

AMCA VIEWS

March 2009

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE MEETS

A meeting of the International Alliance of Mechanical Contracting Associations (IAMCA) was recently held in Scottsdale, USA. The Alliance comprises mechanical contracting associations from the USA, Canada, UK and Australia.

The economic picture painted by the various associations for construction looks bleak for 2009 and 2010.

All countries report a decline in construction activity. For some of the USA states the downturn has been sudden and sharp. The worst affected parts of the USA seem to be those states that are located around the coastal perimeter.

A large part of the government stimulus package in the USA will support the construction industry through infrastructure projects.

The continuing extension of Building Information Management systems (BIM) continues to grow in use in the United States. Contractors say these systems offer significant opportunities for mechanical services contractors. The key issue, however, is that mechanical services contractors get in early and not be directed or controlled by builders.



National President addresses MCAA Convention delegates



AMCA President, Andrew O'Connor, addressed a lunch meeting of an extensive range of international associations while at the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) Annual Convention.

He spoke about the effect on the industry of the economic downturn in Australia.

Andrew also spoke in detail about the work taking place in Australia to improve our suite of training programs - especially the work to link our industry specific training programs with the Australian Institute of Management.

Annual National Conference -- Broome

There was an error in February's edition with regard to the date of the annual national conference. Please note it will be held in Broome, Western Australia, from **29 September - 2 October**.

Broome will provide a magnificent setting for an informative and enjoyable conference. You have never seen a real sunset until you have seen one in Broome.

Program and cost details will be released shortly.



NSWNEWS

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My Say: Guy Waters

LICENSING

The recent changes put forward by the Office of Fair Trading for licensing of tradespeople carrying out Air Conditioning and Refrigeration work has run into some opposition.

What should be of interest to members is that the licensing requirements were already passed back in December. The OFT has done little to publicise the fact since introducing the licensing requirements.

Why should this be of concern?

Simply put actions are being taken which can only be seen as "shooting from the hip" in trying do something... Anything!

This means that changes are being rushed through for the sake of making changes.

Short term gain long term pain.

Also of interest to members will be the way the Government handles the latest challenge to the Emission Trading Scheme.

The AIG have come out strongly against the planned introduction of the scheme in view of the current economic climate. Recent questions posed to Minister Penny Wong showed that the any changes being asked of the general public to reduce emissions would have no effect on the overall emissions for Australia, but merely help industry in being able to offset total emissions.

To quote from the White Paper, "... The Cap sets a limit on the aggregate annual emissions from all the covered types and sources of emissions..."

Also, Minister Wong made comments that the emission caps could be changed each year, whereas the white paper on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme clearly states that caps would be set on 5 years cycles.

The increases in refrigerant pricing which have been publicised are going to be affected by the ETS and the caps that are set. The price of refrigerant will vary depending on the cost of the tradeable permits. Having the cap changed every 12 months could lead to large increases in the value of these permits!

It is becoming clear that training and development of staff and workers within our industry is going to be an identifying mark of those forward thinking companies that have recognised the importance of their workers in being well-positioned when the economy gains momentum.

I will remind members that NSW has many training courses running throughout the year and to take advantage of these courses and the training credits accrued.

AMCA PRIDE

Recently celebrating the Australia Day long weekend, we are often reminded of 'Aussie Pride', with the flag flown everywhere.

Now our Members can also fly the AMCA flag, having their membership displayed on vehicles and letterheads etc. These logos were recently distributed to our full range of Members for them to use to enable further industry networking, status and business.

We have also started meeting regularly with our Associate Members for their insight into our Industry.



30 SECONDS with MARTIN DENNISON

SMS Spellcheck Name:

Manly Density

How long have you been with the AMCA?

Since July last year...

Where did you work before the AMCA?

The University of Sydney... I can boast that I taught the Academics!

What has been your favourite experience during your time at AMCA?

I had a lot of fun showing NEBB President Jerry Bauers around Sydney. We had some really good chats, and became good friends.

I've also really enjoyed introducing young people to our Industry, as I've been in contact with both high school students applying for apprenticeships, and university students from a recent Expo.

Probably my worst experience was at the AMCA Golf Day last year when I was pelted by a ball heading down the straight – it was attracted to my shirt like a magnet! I did not know bruises could be so big, dark, and colourful!

What are you reading?

"Men – Firing through all of Life" by Al Stewart; and Saturday's Herald.

What are you watching?

Get Smart Series 2 on DVD (but my wife keeps trying to get me to watch Little House on the Prairie – help!)

What are you listening to?

Anything by Jars of Clay

What was your most embarrassing moment?

Probably being struck by that golf ball the other day!

What do you love?

My family.

What do you hate?

The guys who hit me with the golf ball!



What's on in NSW?

