

**Submission
No 258**

**INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION
SCHEME**

Name: Mr Leslie Burrows

Date received: 17/05/2012



ABN: 67 067 872 251

May 17th, 2012

The Joint Select Committee
NSW Workers Compensation Scheme

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Terms of Reference: Workplace Health and Safety.

The NSW Workers Compensation Scheme relies on Health and Safety in the workplace. One of the key elements of a safe workplace is Safety training.

The construction industry in NSW has recently experienced the lowest number of fatalities in many years. It is my opinion that the rigorous auditing process and comprehensive safety training that is now in place has played a significant role in this reduction.

The original concept of Work Safely in the Construction Industry training (Whitecard) training in the building industry was to inform, educate, and assess a number of competencies demonstrated by the participants, many of them new entrants to the industry.

The current system of rigorous identity checks and stringent requirements of the face to face training was developed as a result of the ICAC Inquiry of 2004 into WorkCover Licensing of the building industry.

The proliferation of online Work Safely in the Construction Industry training (Whitecard) is a major concern among professional trainers in this industry.

As a WHS professional with more than 30 years experience in building and other industries, I am currently a qualified trainer delivering face to face Work Safely in the Construction Industry training (Whitecard) courses. I am alarmed at the ease of acquiring a white card online.

My concern with the advertised "quick and easy" online Whitecard training is that only the very basic subject matter is covered, not providing students with a realistic understanding of safety in the construction industry.

The development of online Whitecard training flies in the face of the auditing process, which had eliminated many corrupt practices that were prevalent.

There is a National Code of Practice for Construction Work (ASCCC 2007) which stipulates a nominal 6 hour course time. Online training for the Whitecard clearly contravenes this Code of Practice as it is usually advertised as 'a quick and easy 25 minutes'.

There are currently three key methods of assessment in the face to face delivery of the construction induction training over a six hour period.

1. The individual understanding of the subject matter. This involves testing the understanding through questioning and involvement in class discussion.
2. An assessable group activity such as hazard identification and a multiple choice group assessment.
3. A final, individual written exam style assessment.

Throughout the six hours the assessor is constantly monitoring the individual and group work to assess and fill any gaps in learning and understanding of the subject. This provides the opportunity for participants to ask questions and to share learning from the trainers' case studies as well as anecdotes put forward by other class members. The collective experience in any group is usually very broad and extremely valuable as a learning tool particularly for those without any construction workplace experience.

I am concerned that diluting the auditing and training process will result in a far greater number of injuries and fatalities in the construction industry resulting in greater impost on the already burdened Workers Compensation Scheme, not to mention the personal suffering of victims and their families.

This important issue will have serious ramifications in the Construction industry and subsequently the number of claims for Workers Compensation made by construction workers in NSW. Therefore I am seeking the Committees attention of this important issue. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you wish.

Thanking you in advance.

Les Burrows
(Partner)