



## News in brief

### Non-Compliant Contractors – only a matter of time

Members are still having to compete with 'Men-Getter' / quasi shearing contractors who are still engaging workers as subcontractors whereby they have the short term belief that they will be able to avoid paying superannuation, worker's compensation premiums and payroll tax. As many before them having found out, it is only a matter of time before the authorities catch up with them. However, in the meantime there is the reality of this illegal activity destroying the 'fair' competitive environment for any 'law abiding' contractor trying to work in any district where this practice is taking place.

### Vic Faulkner

It was with sadness that we informed that valued SCAA Life Member, Vic Faulkner passed away in early October. Vic lived in Armidale and was not only a significant contributor to the shearing industry but more recently devoted a lot of time & energy to the management of his local bowling club. Vic will be sadly missed by all.

### Broken Leg

We heard recently that SCAA committee member Trevor King broke his leg. Here's to a speedy recovery (and stick to shearing, it's obviously safer!).

## Year in Review

It may be cliché to say it but this year has certainly raced by – I am currently planning next year and have had the realisation that the 2012 SHEARHARVEST Conference is only just over 5 months away! Although preparations are in full swing, there is a lot more to do as with all these type of events, 'the poison is in the detail'. In the coming month a draft agenda will be posted to the website but in the meantime book your flights and accommodation as it is sure to be a worthwhile event.

### Change of Management

Twenty-Eleven has seen some significant changes. One of the less obvious ones is the 'changing of the guard' in terms of the management of the Association. For the past 20 odd years, the Association has been predominantly led by Ivan Letchford, Frank Sutherland and Peter Kimber. This year has seen Ivan and Frank take up less active roles (Peter resigned from the committee in 2009) with Mick Schofield taking over the role of President, supported by other long time committee members, Warren Kimber and John Evans.

### AGM

Earlier in the year members attended the AGM in Sydney which was followed by dinner at the Summit Restaurant and later being entertained by the stage production of 'The Jersey Boys' – a good night was had by all. Some of the major points from the AGM:

The year was once again a successful one with memberships rising and subsequent revenues from subscriptions, sales of emery paper and other sundry items also increasing.

With the Association being in a sound financial position it was agreed that running the annual budget at closer to 'neutral' rather than a surplus of around \$20,000 per annum, would be more appropriate at

## Note from the Secretary

the moment in terms of using the Associations money to benefit member's and the industry as a whole. As a consequence of this undertaking, the committee agreed to engage Joint Action to provide a service around Injury management, as well as hosting the 2012 Shearharvest Conference, both of which will have a significant cost to the Association.

### Emery Paper

The year was not completely smooth sailing. The committee has had to deal with the issue of failed emery paper supply whereby Heiniger, our supplier of the past four years and great supporter of the SCAA, has had serious production issue with their emery, resulting in a recall and then no supply while the quality issue was resolved. This event prompted the committee to look at other suppliers leading to the decision to supply Tru-Test's Supergrind emery. The Association has initially been able to supply members with the paper at \$5.70 per sheet, including freight. The take up of this offer has been very strong to say the least however  
cont. page 2.

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what is believed to be a genuine error in Tru-Test's supply pricing has meant that the Supergrind emery will increase in price from by \$1.00 per sheet from 1 January 2012.

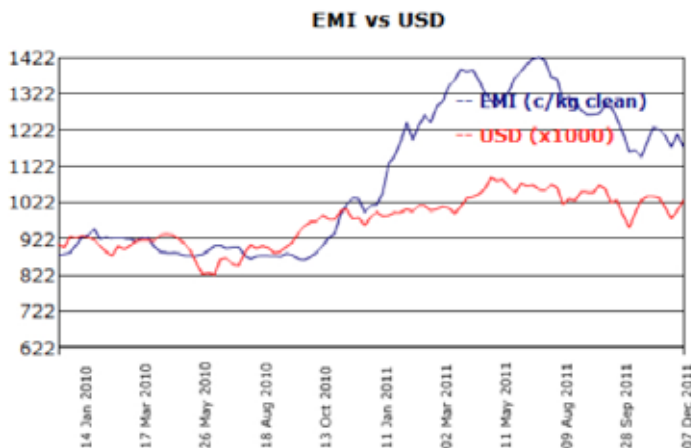
## Injury Management

There is still a major need for the industry to improve injury prevention and management. A major contributing factor as to why workers compensation premiums are so high across the country is because of the significantly above average time it takes for a worker to overcome an injury and return to work. The engagement of Joint Action (see other story) is 'a piece in the jigsaw' of improving the situation.

