



# SMALL BUSINESS SAFETY PROGRAM

## A \$5 MILLION SAFETY REBATE PROGRAM FOR SMALL BUSINESSES WHO INSTALL SAFETY EQUIPMENT OR MAKE SAFETY MODIFICATIONS TO THEIR WORKPLACE

The rebate is available to small businesses on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to \$500. Small businesses are eligible for the subsidy if they:

- attend a WorkCover safety workshop or have received an advisory visit from a Business Advisory Officer or Inspector; and
- develop and implement an action plan adopting a safety solution to an identified safety issue.

See below for initial rebate details. Full details will be made available shortly.

For example, a small printing company may identify that it needs a more effective guarding mechanism, and will be able to apply to have the costs matched on a dollar for dollar basis by WorkCover.

The rebate program follows other successful WorkCover rebates such as the Roll-Over Protective Structure rebate scheme in 2000-2004, which helped 10,000 farmers fit roll-bars to tractors, leading to a 25 per cent in tractor related trauma incidents in the first year of the scheme.

Other current WorkCover safety rebate programs are:

- \$1 million power take-off guard rebate scheme, available to farmers who install life saving power take-off guards on their tractors. On average 15 per cent of the workplace fatalities in NSW occur on farms and 70 per cent of those involve mobile farm machinery. These guards prevent clothing and limbs becoming entangled in the rotating drives, which can prove fatal or cause horrific injuries like the loss of arms and legs
- a \$750,000 incentive scheme for farmers to make practical safety improvements to their silos and field bins . Under the *Safer Silos Program*, farmers are able to claim a dollar for dollar rebate of up to \$750 towards the cost of improving the safety of their silo operations.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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WorkCover. **Watching out for you.**

## **A SECOND WORKCOVER SAFETY BUS AND THREE NEW CUSTOM BUILT SAFETY TRAILERS TO DELIVER EDUCATION AND ADVISORY SERVICES TO SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS THE STATE**

The first WorkCover safety bus began operation in March 2006 and has taken WorkCover's free safety, workers compensation and injury management advice to rural and regional NSW. The second bus and new safety trailers will increase the availability of these services. A team of WorkCover Business Advisory Officers will use the Safety Bus as a mobile resource centre to present a series of workshops at rural field days and safety solution days in rural and regional NSW.

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## **SIX NEW BUSINESS ADVISORY OFFICERS TO BE LOCATED AT PORT MACQUARIE, BALLINA, NEWCASTLE, ALBURY, DUBBO AND NARRABRI**

This is in addition to existing business advisory officers located at Gosford, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Maitland, Nowra, Tamworth, Orange and Tweed Heads.

The Business Advisory Officers give one-on-one advice to clients and present workplace safety and workers compensation workshops that are tailor made to meet local needs. They also visit small to medium businesses on request, to provide individual workplace safety and workers compensation advice.

The officers have a sound knowledge of relevant NSW legislation and best practice in occupational health and safety, workers compensation and injury management, as applied to small and medium businesses.

Small and medium sized businesses often have limited resources and welcome assistance in ensuring they meet their workplace safety, workers compensation and injury management obligations.

Recruitment will commence for Officers in Port Macquarie, Ballina, Newcastle, Albury and Coffs Harbour immediately. Recruitment for the Dubbo and Narrabri officers will commence next year.

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## **1500 FREE SAFETY WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS ACROSS NSW OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS**

WorkCover has conducted over 400 free seminars and workshops over the last 18 months. The Small Business Safety Program sees that program significantly increased with 1,500 seminars and workshops planned across NSW over the next three years.

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## **THE ROLL OUT OF A CONFIRMATION OF ADVICE SYSTEM SO BUSINESSES WILL RECEIVE SPECIFIC WRITTEN ADVICE FROM WORKCOVER INSPECTORS ON HOW TO IMPROVE SAFETY IN THEIR WORKPLACE**

The Confirmation of Advice Record (CAR) is a document intended to support and promote the advisory focus of WorkCover. It allows inspectors to provide a written record of advice during workplaces visits, and leave it with the employer and employee representative. It is not a notice, nor is it enforceable, and it does not replace enforceable notices or orders. However, it can be used in conjunction with notices or orders. For example, if WorkCover advises an employer to develop more effective safety procedures, the CAR will suggest ways to do this. The CAR is intended for use during all workplace visits – not just intervention activities traditionally associated with advisory activities.

The purpose of the CAR is to: provide written practical guidance to employers and workers

- encourage employers to examine how they can improve the way they are managing safety
- help inspectors and employers to engage in a workplace interaction based on discussion rather than direction
- direct the user to sources of further assistance
- provide a means of improved reporting on advisory activities
- assist in identifying advisory trends and designing future interventions.

## **AN EXPANSION OF WORKCOVER'S SMALL BUSINESS MENTOR PROGRAM – INDUSTRIES TO BE INVOLVED INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION, MANUFACTURING, RETAIL, TRANSPORT AND RURAL INDUSTRIES**

In the 2006 pilot of this initiative, WorkCover worked with Bovis Lend Lease to mentor nine small construction companies over six months. Bovis Lend Lease provided the small businesses with support and instruction on specific actions they could take to improve their level of safety.

