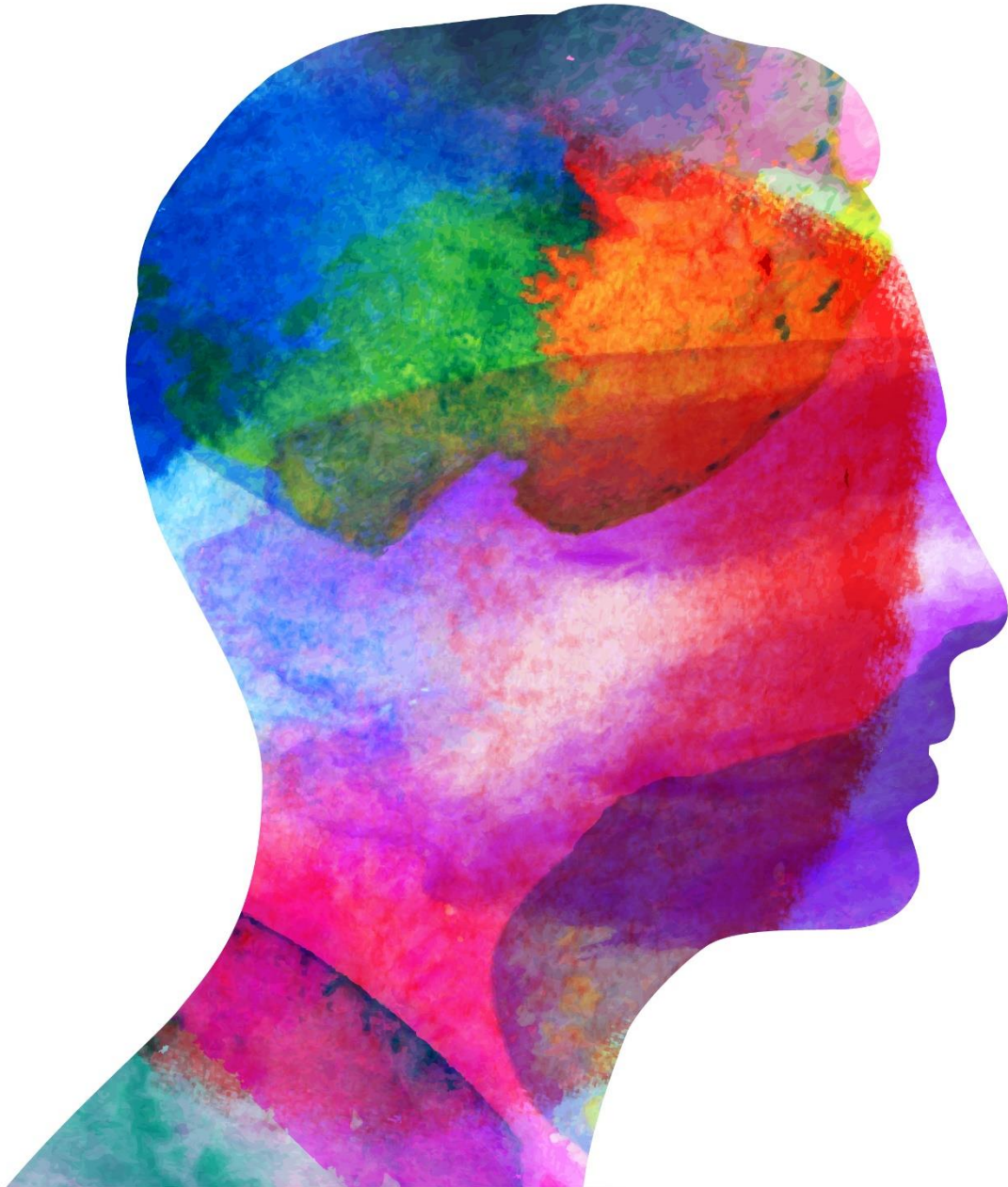


# *Mental First Aid*



- **The Real Cost of Rail Accidents**
- **Safety Leadership for Rail Industry**
- **At-Risk Workers**

**June 2019**

# Welcome to the June Safety Action News

In this month's Safety Action News, Ben explains mental health first aid training and why it should be an important part of your overall mental health / well-being program.

Stephen Weber shares his insights into why you need to identify, understand, and support workers who are at greater risk because of their unique characteristics, such as age or lack of experience.

Also read about recent changes to the Vic OHS Act, upcoming training and our new website coming soon.



Andrea Rowe, General Manager

**Stay safe!**

Andrea Rowe

## The Safety Action Team



Gary Rowe, CEO



Katie Weber



Dr. Stephen Weber



Zara McMahon



Ben Olih

## *Real Cost of Rail Trespass Accidents*

Last month I reported on the surprisingly high number of railway trespass accidents and their financial cost to the community.