Date	Event	Contact
13 Mar 09	Associate Members Breakfast	Guy Waters
31 Mar 09	Service Manager Meeting	Martin Dennison
2 April 09	Members Briefing	Guy Waters
6 April 00	Height Safety Awareness	Martin Dennison
9 April 09	Learning & Development Committee	Martin Dennison
16 April 09	NSW Council	Guy Waters

My Say: David Eynon

A ROAD MAP FOR REFRIGERATION TRAINING

Apprenticeship training and ongoing professional development for Refrigeration Mechanics has long been a problem for the industry.

There are reasons why this is the case which include a disconnect between industry and the TAFE system, a national focus on training packages that does not reflect the local real work situation, staff retirements from TAFE and a rapid growth in technology in the industry.

Industry itself must take some of the responsibility for allowing this situation to develop.

For AMCA the time to do something about the situation has arrived.

Recently a workshop to identify the problems and develop solutions was held. A cross section of people representing wide interests in service and maintenance operations and refrigeration mechanics spent a full day bringing their experience to the discussion.

Coming out of the discussion is a proposal to prepare a business plan that will establish a Centre of Excellence for refrigeration mechanic training and ongoing professional development.

The AMCA executive has resolved to give its full support and provide the funding necessary to staff development.

UNION COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The new agreement is now available to companies that wish to sign the agreement. The agreement has been checked for code and guidelines compliancy and has been endorsed by the Compliance Framework Branch of the relevant Commonwealth Government Department.

STEP TOWARD CONSISTENT OHS LAWS

The review panel set up by the Commonwealth Government to look at steps to develop nationally consistent OHS laws has now reported to the government. AMCA and other employers generally called for nationally consistent laws but not moving to the lowest common denominator. We did not want to extend some of the rights that unions have in NSW to other states.

The report recommends that unions should not have the right to launch prosecutions against employers for alleged breaches to OHS laws. However in what appears to be a tradeoff the report calls for employers to give 5 days paid leave to employee safety representatives.

COMPANY DIRECTOR FINED IN NSW

A company director and his company were fined \$236,500 in the NSW Industrial Court recently. An employee's arm was crushed when it became caught in unguarded rollers in a milling machine. The company and its director were fined because the company had failed to:

- Provide training to the employee using the machine;
- Provide adequate guarding of the machine.

The presiding judge commented that for very little expense this tragic accident could easily have been prevented.

SENATE HEARINGS ON FAIR WORK BILL

The Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee heard evidence recently on the Government's Fair Work Bill 2008.

The principal areas of concern for construction industry employers are:

- Expanded capacity for trade unions to enter workplaces (right of entry), and inspect the personal records of employees who choose not to join trade unions;
- Potentially complex tests for the approval of agreements;
- Reintroducing unfair dismissal laws for small business, and complicating redundancies and their exemption from unfair dismissal laws;
- Greater exposure to complex and costly litigation, including injunctions stopping restructuring and dismissal and complicated adverse actions claims; and
- The introduction of new rules on the transfer of business ownership.

Some of these changes were foreshadowed by the ALP in the election campaign but others were not. The key test for any change to the system should be the effect on work and workplaces, and on the capacity to maintain employment, especially in the current economic climate.

WorkSafe Newsflash

WorkSafe will be running a "Back to basics" campaign for the next 3 months, which will have inspectors targetting site housekeeping to ensure that "everyone on site is doing their bit".

Supervision will also be expected to be evident to ensure that everybody follows the site rules and to regularly inspect the site to ensure contractors are following the safety rules and compliance to all work safety procedures.

For further information and a sample "Site housekeeping checklist" go to the WorkSafe website - worksafe.vic.gov.au/construction and click on the link to "Back to basics".



What's on in VIC?

Date	Event
17 March 09	NEBB Refresher course
20 March 09	NEBB Exams
23 March 09	AMCA Golf Day
24 March 09	AMCA Executive Meeting

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QLDNEWS

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My Say:

Graham MacKrell

LOW CARBON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT - NATIONAL APPROACH

The early adaptation of new technologies and innovation in design and business processes drives a competitive advantage for those with courage and vision.

The push from Governments to achieve a low carbon economy will see the need for all sectors of the community to make changes to existing practices and to take on new skill-sets to ensure a sense of relevance now and in the future.

The identification of skills and processes on a wholesale scale at a national level is being considered in a draft consultation document where input has been requested to a National Vocational, Education and Training (VET) Sector Sustainability Policy and Action Plan 2009-2012.

Although business practices including the need to include sustainability in design, maintenance and installation are relatively easy to adapt to a sustainability model, the process of infusing new technology in a training curriculum in a timely manner is quite a different challenge in a National approach.

VET Sector curriculum development usually lags the front end of industry in some instances by several years. This is usually the point where the real world meets the general needs of the broader community.

