

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NEW FRAMEWORK FOR SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION

A new workplace safety framework aimed at improving safety on Australian construction sites and developed by Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for *Construction Innovation* was launched today by the Minister for Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews.

The framework aims to bring about a long-term cultural and behavioral change in the building and construction industry to improve occupational health and safety (OH&S) practices. It is estimated that one person dies each week on Australian construction sites and there are thousands of serious injuries reported by the industry each year.

The framework, the key recommendation of the ***A Construction Safety Competency Framework*** report, is the result of industry research over two years. It is unique in terms of the scope of partnership and collaborative working between industry, Government, researchers and unions.

Mr Andrews commended the CRC for *Construction Innovation* for its leadership in addressing the significant cultural issues impacting workplace safety in the construction industry.

“A standardised safety framework makes it possible for the industry as a whole to proactively improve the behaviours and attitudes of the site managers who influence safety on construction sites the most,” Mr Andrews said.

Project Leader, John Holland Group Safety Manager, Dean Cipolla, said the transient nature of the construction industry had contributed to the high number of deaths and injuries across the industry.

“Many Australian construction sites have a poor safety culture, which has contributed to a fatality rate more than five times higher than the mining industry not to mention many thousands of avoidable injuries,” Mr Cipolla said.

“Labour mobility makes it difficult for any one company to consistently influence safety attitudes and behaviours because workers and sub-contractors hear different safety messages when they move to different companies, projects and sites. In addition, the sector traditionally has not viewed behaviours such as communication and leadership as a necessary part of safety competency.”

The framework, designed for use by safety managers, senior managers and executives, provides a guide on how to create a positive safety culture by ensuring key staff such as project managers, supervisors, OH&S advisors and engineers are aware of and can effectively execute tasks needed to manage OH&S.

CRC *Construction Innovation* Chairman, John McCarthy said: “We plan to develop more world-class industry development programs that will bring unions, Government, researchers and the private sector together to make construction sites safer for workers,” Mr McCarthy said.

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