Workcover funding from both NSW and Victorian authorities has been non-existent – projects such as shearing Industry specific 'Injury Management', Victorian shed inspection and other workshops have virtually been on hold until more significant funding can be sought.

## Wool prices

The sustained rally in wool prices has certainly been a positive factor for the wool and consequently shearing contracting industry. The Eastern Market indicator started the year around AUD 1,000 cents and will finish the year around AUD 1,200 but having peaked at more than AUD 1,400 during the mid-year (see chart-below). With prices heading 'north', the demand for wool obviously is increased in the short term and it does bode well for any long term decisions for farming enterprises across the country and what will provide the business a better return on their investment than competing farming opportunities.



## Law Changes

Worker Health and Safety laws will change on 1 January 2012. Although the laws will change significantly, the changes are focused on aligning all state's individual laws to a common set of legislation and regulation that are the same in all States. From a small business employer's perspective, there are no significant practical changes for employers who actively manage their employees safety and have processes and documentation to support their process, which all SCAA members have available to them - See fact sheet.

In signing off for the year, I would like to thank Mick Schofield and the rest of the SCAA committee for their help and support during the year. I would also like to acknowledge all member's in the fact that your membership keeps inching the industry in the right direction and does make a difference! For this I congratulate and thank you for contributing. Merry Christmas and all the best for 2012!

Jason Letchford - Secretary

# New 'Harmonised' Laws for Worker's Health and Safety

## Worker health and safety

The introduction of a new WHS Act in each State and Territory across Australia which is based on model legislation developed by the Federal Government in consultation with the States and Territories will ensure that there is a high level of consistency in work health and safety legislation throughout Australia.

The harmonisation of work health and safety laws is part of the Council of Australian Governments' National Reform Agenda aiming to reduce regulatory burdens and create a seamless national economy.

In Australia each jurisdiction (State, Territory and the Commonwealth) is responsible for making and enforcing their own work health and safety laws. This means that in Australian there are currently 9 separate State/ Territory laws governing work health and safety. This causes frustrations and difficulties for the many Australian and International companies that work across our State borders, setting up operations in various States and Territories, contracting staff to work in other jurisdictions or manufacturing and supplying plant and equipment to be used at workplaces in various states. Such arrangements have required the people who operate, control and manage these companies to be aware of the requirements that apply in each State and Territory in which they operate. – See Fact sheet for more details

## Comment

Interestingly, unions will have a greater opportunity to effectively become Workcover/ Worksafe 'compliance officers'. It will be very interesting to see how this legislation is interpreted by the Unions (and the courts) to see what actions they take with this new power. I believe this could be the most significant change to arise from this legislation and it will certainly put contractors, but more so the wool grower / shed owner on notice. As we know, the unions have been itching to have more done about the poor working conditions of many sheds across the country. In terms of 'working conditions' this could trigger a 'quantum leap' in removing some of the obvious substandard working conditions that contractors have to endure in order to get the job done. Next question is that if it is a trigger for improvements in working conditions, will it have any impact on the attraction and retention of staff for the industry?

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# Noisy Sheds – Let’s do something about them!

**Source: Peter Taylor, Chairman of the NZ Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee.**

Everyone seems to have an opinion about noise levels in woolsheds. “It’s too loud - no it’s not, it’s just the radio. It’s the elbow, it’s the cogs, no - it’s the handpiece”. We have heard it all before. This confusion and genuine concern for everyone’s welfare has led to the NZ Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) to initiate a woolshed noise project.

The NZ Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee discussed these concerns with Dr John Wallaart from ACC, this resulted in an extensive woolshed noise testing project led by Dr David McBride from Otago University. The NZ Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee congratulates ACC on its collaborative approach with industry.

Everyone involved in shearing has a part to play: the farmer who provides the workplace, the shearing machines and wool presses; the designers of the shearing equipment; the shearing contractors and the people working in the shed.

The ideal woolshed would operate with a noise level of 85 decibels (dB), or ideally less. This would make it a safer place to work. To achieve this would require best practice in shed design and construction; good machinery maintenance; good workplace safety practices and the use of a well-positioned radio with volume restrictions. The H&SE Act






states that the modifications must be practicable, in other words feasible from a social, environmental and economic viewpoint.

Do we need personal protective equipment (PPE's) like ear plugs, if so what type? Can the workplace and the equipment be upgraded to lower the noise level?