Consequently, the infusion of new/modern technologies is at best ad-hoc reliant on equipment donations to raise awareness in the VET sector of modern technologies.

For a national approach to succeed in a rapidly changing world, we need to start with the end in mind. What a great opportunity!

STRATEGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008

The Queensland Government through the Department of Public Works has implemented a Strategic Energy Management Plan 2008. The Executive summary of this strategy states that the Queensland Government through the Climate Smart 2050 Strategy is committed to the ongoing reduction of energy consumption and resulting greenhouse emissions in government buildings.

This is demonstrated through Government's introduction of the Strategic Energy Efficiency Policy (SEEP). The SEEP requires all departments with buildings to produce a Strategic Energy Management Plan (SEMP) to outline the reporting and reduction requirements of the policy.

The SEMP documents the measures that will be used to reduce energy consumption across the Queensland Government Accommodation Office (QGAO) building portfolio in order to achieve the mandatory energy reduction targets of 5% by 2010 and 20% by 2015.

The QGAO building portfolio is spread throughout the State, comprising mainly of office buildings and workshops. The largest energy consuming sites within the portfolio are Brisbane CBD office buildings.

The QGAO has recently established a program to retrofit the high-energy usage buildings with energy-efficient technologies through the use of Energy Performance Contracts (EPC) for the portfolio-owned buildings. The EPC upgrade program is being funded through the Queensland Treasury loan funding and is expected to realise energy reduction targets of 15.6 % by 2010.

QGAO will also undertake additional energy audits and implement further energy reduction projects across the portfolio. These include lighting retrofits, implementing staff awareness programs on energy use, incorporating energy saving technologies into maintenance routines, improving green purchasing practices, mandating minimum air-conditioning levels and moving towards green leasing arrangements where possible. These energy reduction projects and EPCs are collectively expected to realise savings of 23% by 2015.

SERVICES TO MEMBERS

We have joined AMCA-SA in offering a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) service to members.

A Master MSDS listing will be developed based on input from members and regular updates to the master list will be issued at agreed intervals. The service should be ready to roll out in April 2009.

OH&S CONTRACT RENEWED FOR 2009

We have renewed our contract with Sue Stack of Stack Masula Pty Ltd for the provision of a range of OH&S services including free telephone information and advice.

An Environmental Plan will form a part of the renewed contract together with training and information sessions.

What's on in QLD?

Date

1 & 8 April 09
14 April 09
14 April 09
16 April 09

Event

Drafting Cert IV – Electives
RDO
Service Mgrs Meeting
Council Meeting

Contact

Jannie MacKrell

Graham MacKrell
Graham MacKrell

My Say: Alan Layton

FREE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICE WELCOME

The introduction of the Employment Dispute Resolution Act in Western Australia should serve to allow at least some small to medium-sized businesses to avoid the costs and delays of workplace disputes.

The service, in my view, should be of particular interest to those companies who do not have dedicated human resources staff and who can be financially wounded by protracted and costly disputes interrupting their service to clients.

For the cost of a phone call, a business operator or an employee can access information and practical mediation assistance on a free and confidential basis to help navigate a successful outcome.

According to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (WAIRC), the services are offered by experienced Commissioners providing an informal, responsive and affordable mediation service.

The mediation service has very few limits, provided it is voluntarily agreed to be all parties and is a question, dispute or difficulty arising from employment. The WAIRC Mediation Service can also be provided where the employment is covered by the Commonwealth Workplace Relations Act 1996.

WA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ITS CAPITAL WORKS PRIORITIES

The WA Premier, Colin Barnett, and Treasurer, Troy Buswell, have announced that the government is fast-tracking the building of more than 1,000 new homes and building 14 new schools. Other key projects are the new Perth police complex in Northbridge, the redevelopment of the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital and Albany Regional Hospital, the expansion of Joondalup Hospital, the West Kimberley Regional Prison at Derby and a livestock centre at Muchea.

CARRIER CONFIRMS COMMITMENT FOLLOWING WA CLOSURE

In a circular to industry, Carrier confirmed its commitment to the Australian market following its decision in December of last year to close its Western Australian manufacturing facility and to withdraw from the HVAC market segment serviced by the APAC brand. Carrier assured the industry that the company continues to maintain its direct presence in all of the major markets in Australia, providing direct sales and after-market support. Carrier pledged its determination to continue to provide high quality, relevant products and services to the company's customers.

JOE MCDONALD GUILTY OF TRESPASS

CFMEU WA Assistant Secretary, Joe McDonald, has been found guilty of trespass. WA police lodged an appeal against an earlier decision which had acquitted him of being on a shopping centre building site without the required right of entry permit. In a unanimous decision, the Court of Appeal ordered a verdict of guilty. The Master Builders Association welcomed the guilty verdict commenting that "it confirmed that trespass is a serious offence and, for those union officials that don't have a legitimate right of entry, they have no place on building sites". Joe McDonald is facing another four trespass charges of a similar nature.

