



Welcome

After a review of the delivery of corporate service functions throughout the department a regional model is being established to support schools.

Ten regions have been proposed with districts being grouped into these regional areas. The changes are due to take effect from 1 July 2005.

It is anticipated that the changes can be implemented without disruption to service provision to schools. There may be some changes to the individuals who deliver services to schools due to the changes in regional boundaries. The importance of school access to health and safety expertise will continue to be promoted to ensure these services are profiled in new regional structures.

The Health & Safety Team is also pleased to announce the 'Flu Vaccination Program for 2005— details about the preferred supplier arrangement are included in this issue.

With the 2005 school year comes many new and ongoing health and safety activities. We look forward to schools continued enthusiasm and support for these programs.

Craig Allen
A/Director—Human Resource Services



Catch of the day!

PEOPLE & SAFETY IN SCHOOLS CONFERENCE 2005

Congratulations to Bruce Clarke, HOD Science from Helensvale State High School for organising another excellent health and safety conference this year.

Due to increasing numbers over the past three years the conference was held at a new venue this year. The Helensvale Community Centre hosted the conference which involved 7 sessions and 4 concurrent electives during the day.

Bruce gathered departmental and guest speakers for the sessions which included developing a safety culture, induction, incident reporting, ergonomics, annual assessments and preventing stress and workplace harassment.

The day was a fantastic opportunity for school staff to meet colleagues who have an interest in health and safety. Participants said that the networking was a great

bonus and provided them with extra contacts and support throughout the year.

Once again Bruce has organised an informative and diverse program that was of interest to Principals, Managers, WHSOs and other school staff. Our congratulations to Bruce on this achievement—over and above his school commitments.

John Ninness (SIMTARS), Bruce Clarke & Chris Loos (OHU)



Casting the Net

Far Northern Manual Handling In-service

In October last year, 22 Special Education and Allied Health Staff from the Cairns, Tablelands/Johnstone and Torres Strait districts met to work through the new **Manual Handling of Students Resource Package**.

The workshop was co-presented by Brett Moore, Senior Occupational Health and Safety Consultant and Peter Sullivan, AVT PI. The multi-media resource was well received with staff commenting that this risk management based resource will complement other 'hands on' manual handling training.

Education Queensland schools and staff can obtain a copy of the package from their local Senior H&S Consultant. The CD resources (excluding the video presentations) are also available on the Creating Healthier Workplaces Website at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthsafety/hs-mod-manual-pack.html>

Please send any feedback about the package to janet.edgar@qed.qld.gov.au



Peter Sullivan AVT PI discussing the manual handling package with Far North Queensland staff.



HOSES and allied health staff working through the risk management process.

Don't let these slip through the Net

2005 'FLU VACCINATION PROGRAM

The tender process for this year's Flu Vaccination Program has been completed and EQ has entered into a preferred supplier arrangement with **Home Therapeutics**.

Home Therapeutics is able to provide flu vaccinations at a flat rate of **\$20** to all our schools across the state – so it doesn't matter if you're in Bowen or Brisbane you can get the vaccination at the same price! There are also no minimum numbers required, although the more the merrier!

As in the last 2 years, schools and departmental units are responsible for funding the vaccination program which is highly recommended but not mandatory.

The preferred supplier arrangement is designed to ensure your school/unit has access to the best service at the most competitive price. If your school/unit has a local arrangement that works better for you or is cheaper—there is no obligation to use the Home Therapeutics service.

The vaccination program will begin after Easter so:

1. Confirm with your principal or manager that your site can fund the program
2. Nominate a contact person or "champion" at your site who can coordinate the process (provide their phone no. & email)
3. Collect the numbers (or a 'guestimate') of people at your site who are interested in obtaining the vaccine
4. Contact Jennifer Byrne of Home Therapeutics to arrange your vaccination dates!

jbyrne@hth.com.au

ph: 1300 557 380 or m: 0403 382 301

fax: 1300 557 381

5. See 'What's New' on our CHW Website for more information!

Influenza is an illness caused by the influenza virus. Influenza can lead to illnesses which are more severe than those caused by other respiratory viruses.

The Influenza vaccine contains killed virus that cannot cause influenza. 'Flu-like' symptoms may occur as a result of the vaccine but these symptoms are not influenza. The 'flu virus changes all the time and the vaccine is changed to match the current circulating virus. The vaccine will provide about 70% protection against infection for about one year. More information can be found at:

<http://immunise.health.gov.au>



SCHOOL WHSO COURSE FORGES AHEAD!

2 successful 'school customised' WHSO courses and a Re-Cert course have already been completed this term with already another 8 planned for the year. These courses are run by our own EQ Health and Safety Consultant, Alan Singleton who has worked with schools for the last 7 years.

For any further details regarding WHSO or Reps courses contact Alan Singleton on 4616 9125 or 0428 736 595 or alan.singleton@qed.qld.gov.au

For more info also see 'What's New' on our CHW Website!

Why complete the EQ WHSO or Re-certification course?

- If you have 30 or more staff— ensure your school is compliant with the WHSO requirement, or train a second WHSO for larger, complex schools
- This course is up to \$400 cheaper than other courses
- Content focuses on schools and school issues
- Provides ways to work effectively as a WHSO in a school – it's not just about reading the legislation
- You will complete your Annual Assessment as part of the course—another legislative requirement done!

