

Another death on John Holland job

The death of the 45-year-old rigger in the Pilbara occurs at a time when John Holland Pty Ltd is being prosecuted in the Federal Court over the death of a worker at Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal in Queensland on May 6 last year.

MARK MCCALLUM died after being run over by machinery. His foot had apparently become trapped under wooden scaffolding planks, while he was moving pre-cast concrete blocks. He was 34. The first hearing in that case was held on March 11.

TWO 457-VISA HOLDERS, working on a John Holland Pty Ltd powerline job in Queensland were also killed last year, when the four-wheel drive they were being transported in went off the road in February.

JOHN HOLLAND RAIL PTY LTD is also being prosecuted by Comcare over a serious incident in which a young apprentice suffered a crush injury to the hand and another case where a contractor suffered a crush injury that resulted in the amputation of a finger.

AND TWO WORKERS were injured on the John Holland Group Pty Ltd desalination plant in Sydney, when a wall collapsed in November. One week before that incident, a crane driver's foot was crushed at the same site. But John Holland Group Pty Ltd has taken CFMEU officials to court

A 45-year-old rigger was killed on the Newman Hub Project site in Western Australia on Thursday March 19.

The rigger was employed by John Holland Group Pty Ltd and was working on the night shift when the incident occurred.

He is understood to have fallen from an above ground walkway. He died in Newman Hospital from his injuries shortly afterwards.

Work has been suspended at the Newman Hub construction site.

The Mount Whaleback mine site at Newman is owned by BHP Billiton.

This incident is the fifth death at a BHP Pilbara mine site in the past eight months.

over the inspection of the desalination plant site for safety concerns.

Holland shift to Comcare

John Holland was the first, and only, construction contractor to opt out of State workers' compensation when the Howard Government expanded access to the Comcare scheme.

The CFMEU objected strongly to three John Holland companies, John Holland Pty Ltd, John Holland Group Pty Ltd and John Holland Rail Pty Ltd being licensed under Comcare, because of our view that Comcare doesn't have enough resources to police the dangerous construction industry and our concerns about inferior benefits.

Comcare also allows contractors to operate under what are often less prescriptive and stringent health and safety regulations.

The scheme gives unions a limited role in safety – leaving workers more exposed to shoddy practices by employers.

Some workers' compensation rights are also significantly lower under the federal scheme.

Union objections have led to the suspension and review of any further extension of the scheme by the Rudd Government.

However in 2008, Comcare renewed the Holland companies' licences in spite of union objections.

Safety before profit — what can you do?

What can you do ?

Concerns about Comcare standards

1. Safe Work Australia Awards:

The prosecution of John Holland Pty Ltd over the death of Mark McCallum coincided with John Holland Rail Pty Ltd's bid for a Safe Work Australia Award. The company was on the finalist list for a 'huck gun trolley' innovation it had introduced on one its jobs. But it was taken off the list at the last minute. The Awards will be handed out on April 28 – International Workers' Memorial Day.

Comcare supported John Holland Rail Pty Ltd's bid for the Award.

The CFMEU believes no contractor should be listed for a safety award when there is a recent fatality on their books, or even on the books of a related company.

The CFMEU expects major contractors to maintain safe work practices across all their operations. Innovations for reducing risk must be matched with scrupulous attention to basic health and safety practices on construction sites.



2. Comcare Prosecution:

Comcare's prosecution of John Holland Pty Ltd for breaches of the OHS Act also raises concerns.

The decision in other prosecutions shows that Comcare and some defendants had agreed on the question of an appropriate penalty by the first day of the hearing.

Unions are concerned about agreements on penalties becoming a part of the process of OHS

prosecutions, particularly when a fatality is involved. The question of a proper penalty is ultimately a matter for the courts to decide.

Comcare is also seeking a penalty in the OHS prosecution in John Holland Pty Ltd's case.

Workers have a right to expect that companies convicted of health and safety breaches should face appropriate penalties.

Respect our mates and dig deep

Construction workers around Australia have been holding meetings to discuss these latest deaths, to show their respect for their comrades killed on the job.

In our traditional way, workers have also been putting their hands in their pockets and generously donating to support the family of the killed worker.

You can support these

actions on your job.

Death toll keeps rising

Twenty-three construction workers have been killed on the job between July 1, 2008 and March 23, this year.

Nine of those deaths have been in Queensland, five in Western Australia, four in New South Wales, three in Victoria and one each in South Australia and the ACT.

That doesn't include workers killed travelling to or from work or bystanders.

These deaths occur at a time when the Rudd Government is proposing to gut worker protections under new national safety laws.

Every worker has the right to go to work and come home safely to their family. Demand action on safety NOW!

Remember workers killed – all out for safety on April 28