

Meeting the challenge of maintaining required levels of safety capability in a growing or changing workforce

A Workplace Diversity session presentation by
Harold Downes at the 2006 Queensland Mining
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Freehills

What is the challenge?

- work forces are looking different
- equipment is being upgraded
- work methods are changing
- the focus on safety is intensifying
- Can we rely on common sense?

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So is common sense enough?

lawn mowing

do you **A**lways / **S**ometimes / **N**ever

– remove stones pre cut A / S / N

– switch off to empty basket A / S / N

– switch off if neighbour arrives A / S / N

– clean the mower afterwards A / S / N

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A hypothesis

• competency \neq training

• training \neq competency

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A competency training case study

- **Background**

- Operator assessed and confirmed competent to operate Non Slewing Mobile Cranes
- Dogger assessed and confirmed competent
- Operator and doggers were new to the Franna
- They picked up a partially completed task commenced by the team that usually operated the Franna

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A competency versus training case study

- **Incident**

- Operator and dogger used the already rigged chains to lift the beam
- rigging was checked
- beam was lifted
- Franna reversed across terrain with a 3° cross slope, articulated to the right and commenced moving forward
- weight came off the rear and the crane rolled onto its right side
- Operator and dogman sustained minor injuries

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A competency versus training case study

- So what went wrong?
 - Franna warning system only functions on straight lifts
 - Franna load charts are area specific - one for straight lifts, another requiring de-rating when articulated through $>10^\circ$ and another for operations on cross slopes
 - The charts and operator manual were in the cabin
 - Operator relied on the warning system to indicate whether the lift was within safe working limits

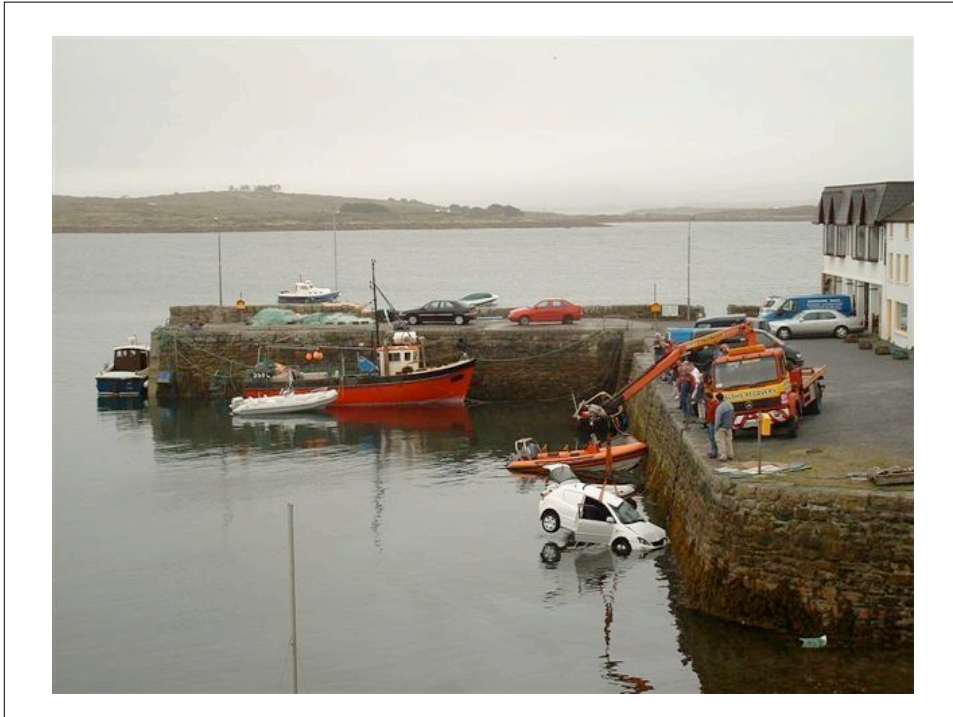
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A competency versus training case study

- What did the Taproot investigation find
 - inadequate training was a basic cause
 - notwithstanding the verification of competency, the operator had a training deficiency
 - generic and not plant specific training
 - inadequate pre job briefing

