

# PULP & PAPER INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

## WORKPLACE CULTURE - LEADING THE WAY

In late September, 2007 the Pulp & Paper Industry OHS&E Unit hosted the second industry based OHS conference **"Workplace Culture – Leading the Way"**. The conference had over 100 delegates attending the two day program which was focussed on the importance that culture has in the workplace and the crucial role that leaders play in changing workplace culture. Highlights of the conference were many and varied.

### DAY ONE

#### DAVID PARKIN - KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The conference got off to a rousing start with the introduction of our keynote speaker, David Parkin, former AFL coach. Amongst lots of thoughtful and entertaining anecdotes, David's key theme was **"if the end product is important to you, you will be motivated"**.

Borrowing from his great mate, John Buchanan – former Australian cricket team coach – David also asked everyone three (3) key questions about being a leader.

**CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?  
DO I HAVE THE ENERGY TO KEEP DOING IT?  
AM I STILL RESPECTED?**



When we broke for lunch these three (3) questions had everyone thinking about what being a leader in the workplace really means. A number of industry presentations were delivered over the two days conference. Some outstanding highlights included:

#### STEVE WESOLOWSKI, Logistics Safety Leader Kimberly-Clark Australia, Millicent Mill

Steve provided an informative and entertaining session on the practical solutions to difficult issues in the logistics and warehousing environment. He reminded us all that real, sustainable and successful solutions to long term problems are always developed with the involvement of all stakeholders.



#### BILLY DUNCAN, PETER FREEMAN, RAY HADGKISS & COL PETERSON Health & Safety Assistants, Australian Paper, Maryvale Mill

Billy, Peter, Ray and Col discussed their unique roles within the pulp and paper industry – full time, off-the-job health & safety assistants. Their work encompasses the entire mill and they work directly with workers on the shop floor in a problem solving and educational capacity. The demonstrated positive impact of these roles was clear for all to see. Their key message was the power of clear and fearless peer leadership.



At the conclusion of Day 1 delegates gathered in the 'Fishbowl' at the Melbourne Aquarium for the opportunity to catch-up with colleagues. The presentations by David Parkin and the Maryvale Health and Safety Assistants in particular, generated some vigorous discussions!

# PULP & PAPER INDUSTRY CONFERENCE WORKPLACE CULTURE - LEADING THE WAY

## DAY TWO

### ALEX MILLAR Federal President Pulp & Paper Workers Branch

Alex issued a challenge to all leaders **"if you can't believe the messenger, you won't believe the message"** and demonstrated that peer leadership is always believable.

### CHRIS MEAKIN, Principal, Lloyd, Jones, Meakin

On Day 2 we were lucky enough to have Chris Meakin, from workplace change consultants Lloyd, Jones Meakin, discussing cultural change and leadership in the workplace. Chris was able to utilise the results of his work within the pulp and paper sector to great effect while demonstrating the importance of leaders working with their teams and the individuals at work and keeping things simple – not making them more complex than they have to be. Chris also stated that **"we have to get people thinking about the potential consequences if we want behaviour to change"**

### BRETT OWEN & GERRY O'CONNELL Ampcor Australasia, Botany Mill

Brett and Gerry shared their experiences of introducing and running a successful behavioural safety program in the workplace. Key elements to this successful program include a "no name, no blame" approach and focussing on the people involved, not the process, system or statistics. Their SHARK program has had a significant and positive impact on the Botany mill and they reminded us that **"when you get it right the responsibility for safety becomes a shared process"**.

The issue of leadership in the workplace can be summed up by asking these questions of ourselves and others



How can we show people we lead that we care about their safety?



How many times can we demonstrate different behaviours to those we talk about without losing credibility?



How do we recognise (reward) good behaviour?



How can we identify and remove unacceptable behaviour?



How will you keep making a difference?

Leadership to change OHS cultures requires courage and honesty, sometimes in adverse situations.