SAFETY PROGRAM FOR YOUNG WORKERS

WorkSafe has issued a new and updated version of SmartMove, its safety and health website for young workers. The update is responding to the fact that, over the past four and a half years, 15 young WA workers have lost their lives in work-related incidents and every day in WA around 10 young workers are injured at work seriously enough to require time off. SmartMove now has a broader content with more interactive features and contains industry-specific information on hazards. Further information is available at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/smartmove.

AMCA BACKS APPRENTICESHIP PLAN

AMCA WA has welcomed the announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister to introduce immediately the government's \$145.6m Securing Apprenticeships Plan. Julia Gillard stated that the incentives available to employers and Group Training Organisations will be increased by \$1,000 on completion of an apprenticeship. A wage subsidy of up to \$ 1,800 will also be available for eligible out-of-trade apprentices at Certificate 111 or 1V level in any skills shortage areas. All the building trades have been identified as skills shortage areas and therefore will benefit from the new plan. The associated \$9.7m Securing Apprenticeships through Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) commences from 1st July 2009. It provides financial assistance to RTOs to enable out-of-trade apprentices to continue their off-the-job training.

SANEWS

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My Say: Chris Rankin

THE NATIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE – IMPACT ON AMCA SA MEMBERS

The recently announced Nation Building and Jobs Plan provides for \$41 billion across the nation.

Of particular interest to AMCA SA Members is the component of the plan that is the Building the Education Revolution section of this stimulus package. Both the Secondary Schools (science and language centres for the 21st century) and the Primary Schools for the 21st Century, will contain new building works that will require HVAC works.

These two parts of the Building the Education Revolution, award projects on a merit basis across the nation, however, we are as yet unsure of the volume or the value that will be required to be done.

What the AMCA SA is attempting to achieve is to offer as much assistance to State Government departments as is required to ensure that the projects awarded to SA will incorporate properly designed and costed air conditioning and mechanical services, to raise members awareness of the upcoming increase in demand for their services in a relatively short lead time (many of the projects must be underway in May / June) and that there are sufficient quantities of equipment, materials and labour to meet construction time frames.

Members who have been to recent AMCA members' meeting will have received a briefing on this subject already.

For further information on the progress of the roll out of this stimulus package go to www.dtei.sa.gov.au/coordinator_general Another site to review is www.decs.sa.gov.au/buildingtheeducationrevolution.

AMCA SA TO OFFER REHABILITATION AND RETURN TO WORK COORDINATOR SERVICE TO MEMBERS

The AMCA SA Executive Committee is currently finalising a new service which members may subscribe to, so as to be compliant with OH&S Legislation requirements for rehabilitation and return work management of injured workers.

The new changes to WorkCover legislation include changes to:

- Provisional liability;
- The waiver of the employer excess;
- Rehabilitation and Return to work
- Removal of the arbitration from the dispute resolution process.

The change with the most impact will be the requirement for enterprises with 30 or more employees (including casual employees and counted on a head count basis not on an FTE basis) must employ / train a person to manage rehabilitation and return to work coordination.

The Coordinator must be in place by 1st July 2009.

Training will be required and will run from one day to three days dependent on the risk profile of the industry, levy rates of less than 4.5% will only require one days training.

The proposed AMCA SA service would offer a Group Cover, so that one person would be trained and instructed to manage the OH&S rehabilitation and return to work functions and each subscribing enterprise could use the service on an as needs basis.

AMCA GOLF DAY 2009: MONDAY, 4 MAY 2009

Put this date in your diary!

Planning is underway for this annual event.

We are back at the Kooyonga Golf Club this year and as you may be aware the club rooms have undergone a complete upgrade, so things should be better than ever.



FUND RAISING

Apart from our fund raising that will be included in this year's AMCA SA Golf Day (Monday 4th May) and the AMCA SA Annual Dinner (Friday 17 July), we will be running a Car Observation (Ramble) from Adelaide to Birdwood, followed by a catered BBQ Lunch.

The date of the Car Observation Ramble is Sunday, 24 May commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Proceeds will go to the Oncology Children's Foundation.

TRAINING

John Pilley two day seminar delayed to 22 - 23 April 2009

Due to other commitments, the **Contract Law for Senior Construction and Admin Staff** and the day two seminar for **On Site Supervisors** have been delayed. Registration information will be circulated closer to the new date.

What's on in SA?

Date	Event	Contact
7 April 09	Executive & General Meeting	Chris / Maureen
9 April 09	RDO 4	
15 April 09	Airconditioning Service Group Meeting	Chris / Maureen
16 April 09	Associate Members Meeting	Chris / Maureen
14 April 09	LDO 4	