The full answers will lie in the outcome of the work funded by ACC and undertaken by Dr David McBride of Otago University. In the interim here is a summary provided by The NZ Shearing Industry H&S Committee (with significant assistance from NZ’s ACC Injury Prevention team)

Most noise comes from the hand piece, cogs and the down tube but the radio, crashing of gates, the press and noise from sheep all add up to a concerning level of noise of between 86 to over 90db. Remember an increase of 3db is actually doubling the noise. The recognised maximum exposure to noise for 8hrs each day is 85db. Generally the noise in woolsheds is too loud when we consider the amount of time that we spend in them. Over time, people will lose hearing, to some degree, because of this.

It is possible to reduce this noise down to an acceptable level. How are we going to do it? (please refer to table below)

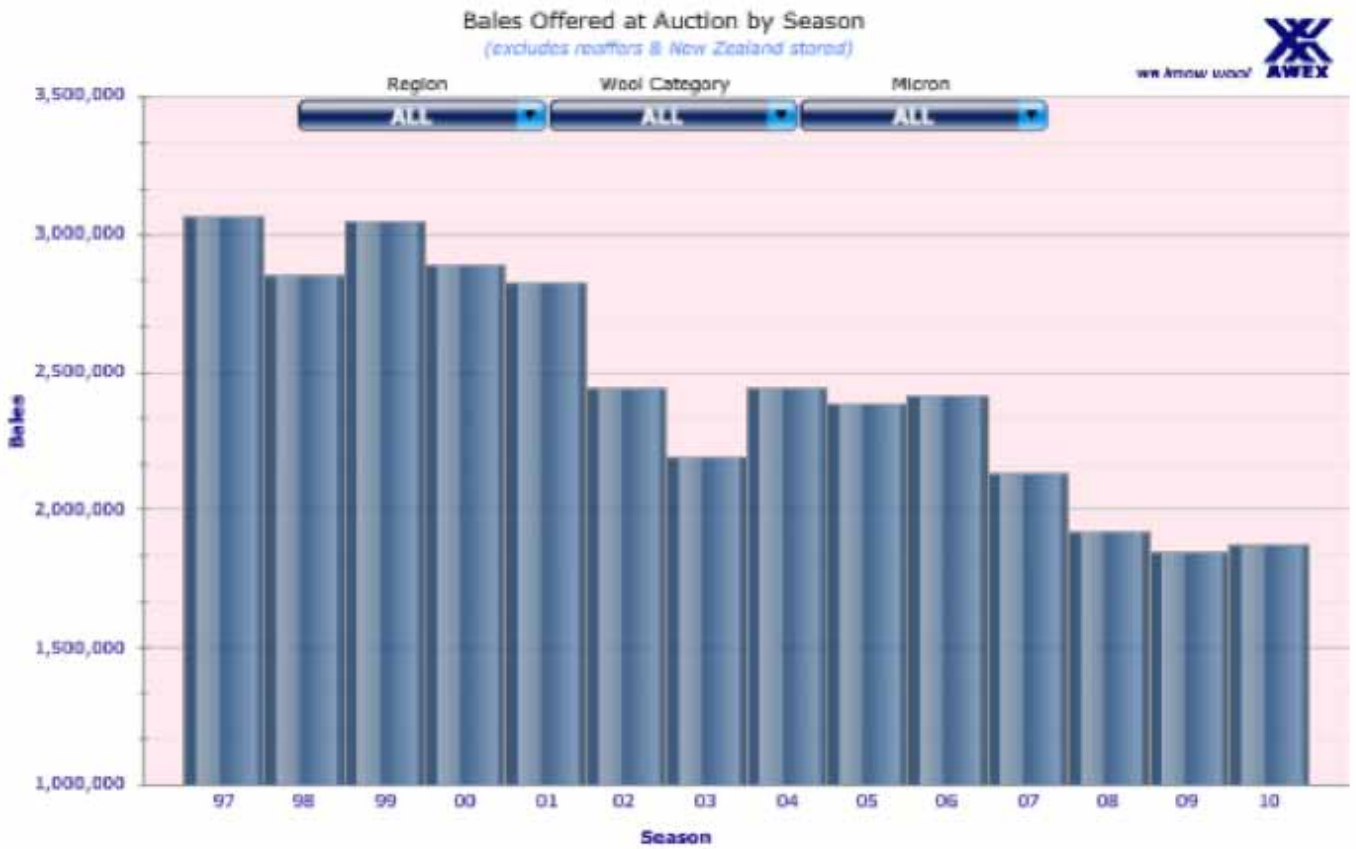
Protect ourselves NOW!	The long term plan
 Wear ear plugs, because the actual noise can't be fixed over night, and we need to protect ourselves	 There has been a lot of research done by Otago and Canterbury Universities to find out how bad the problem is, and what can be done about it!
 Place the radio high in the shed in a central spot so the sound is spread evenly	
 Contractors, should talk to the farmer about ways to reduce noise in the shed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take all practical steps to reduce noise from banging gates etc</li> <li>• When buying new machinery consider noise as a major factor</li> <li>• Keep all motors and down tubes well maintained               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up and lubricate moving parts in the down tubes (according to manufacturer's specifications)</li> <li>- Have shearing machines maintained by a professional on a regular basis</li> <li>- Make sure that motors are well mounted</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 We are working with the shearing gear companies to find ways of reducing some of the noise from new and old equipment