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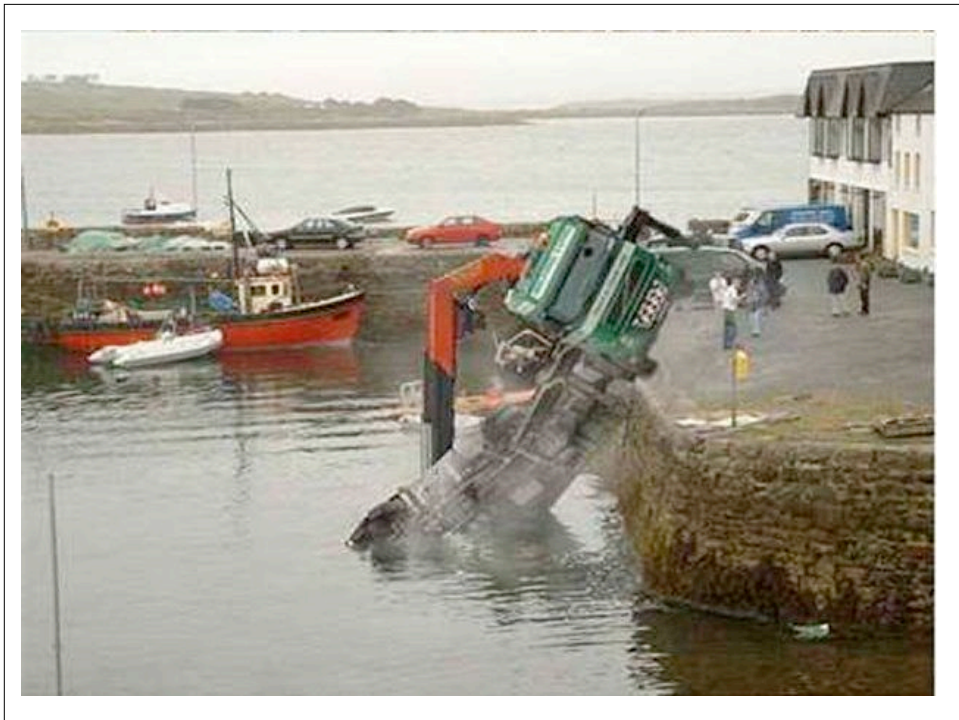
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Freehills



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Construction projects and the allocation of control and risk

- Significant levels of construction in Queensland in the mining industry
- increasingly seeing contractors relying on workers with construction experience but no mining construction experience
- pure construction based workers come from a philosophy of the Principal Contractor regime under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*
- different cultures exist between construction workers and mine operators

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Construction projects and the allocation of control and risk

- evidence is emerging of construction workers causing safety exposures on mine sites
- for example
 - drug and alcohol testing does not occur on construction sites

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Construction projects and allocation of control and risk

- The *WHS Act* does not apply to a mine to which the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999* or *Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999* applies
- The *WHS Act* has a strict regime governing construction workplaces and allows for the statutory safety obligations to be delegated to a Principal Contractor (who is seldom, if ever, the client)
- Under the *CMSH* and *MQSH* Acts, construction on a mine must be performed under the safety and health management system provided for by the *SSE* usually to the client or its representative

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Construction projects and allocation of control and risk

- Where is the risk allocated?
 - On construction workplaces the safety co-ordination obligations vest in the PC and the Construction Safety Plan
 - On mines, the safety co-ordination obligations vest in the *SSE* and the *SHMS*
- Mining does not recognise that a PC should have principal responsibility for construction work

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A case study on the allocation of risk for construction projects

- overall responsibility is with the SSE for '*on site activities*' which would include all on site construction
- is the expectation that an SSE (who may be a mining engineer) should, for example, be familiar with civil or mechanical engineering principles and how civil engineering companies co-ordinate hazards, risks, JSAs etc
- for example, how would an SSE ensure that '*risk to persons from coal mining operations is at an acceptable level*' in a construction environment?

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Examples of the conflict between construction and mining

- Examples:
 - the compulsory fitness for work assessments for alcohol will have to be applied to the construction workers
 - how does the SSE control the stress levels or risks in the work of a plasterer in the site office?
 - the contractor must appreciate that it is subservient to the SHMS, not only the Construction Safety Plan
- All of this may prove to be extremely stressful for a SSE

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Stress test

- On a scale of 1 to 10 how stressful would it be if
 - driving home over the Story Bridge on a Friday night and your car breaks down

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Stress test

- On a scale of 1 to 10 how stressful would it be if
 - you get home and your partners says s/he has cancer and 3 months to live
- Conclusion – it is likely that a SSE and PC would have different views as to what constitutes an acceptable level of risk form the operation so that it is
 - within acceptable limits, and
 - as low as reasonably possible

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Change management following procurement

- How does procurement of services, plant and equipment satisfy safety requirements at the front line?
- How reliable are the contractors?
- their performance is likely to impact on your safety compliance

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The challenge

- contractor use is increasing, both on site and off site
- equipment is becoming more complex requiring OEM / offsite contractors
- Many contractors have more expertise than the client
- new and old equipment for the same operation will often be in use simultaneously
- what steps can be taken by procurement to satisfy the safety requirements?

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Contractor safety Management

- **NOTE** Employees include contractors, subbies etc and their employees for matters over which control is exercised – these are non delegable obligations
- Ensure and demonstrate that the contractor
 - is right for the job
 - has safe work practices, including risk assessments and complies with the regs and any Australian Standards etc
 - undertakes task specific assessments, training, risk control etc
 - has supervision and performance is monitored
 - **THEY MUST DO WHAT THEY SAY THEY DO**

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One option being considered

- Some corporations are considering appointing an auditor(s) with apparent expertise to report on the extent to which contractors will satisfy the safety standard?
- If the contractor or the auditor fails then the corporation remains liable
- Who audits the auditor?

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Another option being considered

- Other corporations are considering auditing all contractors
- can corporations rely on the promotional material, references, past experiences, personal CVs of key people and the historic safety records of contractors
- No, it doesn't provide immunity from prosecution

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Conclusions

1. verifications of competency do not guarantee practical competency or good training
2. construction workers and contractors should be made aware that the SHMS is the ultimate safety system, not simply the construction PC
3. make sure the contractors do what they say they do

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