Breaking news!!! Alan is launching a WH&S Representatives course to commence in Semester 2

Welcome !

The Health & Safety Team is pleased to welcome Vivian Veal to the Southern Corporate Services Unit. Vivian started with us in mid January and is working in Alan Singleton's role while Alan works as Principal Training Officer (WHSO Training).

Vivian brings with her a wealth of experience from private industry including a strong focus on manual handling. With an Occupational Therapy background, Vivian has worked for the Australian National University and The Australian Maritime Safety Authority. Vivian has worked in the private rehabilitation industry and established a Workplace Health Consultancy based in Toowoomba which provided services to a wide range of industries in locations similar to those she now covers for EQ.

Vivian has helped businesses to incorporate health and safety into daily routines and believes this can be achieved easily with basic knowledge, good communication and a positive attitude. Vivian has been visiting schools and assisting in the identification of needs with regard to manual handling and risk management. Vivian has also been actively promoting H&S team projects at seminar days and any opportunity where there is a group of EQ people together! Enquiries are encouraged and Vivian welcomes invitations for onsite assistance to address issues on a school wide basis & for individual situations.

The following activities are Vivian's current focus:

- Promoting the use of the Manual Handling of Students Resource Package
- Establishing a mini distribution list devoted to manual handling enquiries/issues
- Developing further networks with support from AVTs and OTs/Physios
- Meeting with Principals, HOSES, Teachers, Teacher Aides, and other staff
- Developing H&S information to assist schools in their transition from awareness towards best practice



School Safety Scribbles

POTTING ALONG - Art Kiln Upgrade Project Update

\$1M in 2003/04 and a further \$1M in 2004/5 has been committed towards upgrading and replacing art kiln facilities in state schools. On the basis of an audit and additional advice gathered from schools through a direct survey late in 2003, an Art Kiln Upgrading Reference Group has been established. This group has the responsibility of determining a priority order for upgrading of Art Kiln Accommodation. Bassetts Engineering was engaged by the department to develop specifications for mechanical services for kiln enclosures to be used with schools requiring major capital works or new school facilities. Stage 1 of the art kiln upgrade strategy is progressing well and should be finalised by May 2005. A number of school facilities will be audited in the near future to initiate the planning process for Stage 2.

How do we get our H&S Committee working effectively?

This website has useful information about running a successful health and safety committee—it is produced by the federal government so some legislative references may not be applicable. The resource notes the importance of having a person on the committee with the authority to make and act on decisions. This saves time and encourages members as they can see their recommendations being implemented. <http://www.comcare.gov.au/participating-ohs/ensuring.html>

Poisonous Plants and Facilities Branch Design Guidelines

Facilities Services Branch has placed draft Design Guidelines on their website to provide schools and contractors with base level information about important factors in the design of new/refurbished schools. Recently added to the guidelines is the link to **Queensland Health's Poisonous Plants Information Page** which provides guidance on poisonous plants.

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/PoisonsInformationCentre/plantsMushroomsPlants.htm>

Facilities Design Guidelines: <http://www.qed.qld.gov.au/facilities/strategic/dg-contents.html>

SAFETY ALERT—Electrical Incident

Staff and others are at risk of electric shock when removing the cover of the Simplex 2399 Bell Control Unit. Live terminals are exposed when the cover of the unit is removed to reset the device. The risk of touching the live terminals and receiving an electric shock is significant.

A dangerous electrical event recently occurred when a school staff member removed the cover of a bell control unit in order to reset the system. Notices have been issued by the Department of Industrial Relations (Electrical Safety Office) to ensure a safe system of work is implemented when problems arise with this bell system.

School staff (e.g. non-electrical workers) are not licensed to perform work near live electrical parts on any item of electrical equipment. The manufacturer of the bell system has also advised that problems should be referred to a technician and the cover of the bell unit should not be removed by school staff.

Recommendations

1. Prohibit removal of covers of bell control units (Simplex or similar) - place signage on the cover to advise that it should not be removed by staff
2. Inform staff of the risks and reasons for this safety precaution
3. Engage a technician to assess any problems with the bell system



REMINDER — ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS

Last year, Jenny Cranston, Acting Director General, sent a letter to schools highlighting concerns regarding asbestos. The content of this letter along with additional information is summarised below.

While all dangerous asbestos materials have been removed under the Government's Asbestos Management Program, asbestos products may still exist in places such as roof sheeting, eaves, downpipes, ceiling tiles and some vinyl flooring. If left undisturbed, asbestos material does not present a health risk to the school community.

Schools should consult their *Building Management Plan* (BMP) which includes an asbestos register (where applicable) to provide details of the existence and location of asbestos and the process to be followed if disturbance is necessary.

Students should not be involved in any work involving asbestos disturbance and should not be in the vicinity of any such work being carried out. All building and repair contractors and any staff performing work in schools must check the BMP before commencing duty. **Strict procedures apply to any work which involves the disturbance of asbestos.** These procedures can be found in the Asbestos Advisory Standard 2004 at <http://www.whs.qld.gov.au/advisory/adv029.pdf>

Examples of persons who may be likely to have a need to refer to the asbestos register are:

- janitor/grounds persons
- electricians
- manual arts teachers
- air conditioner installers
- carpenters
- data cable/telephone installers
- persons doing any kind of demolition/repair work

A brochure published by the Department's Organisational Health Unit, which provides further details can be accessed at <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/asbestos-alert.pdf>