



# InTact

The Police Association Victoria OHS News

Issue 50

November 2015

## Health and Safety Representatives and Deputies – Have your say in the WorkSafe Compliance and Enforcement Review (The OHS Review)

In its 2014 election platform, the Victorian Government committed to conduct a review of the effectiveness of WorkSafe Victoria's (WorkSafe) compliance and enforcement of occupational health and safety. The OHS Review's terms of reference and important updates are available via the [Independent OHS Review](#) page.

This is your chance to provide valuable feedback that will help the Review Panel in making its recommendations to the Minister for Finance. The survey will take approximately 5-15 minutes to complete depending on the questions you wish to answer.

*We strongly advise members to ensure anonymity by selecting the appropriate option on Question 31 ('I want to remain anonymous'), at close of survey. Participants should be aware of confidentiality of police information provisions under s. 227 and 228 of the Victoria Police Act 2013, relating to the unlawful disclosure of police information. We advise that members are not to disclose information so as to identify any individual.*

You may access the survey via the Victorian Trades Hall Council's website. [click here](#)

The OHS Review will make their recommendations by the end of 2016.

## OHS Regulations Reform

The current Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 (OHS Regulations) which include manual handling, noise, the prevention of falls, plant, hazardous substances, asbestos, licences and major hazard facilities will expire in June 2017 in line with the requisite for regulations to be reviewed every 10 years.

The reform aims to achieve the following:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing regulations;
- Improve health and safety outcomes for workers;
- Identify and deliver savings to business without reducing safety standards;
- Ensure the regulations target the areas of greatest risk;
- Ensure the regulations deliver a proportionate response; and
- Streamline and modernise the regulations whilst maintaining best practice.

For more information visit [WorkSafe Victoria](#).

## Victoria Police Mental Health Review

The release of the Victoria Police Mental Health Review (The Review) has revealed the current state of affairs in relation to the psychological health and wellbeing status of our members. It highlights a desperate need for significant cultural change.

The Review tables 39 recommendations some linked to the recent Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Report.

Mental health stigma is as entrenched and widespread in VicPol as in many other organisations, hindering the ability of employees to seek help early on. A low level of organisation-wide mental health literacy has prompted The Review to seek a program to address this barrier. The recommendations also focus on leadership culture, boosting the capability of the Police Psychology Unit, special considerations for SOCIT members and increased support throughout careers from recruit to retirement and beyond. Further research into the organisational mental health and suicide risk profile of Victoria Police is also needed to gain a

better understanding of the true extent of this problem.

[See TPAV's response to the VicPol Mental Health Review here](#)

## **Wearing your IOEV**

Recently, via an email sent to members of rank Sergeant and above, Victoria Police made wearing the IOEV compulsory. This direction has come as a great shock to many members who feel that the IOEV is likely to cause them musculoskeletal disorders. However, please note the aim is to provide some protection to members from credible terror threats.

In the email there is an eight (8) step risk management process for members to follow including:

- getting your IOEV refitted by Logistics or OSTT to ensure it fits properly
- testing your IOEV when you enter and exit a vehicle; and
- trying to wear a covert ballistic vest.

Also note that point 7 of the email says:

*Members who provide a medical certificate that wearing the IOEV is detrimental to their condition will be provided with a suitable alternative ballistic option that may enable the member to manage his or her condition.*

Call the Association if you require assistance.

## **PTSD should be an Occupational Illness**

The Police Association and Ambulance Employees Australia have called on the Victorian Government to introduce legislation that would create a presumption that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in emergency services workers is work-related.

We believe the system needs to change so that an emergency services worker who is suffering from PTSD will have their workers' compensation claim automatically accepted.

This would mean relieving members of the added stress and burden of having to prove they have developed PTSD from their occupation in order to receive workers' compensation benefits before seeking the immediate help they need.

The Association is calling on the government to reverse this onus so that the WorkCover insurer has to show that an emergency services worker's PTSD was 'not' caused by their work.

You can read our submission to Government "[Trauma doesn't end when the shift does](#)" on our website and watch our [media release video here](#).

## **Stop Asbestos Importation Now!**

There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos.

Over 2,500 people are diagnosed with asbestos related diseases in Australia each year and the number is rising. Australia has the highest rates of the deadly disease, mesothelioma, in the world.

The Victoria Trades Hall Council is looking for your support to urge the Minister for Border Protection to take action.

The petition can be accessed via VTHC's campaigns page below.

[To sign the Stop Asbestos Importation Now petition click here.](#)

## **Victorian Trades Hall Council HSR Conference 2016**

Work is currently underway for the 2016 Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) Health and Safety Representatives Conference.

The Conference will be held on Tuesday 25 October at the World Trade Centre at Docklands. HSRs will have the right to attend on paid leave.

Keep an eye out for registrations via InTact.

## **Provision of Adequate Facilities at Work**

Under Occupational Health and Safety Legislation an employer has a duty to provide adequate facilities for workers.

These basic facilities outlined in the [Workplace Amenities and Work](#)

Environment Compliance Code, including but not limited to:

<b>Drinking water</b>	Free of charge, within 30m of each employee.
<b>Toilets</b>	Pg. 9-10 of Workplace Amenities and Work Environment Code
<b>Washing facilities&gt;Showers</b>	Hand washing basin with hot and cold water, 1 shower cubicle for every 10 employees who may need to shower. Pg. 18-19
<b>Dining Rooms/Mess Rooms</b>	For exclusive use of employees, tables, boiling water, microwave oven, refrigerator, at least 1m <sup>2</sup> of clear space for each person and be separate from work processes. Chairs or seats with back support for dining.
<b>Seating</b>	AS 4438 Height adjustable swivel chairs with 5 point base.
<b>Change Rooms</b>	If male and female employees need to change at the same time, separate male and female changing rooms.
<b>Lockers/Personal Storage</b>	Secure storage needs to be provided for employees to accommodate personal property.
<b>Workspace</b>	6m <sup>2</sup> per person of tertiary space – workstation including desk, chair, draws, filing cabinets etc. unless the employer can prove (e.g. via an Ergonomist) that lesser space is safe. See <u>WorkSafe's Officewise</u> , chapter 4.
<b>Lighting and Temperature</b>	320 lx for moderate difficulty tasks. Optimum temperature comfort for sedentary work is between 20°C and 26°C.

## VWorkSafe's New 'Work-related Stress' Webpage

WorkSafe Victoria has recently launched their new webpage focusing on work-related stress.

Work-related mental injury resulting in psychological harm is the second most common cause of workers' compensation claims in Australia. It currently accounts for 11 per cent of workers' compensation claims in Victoria, and one of the leading causes is work-related stress.

WorkSafe's new webpage provides information on how to prevent and manage

work-related stress, for employers and employees.

# Contact Us

For further health and safety advice contact our Senior Occupational Health and Safety Officers:

Michael Clark (North West Metro and Western Region)

Paul Hatton (Southern Metro and Eastern Region)

For information on the role of HSRs, elections, new and existing designated work groups, HSR tenure and our WorkSafe approved initial-level HSR training course contact:

Rashika Singh

03 9468 2600

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Official TPAV Page [www.tpav.org.au](http://www.tpav.org.au)

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