



SCAA OH&S Funding Success

The SCAA has been successful with their application to WorkCover NSW and has been allocated \$89,000 for the 2007-08 financial year to fund Shearing Industry OH&S information Clearing House we are calling the Shear Health Information & Project Office or SHIPO to make it easy to remember.

The funding is a major break through for the shearing industry. It will be the first time in the industry's history that there will be a dedicated resource to organise, coordinate and drive projects to improve OH&S in the industry. Although the initial funding is focused on NSW, one of the initial tasks of the Project Office is to develop a national strategy that will entail lobbying all state Workcover bodies for ongoing funding to continue the organisations work.

Another project that the SHIPO will initially be undertaking is to fulfill the demand for more Shearing industry specific OH&S workshops. The workshops are being designed to satisfy the NSW Workcover requirements for receiving the NSW Workcover \$500 dollar rebate (see below).

The SCAA would like to thank shearing industry OH&S expert Michael Lawrance for his work in this win for the industry. The SCAA also thanks the AWU for their support of the project.

Workcover NSW \$500 safety rebate

WorkCover NSW is offering NSW employers a safety solutions rebate. The rebate is available to employers who adopt good solution to a safety problem in the workplace. WorkCover NSW will pay half your safety solution costs, up to \$500.

The rebate is available once only for each employer, but you may use it to address multiple solutions. To be eligible for the rebate, you must:

- Be a small business owner employing up to 20 full time workers (or the equivalent) and have a current workers compensation policy.
- Attend a WorkCover safety workshop or have an advisory visit from a Business Advisory Officer or an Inspector - to help you to manage your safety issues. (The SCAA will help you with this).
- Complete an action plan based on what you learn from the workshop or visit i.e. demonstrate how you have identified the safety problems in your workplace and how you will fix them (The SCAA will help you with this also)

What activities qualify for the subsidy?

Basically anything that improves safety in the workplace will be considered including: "black-box" - anti lock devices for electric plant, converting shaft drive overhead gear to electric anti-lock (e.g. Heiniger Evo plant), machine guarding, guard rails, improved flooring, permanent back harnesses supports, improved animal handling modifications, lifting aids, dangerous goods storage cabinets, improved ventilation etc

How to apply

The easiest way for SCAA members and their customers to apply for the subsidy, is to call the SCAA's new permanent OH&S consultant Michael Lawrance (see OH&S funding story) and he will guide you through the process.

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News in Brief

SCAA Office Holder Elections

On the 1st of May, the Election of Officers for the SCAA committee was declared by the Australian Electoral Commission: The officers are:

President: Ivan Letchford, **Vice-President(2):** Austin Grigg & Frank Sutherland, **Secretary/Treasurer:** Jason Letchford, **Trustees (2):** Peter Kimber & Warren Kimber.

As the number of nominations accepted did not exceed the number of positions to be filled, no election was required and the nominees were declared elected.

200 Years of Wool exports

Australian Wool innovation (AWI) reports that it has been 200 years since Australia exported its first bale of wool. Today, Australia stands firm as the world's leading producer of fine Merino wool, generating half a billion kilograms of fleece a year. To recognise the significant milestone, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, will be running an historical material exhibition from 25 July through to 22 August 2007. The exhibition will include wool samples from 1804 and other outstanding archival pieces along with a wool fashion exhibition that includes historical and contemporary garments from designer such as Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent and Giorgio Armani.

Shearing competition

Congratulations to SCAA member Steven Rigby upon winning the SSAA Tasmanian state championship in Campbell Town in May. Also congratulations to Dwayne Black, a key member of AWI / Western Institute of TAFE Shearing coaching staff, who recently took out the NSW title.

Both Steven and Dwayne have the opportunity to compete at the SSAA National Championships in Warrnambool VIC on October 26th- 27th 2007. Winner of the National Championships will earn a place in the Australian team that will challenge for the World Title being contested in Norway in October 2008.

Shearing Safety Summit - Melbourne

The Australian Workers Union hosted the second installment of the Shearing Safety summit in Melbourne, earlier in July. Along with the SCAA, the meeting was attended by representatives from Workcover NSW, Worksafe VIC, Workcover SA, New Zealand's Accident Compensation Corporation - ACC and various state AWU representatives.

In summary, the meeting achieved its objective of forming a Trans-Tasmanian steering committee that will have the purpose of determining best practices for worker OHS and compensation issues. Consequently the steering committee would be in a position to guide Workcover authorities, employers and workers to adopt policies that are in line with these best practices and in 'harmony' with the other states' legislation.

Although the recently acquired funding from Workcover NSW (see story page one) is not directly related to the Trans-Tasman OHS & Compensation policy alignment work being undertaken by the committee, the funds will assist the project significantly as one of the first tasks of the SHIPO is to consolidate volumes of data and information that have been published over recent years but never consolidated into a single source, that will be accessible by the whole industry.



