

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Advertising Feature

Counting the cost of injury and illness

THE cost of illness to industry has been estimated to be as much as 10 times the cost of work-related injuries.

IOH has identified and proven that without suitable policies, procedures, and an excellent responsive service provider the costs of injury and illness can have a significant impact on profit.

When incidents do occur IOH can provide rapid and durable return to work outcomes.

IOH prides itself on the fact that the IOH services can help workplaces achieve reductions in lost

productivity, workers compensation premiums and improve staff morale.

Significant reductions in the frequency and cost of workplace injuries have been achieved by better risk management practices created by current Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.

Many organisations are now recognising the even greater savings that can be achieved by better management of workers' health not only to reduce lost productivity due to illness but to potentially boost productivity.

All things workplace safety in one location

IOH (Injury and Occupational health) is a one-stop shop for everything workplace health and safety.

It is a unique business, having a one-stop service model for employers that provides prevention, training, medical, psychology and rehabilitation services all in one facility.

It is the only such service this side of Wollongong.

The business was first developed in 1984 in Wollongong by Professor John Hogg and his wife Linda, a physiotherapist.

IOH initially developed this holistic practice in a purpose-designed facility in Wollongong that now helps more than 1500 clients across public and private business, federal, state and local government sectors.

The model and service was so popular with employers that it spread to the Shoalhaven, Sydney, Central and North Coast in record time and continues to offer services from several locations: Nowra being one of the longest established branches.

"The Shoalhaven employers love that the manager and this business is local and here for the long-haul; not some fly in-fly out service," IOH South Coast manager Susan Walters said.

"There are other such services available in Sydney, but it is truly unique this model is offered in a regional area. We have a lot of rehabilitation businesses purporting to service this area; but they are usually based in Wollongong or Sydney and they charge travel time and sporadically travel to service this area leaving injured workers isolated an unsupported in most situations.

"We have injured workers walk in and want to change over to our service because they haven't seen their rehabilitation case manager in months. That is not satisfactory."

Locally, IOH South Coast provides services to the larger local companies including council, defence and contractors on the base, Area Health, Australian Paper, Manildra, Rambor, Tyco, RailCorp as well as numerous smaller firms.

Since its inception, the IOH 'medical rehabilitation' model has been proven and enhanced to respond successfully to changing legislation and demand.

In 1987, NSW WorkCover introduced occupational rehabilitation using the skills of occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists and rehabilitation counsellors.

IOH was one of the first organisations to be accredited as a rehabilitation provider with NSW WorkCover.

IOH was then also accredited by Comcare.

Subsequent change has provided further opportunities and challenges to IOH for which it was well equipped with its service model and specialised staff.

"It's fantastic; we have access to several occupational physicians and occupational hygienists and their expertise on any issue that arises," Susan said.

"So we can get fast accurate advice to our employers about any health or safety concern. We are able to call head office specialists and have an answer to unique queries the same day."



A local South Coast company

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- Psychology services- No wait time for urgent counselling & support.
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- Return to work rehabilitation services
- Driving assessments- periodic driver or return to driving after injury.
- Training in WHS, manual handling, preventing stress claims & others



A diagram showing where asbestos might be found in an ordinary home.

Don't let asbestos get you down

THE word asbestos conjures up a number of different images and most of them centre on safety – particularly workplace safety.

Neil Wallace's job is to make people aware of regulations in the Work Health and Safety Act of 2011 which relate to asbestos in buildings.

"The WHS Act of 2011 supersedes the OHS Act of 2001," Neil of Asbestos Reporting explained.

"In relation to asbestos many of the requirements in both Acts are similar."

There are nine main asbestos regulations in the 2011 Act, which are crucial for building owners, strata and property managers, body corporates, building managers and building lessors to adhere to.

Asbestos is only a problem if it is disturbed and not managed in the correct manner.

"If it is left intact asbestos poses no threat to health," Neil said.

Commercial and residential strata buildings constructed before January 1, 2004 are required to have an asbestos audit.

"This is to safeguard persons carrying out business undertakings, known as PCBUs," Neil said.

Asbestos containing material (ACM) occurs in two categories: friable and non-friable.

Friable asbestos is easily turned into dust and is often found around pipes, insulation, old ships and water heaters.

"Friable asbestos is very dangerous and must be handled with extreme care," Neil said.

Non-friable asbestos is often in the form of sheeting, fibro, roofing or flooring.

"Non-friable asbestos, or what is also known as bonded asbestos only becomes dangerous if drilled, cut, broken or creates dust," Neil said.

"The purpose of an asbestos audit is all about awareness of where asbestos is located, and having a management plan tells you how to deal with asbestos if it is to be disturbed or removed.

"An audit not only allows you to comply with the Act, but more importantly protects the health and wellbeing of building occupants or any PCBU."

Neil also carries out clearance inspections and provides certification after asbestos removal.



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