

Construction safety an industry wide responsibility: Wild

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LEIGHTON Holdings chief operating officer Bill Wild is calling on clients and designers to take more responsibility for safety on construction sites to curb the unacceptably high rate of deaths and injuries.

In a paper to be delivered at the upcoming 2nd Construction Leaders Industry Conference being held on the Gold Coast, Wild said clients should include safety as key criteria when evaluating tenders, and designers should modify the permanent features of their projects to ensure a safe workplace.



"Research suggests a significant proportion of construction safety incidents – possibly as high as 50 percent of all injuries and fatalities – partly stem from failure to take account of occupational health and safety considerations at the design and procurement stage of a construction project," he said.

"For most of the industry, safety is the constructor's problem. It is not the responsibility of owners or designers. Even the law supports this approach.

"There is little doubt in my mind that on balance the evidence is that a greater spread of responsibility across all of the stakeholders in the construction process is a key to improving safety performance."

Engineers Australia, which is working with key stakeholders in the Australian construction industry, has developed a draft code of practice which seeks to improve the ability of the industry as a whole to deliver safer building sites and healthier employees.

Engineers Australia commissioned the Safer Construction Taskforce in response to the recognised need to reduce accidents in the construction industry.

According to Wild, the three elements of the construction industry have formally worked together to find a solution, which is critical as the industry wide Code of Practice for Safer Construction aims to integrate occupational health and safety into strategic and operational decision making at all stages of a project.

"The code is intended to be a document that leads discussion, and hopefully industry change, as well as a practical tool which can be used across the industry – by clients, designers and constructors; by large firms and small ones; and by legislators and others," he said.

The code of practice will be launched in September.

The 2nd Construction Leaders Industry Conference is being held on July 6 at the Royal Pines Resort.

Visit Australian Construction Industry Forum for more information.