# Statistics

(source AWEX <http://www.awex.com.au/market-information/wool-statistics-year-book.html>)

“A picture says a thousand words”. The following charts may not tell a ‘thousand words’ but they sure do tell us some simple facts about the direction that the Wool market has taken in the past 13 years: Quality not Quantity is the name of the game.

The first chart shows total production (Bales offered at Auction) in 1997 at a little over 3 million, down from the peak of 5 million in 1990 (1,019 million /Kg) before the ‘floor price guarantee’ was removed, versus total production of around 1.8 million bales in 2010.



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**HOLIDAY INN  
GOLD COAST, QLD  
16 – 18 May 2012**

## **SHEAR HARVEST** 2012 *conference*

The Association in conjunction with the New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association (NZSCA), will be hosting the third wool harvesting Industry conference on the 16 – 18 May 2012 in the Gold Coast.

The conference will be a great opportunity for you to receive updates on industry issues, best practices, along with presentations and displays from industry bodies and suppliers.

There will be an industry dinner on the Wednesday night and in addition the conference is a great excuse to have a tax deductible trip to one of the great family holiday destinations.

So put the date in your diary.... 16 – 18 May 2012

The event will provide a forum for shearing contractors and industry suppliers to come together to develop a new vision for the Shearing Industry. Topics will include:

- Economic conditions of Australia and NZ
- Increasing your businesses Profitability
- Health and Safety – keeping your workers (and your business) safe
- How to be an "Employer of choice"
- Training Ourselves to manage our time better
- Dealing with Drugs and alcohol in the workplace
- General Management and computer workshops
- Representatives from the Superannuation industry, shearing supplies & insurance will attend

For bookings please email Lisa Morris – [scaashearvest@gmail.com](mailto:scaashearvest@gmail.com), or for more information please see our website or contact:

**Jason Letchford**

M 0412 600 586 F 02 9400 9083 E [secretary@scaa.org.au](mailto:secretary@scaa.org.au)

## 'Adopt a graduate' Programme

The SCAA has been contacted by Russell Paterson from the Indigenous Lands Corporation (ILC) and David Buttrey from Access Group Training (AGT) to inform us of the programme AGT is running in conjunction with the ILC, Dept. of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Fletchers International Exports and SCAA member Ian Bateman Shearing.

The programme comprises of a 13 week shearing and wool handling courses of which the David Buttrey is hoping that working with SCAA members may have mutual benefits to both employer and graduate - SCAA members will have access to "job ready" graduates and the graduates will have greater employment opportunity and continuity of work to further improve their skills and earning potential.

The programme has already delivered numerous graduates to members including Jason Wingfield and Ivan Letchford.

For anyone who would like to register their interest in having access to graduates, please contact

David Buttrey Mob: 0419 128 120 / Email: [davidb@agt.edu.au](mailto:davidb@agt.edu.au) / [www.agt.edu.au](http://www.agt.edu.au)

## JointAction

Hope fully you are all aware of the free service provided to SCAA members from the team at JointAction. The service has been available to members for the past six months and has the aim of providing SCAA member's with practical assistance in the area of injury prevention. The service also looks to provide guidelines for injury management, if an injury does occur.

If you do have any questions regarding basically anything to with workplace injuries, prevention and 'return to work' issues, don't delay as the unfortunate reality is that funding for this service is limited and unless we can find external financial support, the service may be would back in the new year.

Contact:

Roscoe McCord

JointAction Pty Ltd

Phone: +61 418 989 100

<http://www.jointaction.com.au>

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Association of Australia