

## Health and Safety Representatives and Deputies (“HSRs”) Survey

As one of the core worker representatives in Australian workplaces, it is important that the union movement ensure the support and assistance to HSRs is best targeted. Therefore, the ACTU is now conducting an online Health and Safety Survey aimed at HSRs.

The survey will include data on:

- Demographics: Gender, postcode, age, union membership (with an opportunity to join)
- Employment: Industry, occupation, employment status, sector, work schedule (e.g. shift worker, etc.)
- Management consultation
- Election health and safety representation
- Type of activities undertaken as a HSR
- Training undertaken
- Use of PINs and cease work notices

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Most questions are multiple-choice.

The ACTU intends to release a report based on the results of the survey. TPA will publish the report at a later date. All HSRs participating in this survey can rest assured that their privacy and identity will be protected.

The online survey can be found by clicking [HERE](#), the closing date of the survey is **Friday 26, October 2012**.

## Office Safety

Office workers are experiencing unprecedented levels of neck, back, shoulder and arm pain as an unintended consequence of the paperless office, according University of Sydney research. The study found that actions since the 1980s to improve OHS and workstation design may have been completely reversed by changing work practices, including longer duration of computer work and less task variability.

Eighty-five per cent of people who spent more than eight hours a day working with a computer experienced neck pain, 74 per cent reported shoulder pain and 70 per cent reported lower back pain. Better workstation design, seating and health education has not resulted in any observable decrease in the number of office workers reporting pain over the last 20 to 30 years. Recent research shows that prolonged sitting and the lack of physical activity associated with computer work is the main problem, and may be contributing to cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity along with musculoskeletal pain.

The key to preventing musculoskeletal pain among office workers lies in changing workstation design including the use of standing workstations and discouraging internal emails so that we are obliged to stand and walk more often during work hours (Source: Safety Institute of Australia Professional News 1337).

## GROCON Dispute

It is timely to consider the OHS implications of recent longer-term crowd control events such as Occupy Melbourne and the GROCON dispute. The same OHS considerations apply to all duty being performed temporarily away from members' permanent workplace (e.g. bushfires, longer-term evidence searches, longer-term searches, etc.). The following OHS considerations are;

**General OHS:** The Force should ensure that members are adequately trained for the type of duties to be performed. Members need to have adequate backup available (Mounted Branch, Dog Squad, etc.) as well as adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE such as glasses, shields, long batons, helmets, etc.). A suitable de-briefing is also required post event to assess the outcome of the incident.

**Fatigue:** The Force needs to abide by WorkSafe Victoria's Fatigue Prevention in the Workplace guidelines. In practical terms this should mean: providing as much notice as possible in relation to change of shifts; providing the correct PPE; providing adequate rest breaks in pleasant break-out areas during the shift; allowing as much time as possible between shifts so members can physically and mentally recover and consider providing transport home for fatigued members.

**Amenities:** The Force need to abide by WorkSafe Victoria's Workplace Amenities and Work Environment compliance code. In particular, Clause 111 of the code says:

*Temporary amenities and facilities, such as dining caravans or sheds, bottled water, portable toilets and mobile change rooms and storage facilities, need to be provided by employers when employees are working remotely at a single location. Temporary amenities and facilities need to be located close to where the employees are working to enable easy access.*

See [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) for further information about fatigue prevention and amenities.

**Meals:** Members are entitled to meal allowance claims under clause 75 of the EBA. Alternatively, where the Force provides meals they must be 'adequate'. Members are entitled to expect breakfast-like meals at approximately breakfast time; lunch-like meals at approximately lunch time and dinner-like meals at approximately dinner time. Members should also expect to be asked about food intolerances, food allergies and dietary restrictions (e.g. vegetarian or Halal etc.). If the Force does not provide adequate meals members are entitled to purchase a meal and claim a meal allowance. If the claim for a meal allowance is denied contact our Industrial Relations Section.

Should the Force not reasonably try to prevent fatigue or not reasonably try to provide adequate amenities to members HSRs have access to the Force's OHS issue resolution process which includes all avenues from lodging 'Incident Notifications' on HR Assist to issuing Provisional Improvement Notices.

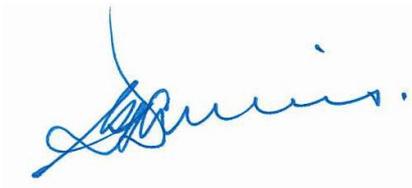
## Workers' Compensation Review

Victoria's Assistant Treasurer Gordon Rich-Phillips told *Inside OHS* that the government had asked the Essential Services Commission to advise on the structures and operations of Victoria's two accident compensation schemes - the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and WorkCover. "This is a government request for internal advice, not a comprehensive public review," says Rich-Phillips. He said the review would determine how they could be improved. (Source: *Inside OHS* September 2012).

## Bullying in Victorian Public Sector

The People Matters survey conducted by the State Services Authority tabled in May this year found that 36 per cent of public servants had witnessed workplace bullying in the past year, whilst 20 per cent said they had directly experienced bullying. However, only 3 per cent had submitted any sort of complaint. Almost 62,600 public servants were surveyed as part of the People Matters survey and over 18,500 responded.

Read the corresponding article from The Age online [HERE](#).



GREG DAVIES

**Secretary**