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Safety Institute of Australia
(NSW Division)

Research, workshops and case studies feature at The Safety Conference

New research into the safety of everything from female truck drivers to the use of safety gear in the construction industry and even work-life balance will be released at The Safety Conference in Sydney from October 28 to 30.

The factual focus of the research will be complemented by interactive workshops and a series of case studies that demonstrate the real-life impact of workplace safety programs and tragedies. The most hotly debated topic in the occupational health and safety profession – the role of human error in workplace injuries and fatalities – also looms large on The Safety Conference's agenda.

Hosted by the Safety Institute of Australia's NSW Division, the conference will cover seven themes, including transport, safety systems and practices, change management, human factors, and injury management. New in 2008 is Safety Saving the Environment.

Among the 60 or more international and local speakers will be the heads of Comcare, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and WorkCover NSW. The regulator is principal sponsor of The Safety Conference and representatives will discuss its plans for effective OHS regulation, long distance truck driver fatigue, problem solving, employer commitment, manual handling, injury management, staff fitness, and major hazard facilities.

A more personal perspective will come from Ambulance NSW's Keith Williams, who was a key member of the Beaconsfield mine rescue team. Another Australian workplace incident will be investigated by delegates at The Safety Conference, who will examine what went wrong and decide on the causes with the help of experts and witnesses. The investigation will be filmed for the professional development of managers responsible for workplace safety.

A more controversial viewpoint on the cause of injuries will come from North American author, Larry Wilson.

"Participants in the conference will see what has really caused over 99 per cent of all the acute injuries but, and this is a big but, what if you discover it isn't an easy pill to swallow?" Wilson said ahead of his October 30 address.

Apportioning responsibility will continue to feature in conference workshops for expert witnesses, while a preventative approach will be the flavour of OHS training sessions. Also up for challenge are the roles of stakeholders – unions, employers, regulators and OHS professionals – in workplace safety. The WorkCover NSW Hypothetical will engage representatives in a dynamic debate when moderator and broadcaster Adam Spencer delivers a series of challenges.

Conference chairman Barry Silburn said The Safety Conference program was designed to appeal to the spectrum of people involved in workplace safety, from senior managers through to OHS professionals and safety representatives.

"There's a great mix of practical information, the latest academic research and personal insights on offer at The Safety Conference in 2008," he said.

Sponsored by WorkCover NSW and Getex, The Safety Conference will run from October 28 to 30 at the Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park concurrently with The Safety Show Sydney. For more information, visit www.thesafetyshow.com, email safetyvisitor@aec.net.au or phone Australian Exhibitions & Conference on 03 9654 7773.

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Media: Marian Macdonald, Firefly Marketing, (03) 9736 4334, (0421) 530 944 or marianm@fireflymarketing.com.au

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EXHIBITIONS
& Conferences

Organiser: Australian Exhibitions & Conferences ABN 23 483 089 852
Level 2 / 267 Collins Street Melbourne Victoria Australia 3000
Tel 03 9654 7773 Fax 03 9654 5596
Email safetyconference@aec.net.au Web www.thesafetyshow.com