

High fatality rate prompts action by construction industry

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WITH a fatality rate higher than any other industry in Australia, the **construction sector has been forced to address the unacceptably high death and injury rates of workers on Australian building sites.**

The Australian building and **construction** industry has developed a Voluntary Code of Practice (VCOP), as part of the Safer **Construction** Project commissioned by Engineers Australia, to help prevent further fatalities and injuries during **construction** processes.



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

Chairman of the Engineers Australia Taskforce on **Construction** Safety Bill Wild, also chief operating officer of Leighton Holdings, said this fatality rate was three times the national average.

"The VCOP has been developed to reduce this rate of injury and decrease unnecessary regulation across states. 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 Cooperative Research Centre for **Construction** Innovation is providing the industry research leadership in coordinating and funding the project.

The VCOP is being circulated to key industry groups as part of a three-month consultation process.

Wild said it would be a guide for policy development in this area and by providing feedback to the initiative, industry would be able to shape the procurement, design, **construction** and commissioning of safer projects in the future.

The VCOP and guidelines for providing feedback are available at www.construction-innovation.info

The deadline for feedback submissions is June 22.