
Student OH&S Risks and Enforceable Undertaking at The University of Queensland 2010

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UQ Gatton Campus Incident

- Gatton Campus is over 2600 acres, has over 60 buildings with 500 staff and 3000 students
- Gatton Vocational Education Centre (GVEC)
- Students undertaking Cert IV in Agricultural Science(average age 17 years)
- Included 1 day per week in “practical placement” on Campus
- Placements may be anything from fence post repairs to working in a machine shop



Centre for Advanced Animal Science (CAAS)

- Opened in December 2008
- Specifically designed for large animal PC2 and PC3 research
- Total cost \$35 million
- “Farm culture” still exists including transfer of old and home made equipment from other areas of the University



CAAS Incident

- Students asked to dismantle old feed conveyor to salvage electric motor(at least 20 years old!)
- Given a toolbox of mostly spanners
- Students left alone for 3 hours
- Were unable to complete dismantling as some parts were “tack welded” and the supervisor could not be located



CAAS Incident

- Without any instruction the students found a “cold chisel” in the bottom of the toolbox with an old carpenter's hammer
- Students then proceeded to attempt to break the welds with the hammer and chisel



Incident Investigation Findings

- Qld Workplace Health and Safety regulator notified and commenced immediate investigation
- Student had not completed CAAS compulsory OH&S induction
- No risk assessment had been completed for the process as a result no PPE identified
- Students left to complete task totally unsupervised

Investigation findings

- University charged with breach of Section 28 of Qld Workplace Health and Safety Act
- Independent legal advice received that would be likely that both the CAAS Manager and Executive Officer for the campus would also be charged for breaching the Act
- Opportunity in Qld to seek “Enforceable Undertaking” in lieu of prosecution

Enforceable Undertakings in Qld



- Only available where there are no fatalities and employer has a previous good record in OH&S
- Must acknowledge the “alleged” contravention
- Must include a statement of regret
- Must include assurances or employers future behaviour in OH&S matters
- As a rule of thumb should total identifiable expenditure of approximately 4 times an expected fine

Enforceable Undertaking Details

- A full OH&S management systems audit to be conducted by an externally accredited OH&S Auditor of UQ Gatton Campus
- Audit report to be provided to the WH&S regulator within 30 days of completion
- ALL corrective actions must be completed within 6 months
- Gatton campus will be audited similarly every year till 2013

Enforceable Undertaking Details

- Develop and implement a further range of online OH&S training modules for UQ staff and students. Modules will include:
 - Safety with Biological Agents
 - Safety with Chemicals
 - Computer workstation setup
 - UQ Risk Assessment system

Enforceable Undertaking Details

- Compulsory OH&S responsibilities training for UQ Senior level managers
- Training will have up to 170 senior managers attend including ALL Exec Deans, DVCs, HOS, Institute and Division Director's, Faculty Executive Officers and School Managers.
- Training program to workshop interactive on 3 hours duration

Enforceable Undertaking Details

- Development of OH&S module/s to be included in GVEC and other “at risk professions”
- Modules may include full OH&S subject in a range of undergraduate programs
- Will also include a shorter online module written under “blackboard” and made available for no fee to other tertiary organisations. Some program delivery also included

Enforceable Undertaking details

- OH&S Scholarship program to provide 2 scholarships for students to complete the Bachelor of OH&S program
- Provide a contribution to the KIDS foundations to promote child safety
- Publish details of the EU in the Annual report and advise other institutions by presentations at a range of National OH&S conferences and seminars

Costs of Undertakings

- Total up front costs of Undertakings \$163,000
- Costs of implementation of Gatton audit findings is not quantifiable but estimated at significantly more.
- Costs of prosecution and conviction under criminal code??
- Legal estimates up to \$5 million per year for 3 years but reputational damage to the brand may be higher than this







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UQ Enforceable Undertaking 2010

100
YEARS AHEAD