



Worksafe Victoria: Wool Industry Fund

SCAA Vice-President, Frank Sutherland reports: Worksafe Victoria has allocated \$200,000 towards an OH&S initiative for the shearing industry. The SCAA has been working in conjunction with the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), the Australian Workers Union (AWU) to develop & administer the program and funding. The state minister John Landers successfully launched the program at "Ballyglunin Park", Hamilton Victoria. The program will include a number of workshops at various Victorian centres to cover all aspects of OH&S in the shearing industry. Furthermore the program is looking to include subsidies for back-harness supports for shearers & will look at other issues such as the tranquilising of rams.

New Agents for NSW Workcover

Under the recent reforms of the NSW Workcover workers compensation Insurance scheme, the seven new Workcover agents that have been awarded contracts to offer "Insurance" are:

- Allianz Australia Ltd
- Cambridge Integrated Services Pty Ltd
- CGU Insurance Ltd
- Employers Mutual Ltd
- Gallagher Bassett Services Workers Compensation NSW
- GIO Insurance Ltd
- QBE Insurance Ltd

Under the transition period arrangements, existing policies cannot be moved until after the 29th June 2006.

Recent questions regarding the Federal Pastoral Industry Award:

Paying super on 'found' shedhand's wages:

The SCAA will be monitoring any attempts by the AWU to change the way super is calculated on found Awards. The AWU has been in contact with one of our SA members accusing them of calculating Superannuation incorrectly. The argument is based on what the shedhands gross salary is: Section 19.2 of the Award states that the gross wage of a shed hand is the 'unfound' rate less the found amount. The AWU is arguing that the gross wage is the 'unfound' amount and that the 'found' amount is an expense deducted off the gross wage amount.

Costs of employing Woolclassers:

The cost of travel for a wool classer is calculated as the distance from their home to the shed at the commencement of the shed and the return journey on cut-out. As the Woolclasser is 'found', their accommodation and meals are to be provided for the duration of the shed, including weekends if the job continues over the weekend. Sounds all very simple but can be a costly exercise where the job is a suburban job and the woolclasser is not local. For example, If you are doing a suburban job on Kangaroo Island SA and you engage a Wool classer from Adelaide, you are up for the total km's travelled at \$0.29 cents per km in both directions or the fares incurred while travelling, plus an allowance of \$2.18 per hour (\$52.30 per day) while they are travelling, plus all accommodation costs and three meals per day. The issue needs to be highlighted as longer distances and expensive accommodation would be a very costly exercise.

Additional Service provided by the SCAA

The SCAA plays an active role in facilitating the sale or transfer of shearing runs from contractor to contractor. There is no fee for this service that a broker would otherwise charge thousands of dollars to provide. So if you are thinking about finding easier ways to make a living or know of someone looking to start shearing contracting or growing their current business, please contact the secretary.

New Stop-work powers of Workcover

Workcover Officers in NSW have recently been granted the power to enter and shutdown the workplace if they suspect the employer does not have a current workers compensation policy.

This may be useful legislation for SCAA members to assist in trying to 'weed out' unscrupulous contractors operating in your district. If you suspect that your competition is guilty of not having a current policy, please contact the secretary, who in turn will report the matter to Workcover.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI)'s Upright Shearing Platforms (UPSP)

Australian Wool Innovation recently invited SCAA President, Ivan Ietchford to join the AWI's Expert Advisory Group (EAG) which offers expert advice to the developers and AWI on the UPSP project.

The Peak Hill Industries UPSP is the first of half a dozen prototypes due to be tested by the shearing industry. The Peak Hill Industries UPSP was successfully launched in November in conjunction with the AWI AGM in Adelaide. SCAA members were invited to come and evaluate the machine.

The obvious benefits of the machine include:

- Sheep can be shorn with a normal shearing 'pattern'.
- the handling load of 'catch and drag' on shearers is eliminated.
- minimum effort is placed on the shearer to shear the sheep.
- commercial tallies can be achieved by the shearers working on the machine.

SCAA members Mark Baldwin (Tocumwal) and Ralph Blue (Dubbo) will be conducting field trials of the Peak Hill Industries UPSP machine during early 2006. AWI is looking to other SCAA members to assist with further trials and evaluation of the machine. If you have interest in taking part, please contact Joe Sullivan at AWI on 02 9299 5155.

Good luck to Kelly and Carol Smith

The SCAA secretary recently received a letter of resignation from Kelly and Carol Smith of Collarenebri, NSW. Kelly and Carol have been in the shearing industry for close to 30 years, with their son Trent following his father's footsteps. The Smith's expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Association for their assistance over these years. Phillip Skewes and his family have taken over the run and are now active members of the SCAA. On behalf of the association I wish Kelly and Carol all the best in the future and welcome The Skewes family into the Association.

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