

Hockey launches new safety guide for builders

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THE Australian construction industry is working to address the unacceptably high death and injury rates of workers on Australian building sites through the launch of the Guide to Best Practice for Safer Construction in Canberra today.

The guide is being launched by federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Joe Hockey and forms part of the Safer Construction Project, commissioned by Engineers Australia, to help prevent further fatalities and injuries during construction processes.

The Guide to Best Practice for Safer Construction is designed to integrate occupational health and safety into strategic decision making by owners, clients, designers and constructors in order to reduce workplace injuries within the industry.

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

Engineers Australia Taskforce on Construction Safety chairman Bill Wild, also chief operating officer of Leighton Holdings, said all industry stakeholders consider this rate, which is nearly three times the all-industry average, to be unacceptable.

"The Guide to Best Practice for Safer Construction has been developed following significant industry input and collaboration, and a detailed review of practical Australian and international best practice initiatives," he said.

"It suggests a framework aimed at improving safety performance on construction projects and covers all stages of a project: planning, design, construction and post-construction."

The guide outlines six best practice principles to manage OH&S within project processes.

These principles aim to establish a foundation for the collaboration of stakeholders – client, designer and constructor – who can all impact on OH&S performance.

To introduce the guide to industry, a series of workshops will be held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth during September and October.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation provided the industry research leadership in coordinating and funding the project.

The construction industry was encouraged to have its say on the new guide during a three-month consultation process.

Visit Safer Construction Workshops for more information.