However, a good friend and big-hearted heritage rail enthusiast (Kym) has written to remind me of the real cost of these accidents which include the initial shock and trauma and the often long lasting debilitating mental stress.

Kym says "more than the dollar cost though is the human cost in terms of the trauma suffered by Rail Traffic Crew in being involved in the incident or responding.

What a lot of non-rail people have difficulty in perceiving is how sickening the feeling is when you cannot swerve a train or tram – it is going in the one direction on the rails.

When driving a car you are usually able in most cases to veer left or right to help avoid a collision, but on rail there is no swerving. The momentum of train and trams also means that stopping to avoid is not achievable in most cases. Some rail crew never recover from an incident and the trauma effect that it has on them.

The flow-on impacts continue to; railway response crews, emergency services, infrastructure maintenance staff, rolling stock maintenance staff, rail investigators and rail operations first response personnel, who have to respond to incidents and experience the end results of trespass or suicides.

It also affects passengers due to the delays from the incident when rail services are stopped and having to wait for substitute bus services to be provided.

The risk of trespassing is made worse when the trespasser is on their phone or has headphones on, as they quickly lose situational awareness.

All that being said, railways also have their part to play in ensuring safe public access to all stations and rail facilities, and not tolerate circumstances which encourage the public to cross the tracks at unapproved and unsafe locations."

*Thanks Kym - Gary Rowe, CEO*



You cannot swerve a train or tram to miss obstructions

## ***What is Mental Health First Aid?*** By Benedict Olih

**Mental health first aid** is initial support provided to a person who is going through a mental health crisis; developing a mental illness; or assistance from friends or work colleague who observe signs of stress or abnormal behaviour.

It is important to note that that this does not include diagnosing mental health conditions which is usually done by trained medical personnel.

A worker trained to give mental first-aid is usually trained in the following:

- What is mental health?
- The common types of mental illness
- Managing a mental health crisis
- How to identify and respond to colleagues at risk
- Support colleagues in the workplace
- Provide information on support services
- Tips on self-care for themselves after providing support



**Mental health crisis / emergency:** A crisis or emergency can occur when a person is overcome by stress, whether home or work related, and can pose a danger to themselves or others in the workplace. When this occurs, immediate action is required to support the person going through such episode.

Persons experiencing a crisis can exhibit a range of symptoms that include but not limited to sudden mood swings, confused thinking, hallucinations, pacing uncontrollably, using suicidal phrases, hysterical behaviours, threat to harm themselves or others.

A crisis can affect anyone and can be triggered by many stressors such as;

- Sickness or death of a loved one;
- Inability to meet work related targets or goals;
- Anxiety as a result of new role;
- Financial stress;
- Relationship breakdown both in their personal life or workplace.

While many of these stressors might not be work-related, there is a high likelihood that a mental crisis might occur at work due to long day-time work hours. Therefore, it is important that employers provide training, information and resources to all front-line manager and supervisors to help them deal with a mental health crisis.

**Growing trend of mental illness:** Statistics tell us that 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental health episode at some time in their life. This implies is that you have a higher likelihood of managing or supporting a colleague with mental episode than an industrial accident.

Mental illness not only affects a worker's productivity and personal wellbeing but ultimately impacts on the overall business performance. Studies show that investment in mental health in the workplace can yield significant dividend. Ensuring that you provide a workplace that would not harm the health of our employees including their mental health is part of the duty of care. Employees tend to thrive in environments where they feel valued and supported. Since a healthy mind is the most important asset of any worker as it offers the bedrock where all their unique skills depend upon, it is a good investment to ensure their mental health.

Mental first aid is as important as the traditional first aid. It is therefore important that every business, regardless of its size, ensures that information is readily available in the event of a mental health crisis.

We will provide more information on this important topic in part 2 in the following edition.

*SafeWork NSW recently announced that inspectors will be conducting psychosocial risk assessments during site visits.*

Register to attend the ½ day workshop on the Management of Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 [click here](#).