Obituary - Kevin Heather

Kevin Heather was a very good left hand shearer and established himself as a highly respected shearing contractor.

Kevin and his family lived at Bannockburn for many years on a small property and all his sheds were in the Geelong to Shipton area, with the furthest only an hour away. Kevin was hands-on in the shed and besides running the team often did the pressing and penning up. His run was well established with usually 10 Months work, in mainly 4 to 8 stands sheds.

Kevin was a long time member and valuable asset to the Association. He later joined the SCAA's Executive Committee and attended many Annual General and Regional meetings.

Many years ago he saw the need for training in the industry and was responsible for calling a meeting to start the process of establishing a shearer and wool handler training organisation. This was not an easy task, as accreditation for such an organisation required a lot of effort and money.

Kevin persuaded the SCAA to lend his newly formed committee \$15,000 to obtain the required qualification. His goal was achieved when RTO status was granted and the SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Incorporated was formed. Its formation and accreditation meant that it was eligible for government funding and the SCAA loan was duly repaid.

Kevin sold the Bannockburn property and bought an old and two story home in Geelong in which he could see a lot of potential. There was a lot to do and many dollars were spent restoring and renovating. More recently, the Geelong house was sold and a new home was built at Indented Heads.

Besides the family, some of his main activities were fishing and camping at Indented heads and the Geelong Football Club. How pleased he would have been to learn of the great win at the old Kardinia Park by his beloved cats over the unbeaten West Coast Eagles, earlier in the year. Kevin and his wife Wendy had reserved seats at the park and his friends would comment that the game did not start until they were seated!

Kevin's community spirit and strong association with shearing led him to be a major contributor, representing the shearing industry at the Geelong show over many years.

Kevin retired from the industry and a few years ago was awarded with a life membership to the training organisation which he had worked so hard to start and see it prosper over the years.

The SCAA sends its sincere condolences to Wendy, Paul, Kristine and Jay from all his friends in the industry and at the SCAA. Although this is a time of sadness, Kevin's contribution will always be remembered.

Thanks to Frank Sutherland for this contribution.

Reminders

Drinking and drugs in the Workplace

Reminder: the safety of employees in the workplace, which includes accommodation areas during *after hours*, is the responsibility of the employer and the workplace owner (the farmer). 'Turning a blind eye' to drug use and alcohol abuse, is not an acceptable defence if any worker is injured in your workplace.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the use of hard drugs such as amphetamine based "crystal meth" is becoming more widespread. The WA media ran stories on shearing World Record holder Brandon Boyle, who is now doing random saliva tests on his workers to ensure they are not under the influence of drugs whilst in his workplace. Although the initiative is applauded by the SCAA, the cost reality (approx \$25 per test) for most contractors adopting a similar policy is somewhat unrealistic. The bottom line here is: if in doubt, they are out. Unfortunately you must take the approach that suspects are guilty until proven innocent.

Even more importantly if you know workers are using drugs or are drunk for that matter, firstly you will be liable for any resulting accidents and damage to humans and property. Secondly, the user needs to get help. Drug and alcohol HELP and SUPPORT contact numbers can be found on <http://www.adca.org.au/conflinks/helplines.htm>

Casual Worker Status

Employees employed in the shearing industry under the Pastoral Industry Awards are employed as casual workers. Sounds obvious but sometimes we need to remind ourselves of this fact.

For example, if you have a 'trouble maker', suspected drug user, drunks or any one who can not perform their required duties in a professional manner, you don't need to "sack" them, you simply 'do not have a job for them' tomorrow or when ever the next shed starts etc.

Industrial Relations Update

Two important developments affecting all employers have been announced this week. SCAA members will need to be aware of them and plan for their implementation:

- The Workplace Relations Fact Sheet has been publicly released, and all employers must now provide a copy of this Fact Sheet to their new and existing employees.
- The Australian Fair Pay Commission announced its 2007 Minimum Wage Decision, which increased the Federal Minimum Wage (FMW) by \$10.26 to \$522.12 per week.

I. Workplace Relations Fact Sheet public release

Under the most recent amendments to the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Commonwealth), all employers are required to distribute a Workplace Relations Fact Sheet to all employees. The Fact Sheet was launched on 4 July and must be provided to:

- all existing employees by 20 October 2007.
- all new employees must also be provided with a copy within 7 days of commencing employment.

The Workplace Relations Fact Sheet is produced by the Workplace Authority and contains information about the following matters:

- the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard
- the role of the Workplace Ombudsman and Workplace Authority
- the Fairness Test and protected

award conditions

- employees' rights when negotiating a workplace agreement, and
- the Workplace Infoline.



The Act also provides that other matters may also be added in future by way of regulations.

Employers may be liable for penalties of \$110 for each employee who does not receive the Fact Sheet, though the Government has indicated that the Workplace Ombudsman will seek voluntary compliance before considering any sanctions against employers.

