



## OH&S Seminar Success

The regional OH&S seminar's held in October and November were a huge success, with more than one-hundred people attending the Dubbo, Wagga and Armidale meetings.

Publicised in rural newspapers, the ABC and radio station 2WEB the seminars were presented by Michael Lawrance. Arguably the leading expert in the

field of OH&S, Michael informed members of their responsibilities in terms of hazard identification and risk assessment.

The feedback from members was positive and they are now more aware of their liability in terms of responsibilities and costs.

A number of members could not attend due to the timing of the

meetings. SCAA plans to hold a seminar in Sydney on January 21st and are now taking bookings.

The new tally books have been very well received, and they are fast becoming the "bibles" for OH&S in the shearing shed. Note that new tallybooks will be distributed to members at the AGM in January.

## \$200,000 Shed Improvement Grant

The SCAA has successfully lobbied Workcover NSW to spend the balance of the funds from last year's shed-safety program. This new program aims to assist a greater number of shed owners by offering a limited number of grants of up to \$750 per shed owner to improve safety and working conditions.

The grants will be paid on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Workcover NSW will match any expenditure on selected shed improvements, up to \$750. Even though contractors do not own the workplace they carry the workers compensation insurance risk in shearing sheds and this is an ideal opportunity for contractors to encourage their clients to apply for this grant. As it is on a first-come-first-served basis, no time should be wasted in registering for the grant. Register for your kit by calling Workcover NSW, on 131050.

## REGISTER NOW!

An OH&S Seminar is planned for the weekend of the AGM in Sydney.

Registration forms will be emailed or faxed to members

Register ASAP

## Coming Events

- AGM date Saturday 22 January 2005 at the Castlereagh Inn, Castlereagh Street Sydney.
- Executive Committee meeting Friday 21st January in Sydney
- OH&S Seminar – Due to additional interest we are looking to hold an OH&S seminar on Friday 21st January in Sydney at the above venue. Please advise of your interest ASAP as we need a reasonable attendance to justify the cost.
- Remember that travelling to the AGM/OH&S seminar is tax deductible.

## Contacting SCAA

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## New Awards Rate

New Awards pay rates for shearing staff, came into effect on 31 October. The cost of shearing labour rose by approximately 4% for shed staff and cooks. The woolclassers are playing "catch-up" since they missed out on earlier safety-net increases. Their base rate has increased 9% since May this year.

Contractors should note that the Award increases are based on inflationary effects on the "cost of living". Contracting overheads have also increased - remember this when "re-pricing" the cost of contracting.

## Cost-Plus Pricing

Secretary Jason Letchford, is seeking feedback with regard to having a pro-forma **cost-plus** contract drawn up for members use. It would enable contractors to pass on the true cost of workers compensation for each job

Contracting cost-plus, **without** passing on the costs is an unsustainable business practice. The SCAA looks forward to your feedback regarding this critical management issue.

## On The Road

During November either Secretary Jason Letchford or a committee member attended the following meetings on your behalf:

- NSW Workcover rural IRG.
- NSW Workcover CEO forum on restructure of IRG's.
- Industrial Relations Commission hearing on the woolclassers awards.
- Review of the NSW workers compensation premium formula.

## Are You Exposed?

Did you realise you may be exposed personally to \$150,000 liability for each worker injury (if working in NSW)?

SCAA has become aware that there is a significant number of members who are operating their businesses as **sole-traders** or **partnerships**.

If this applies to you, contact your accountant or legal advisor to re-structure your business and limit you and/or your partner's personal liability.

## Victorian Workcover Rate Rise

Victorian Workcover recently announced a rise in premium rates from 8% to 12%. This represents nearly a 50% rise which no doubt will have dramatic impacts on Victorian contractors. SCAA Vice-President, Frank Sutherland is currently in consultation with the Australian Workers Union (AWU) and the Victorian Farmers Federation in order to develop a strategy to manage the impacts of these changes.

## Heavy Weights

Earlier this month ABC national radio highlighted the issue of work practices regarding heavy sheep - those in excess of 70kg. The issue is slowly gaining momentum and the AWU has indicated it will look at the OH&S implications and pay rates related to the handling of heavy sheep.

Changes in dealing with heavy weights could add to the shearing time of an individual sheep with additional labour required to control the sheep and potential higher incidences of back injuries to shearers.

## Ban on Mulesing?

A US boutique clothing retailer has banned Australian wool products in support of the anti-mulesing stand. The retailer perhaps feared a backlash from animal rights organisations or they saw it as an opportunity to get some cheap publicity. How this issue will impact on wool sales and a potential alternative to mulesing is unclear. Alternative practices will then pose the question of the cost of shearing either unmulsed sheep or sheep mulsed with the alternative practice.

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\$3.50 (+GST)**

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