairperson of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, Peter Henneken

- 1) What does workplace safety mean to you and how do you instil that message in your day-to-day life?

At its very heart, workplace health and safety is an attitude of respect for your fellow workers. They deserve to be able to come to work, enjoy the contribution they can make, feel part of the decision-making processes in the workplace and go home safe and healthy. This potentially makes the message easier as safety, health and wellbeing are a way of managing and getting great outcomes from people.

- 2) What led you to the role of Chairman of the SRCC and what were your first thoughts when you were appointed?

I was very pleased to have been asked to chair the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (SRCC). I see the role as an extension of my previous roles, which involved over 30 years in Industrial Relations, vocational education and training, employment, workplace health and safety, and workers' compensation. Over the years I have come to appreciate the importance of work in peoples' lives. In most cases work enhances their lives, but unfortunately in some cases it has been detrimental and even tragic.


Like most people in a new job, I felt quite apprehensive and needed some time to learn about the SRCC and Comcare, and to get to know the people.

- 3) You've spent many years living and working interstate/overseas. How does Canberra compare?

Most of my career has been in the Queensland Public Service, but on two occasions I was seconded for six months to work in the Federal Public Service. The first occasion was in the mid 1980s and then again in the early 1990s. In addition, I have worked on many Commonwealth-State working groups and committees and attended a range of Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils. Canberra and various national agendas are therefore very familiar to me. I will continue to live in Brisbane but, unlike some, I do enjoy coming to Canberra and have been interested to see how it has changed since my first visit in the late 1970s.

- 4) What are you most looking forward to in the future of workplace health and safety in Australia?

Clearly a national harmonised workplace health and safety system is well advanced at least in policy terms. This is a great initiative and we all need to grasp the opportunity to put the best possible regulation systems and programs in place. Workers' compensation will be harder to address, as the laws in each state are the result of compromises made over many years between the key stakeholders. Nevertheless, there is a lot of work we can do in many areas, such as developing consistent laws regarding who is covered and how an injury is defined for compensation purposes.



I am excited by the current agenda of healthy workplaces. I am interested in the general proposition that quality workplaces can contribute to health and wellbeing, among other things. I am also interested in the concept that not being at work can be bad for your health, and in the impact this has on a whole lot of other social and economic circumstances for people.

I firmly believe that jobs are key to addressing social inclusion. From a workplace health and safety perspective, we need to respond to the research of good quality work as a preventative measure for workplace injuries, in particular psychosocial injuries. We also need to look at what it means for rehabilitation and return to work strategies.

5) When you're not busy at work, what keeps you busy?

I don't have a particular hobby, my interests are rather eclectic and include watching sports, family, social occasions, reading and exercise. My retirement from full time work has also allowed me to dust off my old bike.



Name: Chelsea Drewsen
Organisation: Department of Disability Housing and Community Services
Role: Rehabilitation Case Manager

What motivated you to apply for the Certificate 4 in Injury Rehabilitation Management scholarship?

I have been working as a rehabilitation professional in both public and private organisations since 2002. My motivation was the opportunity to gain more experience and knowledge to better assist myself, injured employees and the department in ensuring the best outcome is achieved by the correct information being available at the early stages of a claim.

What does rehabilitation mean to you?

Assisting and supporting someone back to the workforce after an injury or period of time off work is an extremely important process. It is hard to describe the feeling of satisfaction I get from successfully helping someone get back to work.

How do you feel about being chosen as a winner of the scholarship?

I feel very proud and honoured to receive this opportunity.

What are you looking forward to most in studying the Certificate 4 in Injury Rehabilitation Management?

When I started the Certificate IV I was looking forward to the 'Advanced Communication, Customer Service and Negotiation Skills for Injury Management Professionals' course. I am currently completing this course and am finding it very interesting.

The reason this topic appealed to me is the practical implications it will have in my day-to-day interactions with the injured workers I am helping return to work.

We are speaking to injured workers

In April and May 2010 we are speaking to injured workers to gain an insight into their health outcomes, service experience and expectations of Comcare.

In our research we will speak with over 400 injured workers from Australian Public Service agencies and the ACT Government. The surveys are being carried out over the telephone, with most phone calls only taking 10 minutes.

Injured workers are being asked to share their stories and the experiences they have had as a result of their injuries. The research will seek to delve into assessing injured workers' perceptions of our claims management and touch on various aspects of their interactions with Comcare and others in the injury management process.

We expect to receive the results in June 2010 and will use them to measure our performance and shape our services in the future.

For more information about this research, email the Marketing and Communications Section at mac@comcare.gov.au or call 1300 366 979.





National campaign— forklift safety

Comcare is participating in a national campaign to assess and improve forklift safety.

The campaign is coordinated by the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA), the joint national body of Australia's OHS authorities of which Comcare is a member.

The aim of the campaign is to reduce the rate of incidents and injury from forklift-related tasks, such as loading and unloading vehicles. Forklifts are a well known hazard in many work environments. Use of forklifts presents a risk of severe injury or fatality to operators and others in the workplace.

Comcare is conducting workplace visits to review forklift safety. Outcomes and feedback from these visits will be collated and referred to the HWSA representatives for analysis. The results of the campaign will be released by the end of 2010.

For more information on this campaign, you can contact Comcare's National Compliance Section on 1300 366 979.



Australian Government

Comcare



Conference

2010 Comcare National Conference

National Convention
Centre, Canberra
22 - 24 September 2010

Comcare's 2010 National Conference will concentrate on the critical health and wellbeing factors impacting our workforce.

Industry experts will explore topical issues surrounding mental health and employee wellbeing. This event will provide leaders at all levels with practical strategies and ideas to better manage the health of their workforce.

Registration to open in June 2010. For more information visit www.comcare.gov.au/events

Improve, include and inspire workplace wellbeing

