



MEDIA RELEASE

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Construction industry takes action on safety

The Australian building and construction industry has developed a Voluntary Code of Practice (VCOP) to combat the unacceptably high death and injury rates of workers on Australian building sites.

On average, one worker a week dies on construction sites in Australia and many more are seriously injured.

Chairman of Engineers Australia Taskforce on Construction Safety, Bill Wild, also Chief Operating Officer of Leighton Holdings, said this fatality rate was the highest of any industry in Australia – three times the national average.

“The VCOP has been developed to reduce this rate of injury and decrease unnecessary regulation across States,” Mr Wild said.

“The VCOP is voluntary rather than mandatory,” he said.

“It is designed to integrate occupational health and safety into strategic decision-making by owners, clients, designers and constructions in order to reduce workplace injuries within the construction industry.”

The Safer Construction Project was commissioned by Engineers Australia in response to the recognised need to reduce accidents in construction processes.

The CRC for *Construction Innovation* is providing the industry research leadership in coordinating and funding this key project. Additional industry supporters are the Australian Contractors' Association, Property Council of Australia, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Association of Consulting Engineers Australia, Australian Procurement and Construction Council, Master Builders Australia and the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner.

Mr Wild said it was crucial for industry to drive this project and said the VCOP was being circulated to key industry groups, as part of a three month consultation process.

“The VCOP will be a guide for policy development in this area and by providing feedback to this initiative, industry will be able to shape the procurement, design, construction and commissioning of safer projects in the future,” he said.

Dr Keith Hampson, CEO of the CRC for *Construction Innovation*, said the VCOP would deliver improvement to Australian workers.

“The VCOP has been developed following a detailed review of practical Australian and international best practice initiatives to identify the key processes that create a safer construction industry,” Dr Hampson said.



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The VCOP and guidelines for providing feedback are available from the CRC for *Construction Innovation* website www.construction-innovation.info. Industry organisations are invited to download the document and circulate information to their members.

The deadline for feedback submissions is 22 June 2007.

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