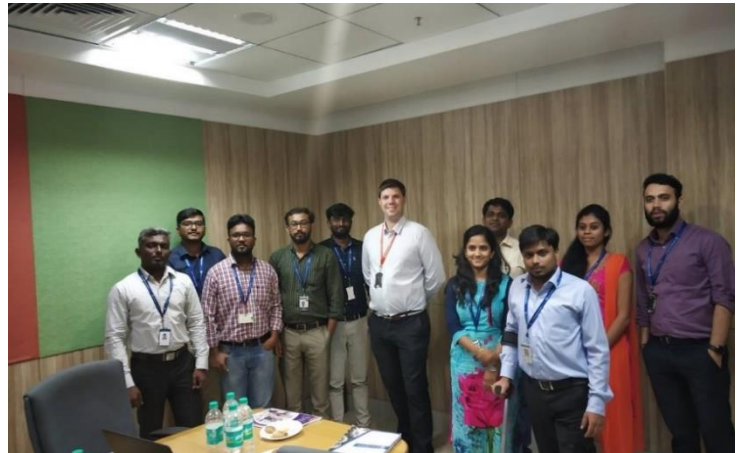
## ***Safety Leadership in Metro Trains*** *By Dr Stephen Weber*

Safety Action is working with Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) to deliver a tailored training program for all signal contractors working on the MTM rail system. The safety leadership workshop includes Metro's safety rules and procedures for contractors, case studies and duty of care obligations.

This workshop is now a mandatory competency for all contractors who undertake work on MTM's signal network.

Stephen Weber recently delivered two of these courses in Bangalore, India, which was warmly received by all participants and their organisations.

Safety Action deliver this safety leadership program focusing on safety in design and courage & responsibilities as part of a global project team, working towards achieving safe and well-managed delivery of projects.



Stephen Weber with rail signal safety workshop participants in Bangalore, India last month.

### ***Tip of the Month***

***IF ATTACKED BY A GROUP OF CLOWNS –  
GO FOR THE JUGGLER***



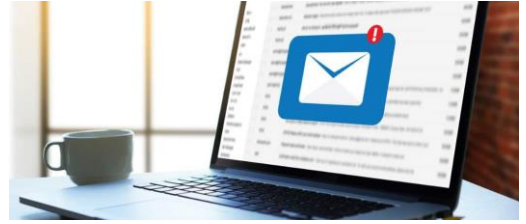
## Victorian OHS Act Changes

Some minor amendments were made to the Victorian OHS Act, commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Section 36 - How employees are to be consulted, has been repealed and its requirements merged unchanged into Section 35 - Duty of employers to consult.

The penalty units for breaches have also been inserted in S.35 e.g. 180 penalty units for individuals (currently almost \$30,000) and 360 penalty units for companies (over \$58,000).

Section 64 – Service of provisional improvement notice and S.115 – Service of notices, has been amended to specifically allow serving of notices electronically e.g. sending them by email.



## Safety Action Website Face-Lift

We are excited to announce that in the coming weeks we will be rolling out new features and services on our website [www.safetyaction.com.au](http://www.safetyaction.com.au). Our team has been working hard to create a new, modern site to improve your online experience and make it easier to find the information you want.

The fresh visual format will make navigating our site simpler, including to new areas such as our growing library of Podcasts and webinars.

We have also created a brand new portal for our Safety Helpline clients, making accessing your tools, information and resources quick and easy.

If you have any suggestions or experience any issues please contact Zara or any of our team on 03 8544 4300 or [enquiries@safetyaction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@safetyaction.com.au).

## Hazardous Chemicals Workshop

*Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 9.00 AM – 1.00 PM – at  
Safety Action Boardroom, Clayton VIC*

Learn how to safely handle, store and manage chemicals.

[Click here to register.](#)



# Who are the Most Vulnerable Workers?

By Dr Stephen Weber

I was privileged to present at the 2019 National Health & Safety Conference held in Sydney last month which was hosted by the Safety Institute of Australia. My presentation was on identifying and controlling risks to at-risk workers'. The purpose of my presentation was to outline the unique vulnerabilities and changing risks which are faced by every worker over time and which organisations often over-look in their traditional safety programs.

The model used to identify these vulnerabilities was outlined, through a case study where four key 'categories' of workers were identified with unique, physiological, psychological and cultural risks. The four categories include:

1. **Young workers** (defined as a worker who is less than 25 years of age);
2. **Older workers** (defined as any worker over the age of 60);
3. **Contractors** including labour-hire workers, and
4. **Returning workers** and workers transferring roles within an organisation.



By identifying the risks specific to these categories of workers we were able to make simple adaptations to existing safety programs to reduce the risks for these workers.

Prior to the conference I was invited to talk with Andrew Barrett on his podcast, 'Safety on Tap'.

I invite you to listen to our discussion on changing your organisation mindset beyond the one size fits all model of the 'typical worker' towards focusing on the kinds of people at work, who by virtue of certain characteristics, are more vulnerable to harm e.g. "at-risk workers".

[Click here](#) to listen to the 'Safety on Tap' podcast.

*For more information on at-risk workers' please contact Stephen Weber by email [enquiries@safetyaction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@safetyaction.com.au) or T. 03 8544 4300*

## SIA New Name

At the SAFETYSCAPE Convention, the Safety Institute of Australia (SIA), the national association for the health and safety profession, announced it will be changing names to 'The Australian Institute of Health and Safety.'