

Welcome

Dear Colleagues

The Department had its first Corporate Workplace Health and Safety Standing Committee meeting for the year on 13th March. It was extremely encouraging to have so many agenda topics forwarded from Regional Health and Safety Standing Committees. This demonstrates that the Consultative Framework is beginning to gain momentum in terms of highlighting and managing health and safety issues. The Corporate Committee is endeavouring to address the items raised by regions with planned actions being undertaken by the next meeting date on 5 June.

In this edition, please find information relating to WHSO training in the Torres Strait, the 2008 Influenza Program, Anaphylaxis Training for School Staff and the General Induction—Construction Blue Card Training progress. As usual there is also a “wrap-up” of the most recent additions to the Creating Healthier Workplaces Web Site, including: fact sheets, checklists and presentations.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring the workplace health and safety of staff, students and visitors to our schools and workplaces. Please pass this newsletter onto all relevant staff at your work location.

Gary Barnes

Assistant Director General - Strategic Human Resources.

[Anaphylaxis training for state school staff](#)

A pilot of an accredited Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Anaphylaxis Management Training Program in the Greater Brisbane, Moreton, South Coast and Sunshine Coast Regions has begun. Schools in these regions have been provided with full details of the proposed training sessions. The pilot will be assessed at the end of June 2008 to determine opportunities to expand the program around the state.

For more information email [Suzi Barbir](#) (Student Services Division) or phone (07) 3237 1122 or [Nicole Buckler](#) (Organisational Health Unit), phone (07) 3405 3710 or visit the DETA [website](#).
www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/anaphylaxis.html

*Excerpts from— Medial Release: Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts
The Honourable Rod Welford — 30/04/2008*

[School Maintenance Program](#)

School maintenance is recognised as an important component in providing safe and healthy environments for our students and staff. This was highlighted by Minister, Rod Welford who outlined both budget commitments and departmental strategies to identify and address maintenance issues in our schools. Education and Training Minister Rod Welford said this funding was in addition to the Government's \$445.5 million capital works program, which was building new schools and new classrooms for the state's growing population.

"A safe learning environment for students and staff is the over-riding priority of our Government and every state school in Queensland," Mr Welford said. "Our school maintenance systems involve a thorough annual inspection of every state school by qualified QBuild staff where they identify and help prioritise maintenance work for each school. "The most recent assessment earlier this year identified \$99.3 million in priority school maintenance for completion by 30 June 2009.

"Maintenance is ongoing in our schools and some of those projects identified as part of the assessment have already been completed since then. The school maintenance program is a regular, sound process that serves our schools well and will continue to do so in the future. As any homeowner knows, buildings show signs of wear and tear as they age, and every building needs regular maintenance."

"In some years, the maintenance bill will be low, while in other years the maintenance budget will need to be much higher. State schools are no different, but with more than 20,000 buildings at 1251 state schools across Queensland, our task is bigger than most."

"Each year, every state school receives an allocation of funds to cover routine maintenance such as replacement of taps and minor repairs and painting. If there is an identified need above the school's routine allocation, supplementary funds can be made available for essential work."

Mr Welford said there were also a range of special maintenance programs centrally managed by the Department of Education, Training and the Arts for larger projects that were beyond the scope of an individual school's maintenance program."

Media contact: Marnie Stitz on 3237 1000 or 0419 734 985

2008 Influenza Vaccination Program

We all know that the 'flu' season usually runs from May to September each year however, if you want to be vaccinated you need to receive your "flu shot" much earlier (i.e. during the months from February to June).

Workplace vaccination clinics are one way to demonstrate commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of the staff at your school/office. Immunisation can reduce absenteeism, replacement and overtime costs, interruption of service delivery, re-scheduling of important events, extended health costs and many other unwanted disruptions at your school/office.

In 2008, the department has supported a preferred supplier arrangement for the provision of influenza vaccine.

A word from the vaccination team leader—Matthew of Home Therapeutics:

"Home Therapeutics would like to thank all of the participating schools for their patience in 2008 with flu season.

By the end of May we anticipate having immunised more than 20 000 people in Queensland, the large majority of which will be Education Queensland employees.

This year the vaccine was late entering the country, so the program was not able to start until mid March, leaving us only 10 weeks to cover the state and book all of the clinics. It is our usual practice to immunise the southern areas of the State first, then the northern regions throughout May, which is still within the acceptable timeframe for immunisation. If you have not received your immunisation yet, do not despair because fortunately the worst of the flu strains do not generally affect Brisbane and surrounds until August and as you move further north it is later still.

If you have registered your school and have not yet been contacted, please call our team on 1300 557 380 so that we can make arrangements for you.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of this very worthwhile program."

Sun Safety Program

A Sun Safety Program has been established as a proactive strategy to prevent the development of skin cancer in DETA staff and students (currently 1 in 2 Queenslanders—who have lived here all their lives will develop skin cancer).

The target audience for this program includes all members of the school, but particularly those who undertake activities with high exposure to the sun such as schools officers, agricultural staff, physical education teachers and students.

A Resource and Information Package tailored for schools has been developed and will be available in Term 3. DETA's Regional Health and Safety Consultants have already been trained on delivery of the package, and will use it as an ongoing resource to assist schools to implement school-based sun safe policies and strategies.

Please contact your Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant (during term 3) for more information.