One copy of Fact Sheet is enclosed

Employers may order copies of the Fact Sheet Workplace Infoline on 1300 363 264 or go to <http://www.workplaceauthority.gov.au/graphics.asp?showdoc=/employers/WorkplaceRelationsFactSheet.asp> to order printed copies

II. Federal Minimum Wage increase - Australian Fair Pay Commission Decision

The Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC) has announced its 2007 Minimum Wage Decision. The main components of the decision are:

- The Federal Minimum Wage (FMW) increases by \$10.26 to \$522.12 per week, or \$13.74 per hour
- All wages on pay scales up to \$700 per week increase by approximately \$10.25 per week, or \$0.27 per hour, and
- For pay scales of \$700 per week and above the increase is approximately \$5.40 per week, or \$0.14 per hour.

The increases come into effect on the first pay date after 1 October 2007. Pastoral Industry Award Pay Scale increases will be sent to members as soon as the calculations have been agreed by all parties. As a guide, the increase to the shearing rate for flock sheep will be approximately \$4 per hundred, taking the rate to \$225 per hundred.

Combined with the increases from its 2006 decision, the AFPC has increased minimum wages by \$37.62 per week since its first decision came into effect in December 2006 (an increase of \$27.36). The decision also confirms that future wage settings will be announced in July each year and come into effect in the following October.

The AFPC's decision also provides some further information on its forthcoming rationalisation of pay scales. The rationalisation process will commence later this year with the publication of an Issues Paper by the AFPC around September 2007, to which interested parties can respond through submissions.

The decision also states that the AFPC is commencing the process of creating and publishing new pay scales, though no timetable is provided for when this process is likely to be completed.

IR News – Two Rates of pay is here

STOP PRESS

Two rates of pay for the Shearing industry are now upon us: There will be a rate of pay for shearing performed by a company and a different rate of pay for shearing performed by a sole traders or partnerships. The exception to this will be in the state of Victoria, where all trading entities will fall under the Company rate.

Why?

The reason this has happened is due to the WorkChoices legislation that came into effect in March 2006. This legislation has stated that companies will cease to pay employees under traditional Awards and instead will now pay employees under (WorkChoices) Payscale. As Victoria has handed over all IR laws to the Commonwealth, all Victorian trading entities (companies, trusts with company trustees, sole traders and partnerships) will pay employees under the Workchoices Payscale.

Why now?

To date no Payscale have ever been published. Therefore companies (and Victorian employers are in a peculiar situation of having laws stating that they will now pay their employees Payscale

rates (not traditional Award rates) however the Commonwealth is yet to publish these Payscale rates of pay. In the past few months, the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) in consultation with the Australian Workers Union (AWU) and the SCAA, has undertaken the task of interpreting the legislation and converting the rates of pay from the Pastoral Industry Award into WorkChoice's Payscale. The calculations are being reviewed by the Department of Workplace Relations (DEWR) and will be sent to you when they are agreed.

When do they take effect?

WorkChoices came into effect in March 2006. Payscale came into effect as part of that legislation however as mentioned, no Payscale have been published by the relevant government body. So in summary, there is a law saying Payscale must be used but the law makers have left it up to industry to determine the specifics of the actual payscale. This is where we are up to now. So going forward, if you are trading as a company, a trust with a company trustee or based in Victoria, it would be advisable for you to start paying your employees based on the Payscale as soon as they become available.

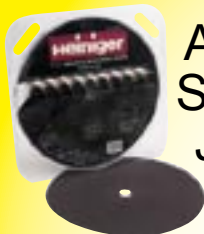
How much will the rates differ?

The difference in rates between WorkChoices and the Pastoral Industry Award for shearing flock sheep will be approximately \$1 per hundred. Under the payscale, flock sheep will be \$221.77 per hundred compared with \$220.76 per hundred under the Pastoral Industry Award. Furthermore, as part of the WorkChoices legislation, rates of pay will be paid on an hourly basis, not by the run (2 hours). (Note: this does not change the need to pay staff for the whole run or half day where applicable). It appears that under WorkChoice's Payscale, that although shearing rates will increase slightly (0.5%), shed staff's hourly rate will be slightly less (approx \$0.20) per hour. Cooks will become more expensive as they move from a day rate to an hourly rate.

Will these Payscale change on 1 October with the Award rates?

Yes – new rates will be published as soon as all parties agree to numbers. The increase will be approximately 2% or \$4 per hundred.

EMERY DEAL EXCLUSIVE TO SCAA MEMBERS



An exclusive deal** is available to SCAA members for the months of July and August 2007. Purchase **200 sheets of Heiniger Brown Emery** to receive a **FREE Heiniger "Hoodie" Jumper**. Simply send in a copy of your SCAA Invoice with your details to Heiniger Australia, Attn: "Marketing", 46 Miguel Road, BIBRA LAKE, WA, 6163.

Heiniger "Hoodie" available in sizes S, M, L, XL, please state size of jumper with your details.

**** Conditions apply. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. While stocks last. Claims must be received by Heiniger by 30th September 2007.**

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