Often the issues faced by small business have been addressed and solved by big business. This program is about sharing that knowledge and experience to save lives, prevent injuries and lift productivity. The mentor program is a real chance for small businesses to get professional and practical occupational health and safety advice and assistance from industry leaders to make a real difference at their workplace.

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**TEN REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS GROUPS ACROSS NSW AND ONE PEAK ADVISORY GROUP PROVIDING A LINK BETWEEN LOCAL EMPLOYERS AND WORKCOVER AND ENSURING WORKCOVER'S SERVICES ARE RELEVANT TO THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

The groups will be set up in Sydney, Western Sydney, the Central Coast, Illawarra, Hunter, Riverina/Murray, Northern Rivers, Central West, New England/North Western NSW and the North Coast.

Recently piloted on the Central Coast, this successful program is being rolled-out across NSW to ensure each region gets the advice and services they need from WorkCover. Under the plan, local small business operators will have the opportunity to provide direct input into the identification and development of these services ensuring the services meet their needs and cut unnecessary red tape. The groups will meet regularly at a time and place that is appreciative of the work demands placed on small businesses.

Businesses interested in joining their regional small business group should contact the Business Assistance Unit or their local Business Advisory Officer.

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**AN EXPANSION OF THE INDUSTRY SAFETY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM WHICH SEES WORKCOVER, INDUSTRY, UNIONS AND TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVES DEVELOP PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND GUIDANCE ON SAFETY ISSUES PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED IN THE 'TOO HARD BASKET'**

WorkCover has been working with industry, unions, manufacturers and technical representatives to address three difficult workplace risks – Safe Erection of Timber Roof Trusses, Grain Augers and Post Drivers. That work is nearly complete. The successful approach will be extended to address other significant identified risks in our workplaces, for example safe erection and dismantling of scaffolding, log splitters and Woodchippers.

By working together, WorkCover and industry has been able to find ways to develop practical and innovative solutions and guides to assist small business eliminate or minimise identified risks. Industry has been supportive of the Industry Solutions Program approach and will be promoting the solution within their sector. This support has been essential and will lead to important improvements in workplace health and safety.

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**A CASE STUDY AND SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM IN THE CONSTRUCTION, MANUFACTURING, RETAIL, TRANSPORT AND RURAL INDUSTRIES**

This program will see the identification of small businesses that have achieved OHS, workers compensation or injury management improvements. These improvements will be showcased through written, Internet or audio-visual means and provides an opportunity for other small to medium business to see the benefits of giving OHS/WC practices a priority in the workplace. The Safety Ambassador program is a natural progression of the case study program. This program will identify safety ambassadors/ champions who having been identified as having an exceptionally strong commitment to safe business practices, and will act as “change agents” in their industry. Safety Ambassadors will also promote safe business practices at a variety of forums and seek to influence and assist small to medium business.

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**A NUMBER OF 'SAFE BUSINESS IS GOOD BUSINESS WEEKS' WILL BE HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WITH EVENTS HELD ACROSS NSW FOCUSING ON SAFETY AT WORK, INCLUDING LOCAL WORKSHOPS AND ONE-ON-ONE ADVICE**

Safe Business Weeks will include a range of activities aimed at informing small and medium business that assistance is available to improve their level of workplace safety. Locations and safety week themes will be identified through research and consultation with small business.

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**REBATE CRITERIA**

- Subsidies are available on a one-time-only basis. ABN number will be collected to ensure there are no multiple application approvals.
- To be eligible, applicants must be small business operators who have a current workers compensation policy and must have no more than the equivalent of 20 full time employees.
- To encourage compliance with OHS statutory obligations for risk assessment and consultation, employers will be required to provide a copy of an action plan developed either through a workshop or through an Advisory Visit, and will need to indicate on their application the problem the “safety solution” addresses, alternatives they have considered, and how they consulted with their employees about the matter.
- Applicants will need to specify whether they have attended a workshop or have had an Advisory Visit, and the date(s) of these activities.
- To encourage tangible improvements leading to sustainable increase in worker safety, eligible solutions must be related to the following broad areas:
  - safety upgrades to existing plant or equipment
  - safety technologies, such as closed chemical-delivery systems, non-slip flooring, machine guarding, fall arrest devices and other technology-based solutions to safety problems
  - safety equipment, such as mechanical lifting aids, patient slides, conveyors and other devices that increase the safety of patient or materials handling
  - safety-specific workplace modifications, such as dangerous goods storage cabinets, guard rails, traffic control markings, ventilation and safety changes to work areas.
- Likewise, certain measures will not be supported by the subsidy. Ineligible measures include:
  - repairs or maintenance to existing plant or equipment (though safety upgrades may be considered)
  - parts or components for safety devices, unless they represent a true safety upgrade
  - personal protective equipment (PPE)

- monitoring equipment, such as meters, thermometers and similar devices that are used to identify a problem but not actually fix it
- consultancy fees, unless the consultant is directly involved in resolving the problem – in most cases, consultants provide intermediate assistance but not the actual solution.
- In order to minimise the chance of an employer implementing a solution and then later finding it is not deemed eligible, a program-specific telephone number will be made available and highlighted in promotional materials which employers will be encouraged to call in order to find out in advance whether certain solutions, which do not fall within the above criteria, would be eligible for the subsidy. In addition, a Safety Solutions Activities Guide will be available to provide information to employers about eligible and ineligible activities.

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