Regional Contacts: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>

General Induction — Construction Blue Card Training

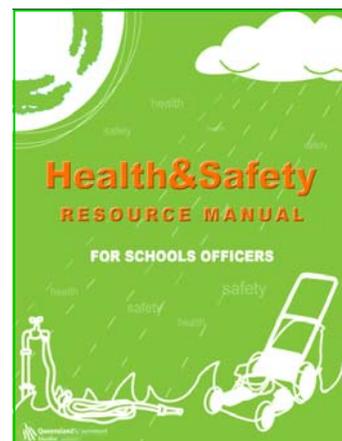
The Organisational Health Unit has been making great progress on the provision of General Induction - Construction Blue Card training for departmental staff — namely our Schools Officers.

The "in-house" course has been developed specifically for Schools Officers, extending the basic four hour Construction Blue Card course to a full day professional development opportunity.

The extended course includes issues that are relevant to Schools Officers — including : manual handling, chemicals management and ladder safety.

Participants also receive a comprehensive information resource folder entitled "Health and Safety for Schools Officers".

Please contact your Regional Health and Safety Consultant about training available in your region.



Regional Contacts: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>



Don't let these slip through the Net

South Coast Region

— Health and Safety Conference

In March, South Coast Region hosted a fantastic Health and Safety Conference attended by 105 participants from five regions.

Throughout the day eight presenters covered a range of topics including fire safety training, troubleshooting "return to work programs" and strategies to safeguard staff from aggressive behaviour.



Participants enjoying the South Coast Region Health and Safety Conference

The key note speaker, Dave Randall spoke about the need to plan for, and self audit health and safety issues in schools.

A highlight of the day was the high energy presentation by Rowena Szeszeran-McEvoy on how to make every Monday a "Wow" day; finding the positives in your work day and finding the motivation for getting through the day and the week with a smile on your face and a spring in your step. The discussions centred around the left and right side of your brain and how your thoughts influence the way you feel. She is the owner and director of the Australian Institute of Fitness.

Feedback from the day was very positive with strong support for a 2009 conference. Congratulations to Pauline Armstrong, Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant and the South Coast Organisational Health Team who organised the day.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland - Online Newsletter

WHSQ's electronic newsletter (titled "SAFE") can now be accessed online. You can subscribe to "SAFE" via the following web page : <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/publications/safe/autumn08/index.htm>.

The current edition of "SAFE" includes articles on: Rural Industry Action Plan, Leptospirosis, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Roll Over Protection for Tractors, Legislative Updates, Hygiene Practices for Working with Children as well as the ever popular update on Workplace Health and Safety Prosecutions, Fines, Prohibition Notices, Enforceable Undertakings and Improvement Notices.

WHSO Training in Torres Strait

Our intrepid trainer from Toowoomba, Alan Singleton made the long and arduous but picturesque trip to the Torres Strait last month to provide WHSO training for staff from the Tagai College, and The Northern Peninsula area college (Bamaga).

The course was also attended by the Senior Sergeant from Horn Island and also a staff member from the local TAFE campus. Alan got a taste of life in the top end and posed for some photos at the historical sites on Thursday Island. On behalf of the staff who attended this historic course, thanks Al for a job well done!

Brett Moore - Senior Health and Safety Consultant (Far Northern)



Workplace Health and Safety Officer Training

The Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 requires all workplaces with 30 or more workers to appoint a Workplace Health and Safety Officer (WHSO).

More information can be found on the Creating Healthier Workplaces web site at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/managing/whso.html>



What's on the Safety Net?

Schools Officers and Electrical Safety

A fact sheet regarding Schools Officers and electrical safety has been developed by the Organisational Health Unit and posted on the Creating Healthier Workplaces web site. The fact sheet advises that safety switch protection must be in place when Schools Officers are using electrical equipment. Portable or fixed safety switches can also be used. For more information please refer to the [Schools Officers and Electrical Safety Fact Sheet](#).

www.education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/electrical-safety.pdf

Work Safe – Learn Safe: Sport & Physical Activity

It is important to be mindful of your own health, safety and wellbeing while participating in, or directing, sport and physical activity. When staff are supervising sport and physical activity it is important to plan ahead to ensure the safety of themselves and students involved in the activity. The following link provides some useful tips for teachers and other school staff.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/physical-activities-factsheet>



Voice Care

Due to the constant demands on their voices many teachers experience symptoms that range from discomfort, hoarseness, lack of carrying power of the voice to pain and chronic voice problems.

The voice is an important resource for teaching and the Organisational Health Unit have developed fact sheets and can direct you to other information sources.

Information and strategies to prevent voice strain can be found at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/docs/voice-strain.doc>



Safe Use of Laptops

The increasing use of laptop computers by departmental staff makes it important to be aware that inappropriate use and poor postures may lead to musculoskeletal discomfort. The "Safe Use of Laptops" fact sheet has been developed by the Organisational Health Unit to assist staff avoid injury by providing information on basic principles for correct posture and information on setting up your laptop.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/laptopuse.pdf>



Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Inspectors and School Visits

Under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*, Workplace Health and Safety Inspectors have the authority to visit schools at random. A [fact sheet](#) is now available which outlines the role, rights and powers of Workplace Health and Safety Inspectors visiting EQ Schools, the usual outcomes of a visit, and where to find further assistance.

www.education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/



Health, Safety and Wellbeing Induction Fact Sheet / Power Point

An induction program at the commencement of employment is an important part of ensuring staff have the information, instruction, training and supervision to *ensure health and safety*.

The Organisational Health Unit has developed a fact sheet and presentation which are both available on the Creating Healthier Workplaces website.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/induction-fact-sheet.pdf>

