



TABMAtalk

quote of the month

"Here's to the bright new year, & a fond farewell to the old; here's to the things that are yet to come & to the memories that we hold."

Anonymous



Norm Tilling & other volunteers clean out the Beveridge Timbers shed at Sumner Park.

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PROUD TO BE A QUEENSLANDER: Our Timber Community Rallies to Help Fellow Members in Need

Four TABMA Queensland members in Brisbane had flood waters through their premises last week. In Sumner Park there was AAA Timber & Hardware, Beveridge Timbers and Finlaysons, as well as Gill & Co at Rocklea. Others members located in Acacia Ridge, Archerfield, Moorooka and Rocklea have been without power for a number of days and had flood waters come frighteningly close to their front doors. Luckily our TABMA family members in Toowoomba and Ipswich are safe.

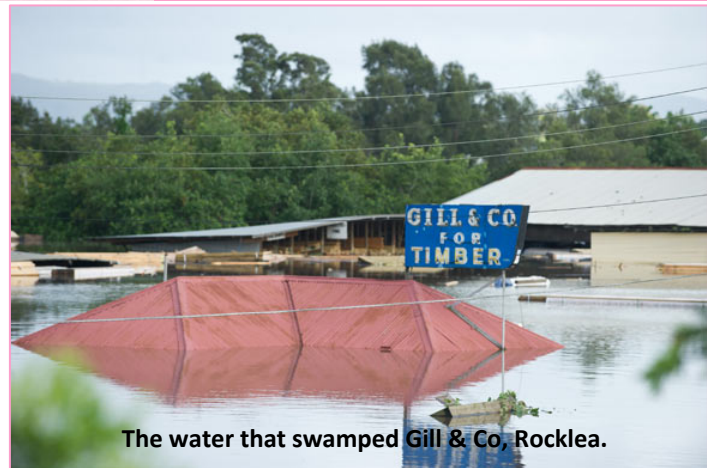
The level of support that I have seen and heard about this week has almost left me speechless (I know, ME!), and is appreciated beyond words to those on the receiving end. Many of you have assisted your personal friends and family and/or the general public in their clean up endeavours. What an amazing spirit of community and teamwork is alive throughout our communities! We really can work together.

This week, Alicia and I have been out delivering refreshments as well as assisting in the clean up efforts of our members where it has been needed. There are some joist hangers at a few merchants that have never sparkled so much! (We have a manicure booked in next week to tend to our broken hands!) On our adventures we have been joined by other TABMA Queensland members also getting dirty while lending a hand. GREAT JOB EVERYONE! I am proud that TABMA members are so willing to come together and help each other. Those I have run into (which is by no means exhaustive I am sure) in the past 7 days have included:

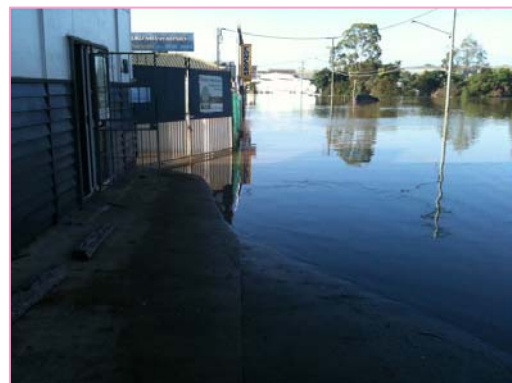
Dindas
Parkside Timbers
Tilling Timber

Hyne
Tarmac QLD
Woodhouse Timber Co.

Thank you!



The water that swamped Gill & Co, Rocklea.



LEFT:
The water **ALMOST** reached the front door of member **Garde Timbers, Moorooka**



The rubbish pile and 'pick-up sticks' at Beveridge Timbers.

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NO DOLE COMMITMENT: STUDENTS & THE COMMUNITY

Late last year I was invited by Mabel Park High School to attend their annual Year 10 Charter Signing. The Charter Signing is organised by the Beacon Foundation. It is where Year 10 Students make a commitment to “No Dole”. The commitment is not only made by the students, but also the teachers, and businesses in the community who are committed to supporting the students in the “No Dole” Program.

The Beacon Foundation (Beacon) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been running the “No Dole” Program since 1988. Their vision is of ‘an Australia in which our young people have the desire, the motivation and the opportunity to reach their full individual potential’. They are currently operating in 125 schools across Australia with a sole focus on the prevention of youth unemployment and the organisation has been working to help bridge the gap from school to work. They offer schools support programs particularly those that operate in low socio-economic status areas with programs such as the charter signing, mock interviews and industry tours.



Mabel Park High School has been working with the Beacon Foundation for four years, which has produced many success stories, including the school being named ‘Best Beacon School in Australia’ at this year’s Beacon National Conference. This year TABMA Queensland got involved with both the Beacon Foundation and Mabel Park High School. We plan to continue supporting the “No Dole” program and, together with your help, we can do this.

We have a few members who have already stepped up to the plate to support these students. Fineline Timbers at Woodridge, 5 Star Timbers at Yatala and this month Pacific Wood Products, Acacia Ridge have all offered a student the opportunity to start their career, in an industry that can offer a young person so much! The Government too, support School Based Trainee’s by offering the training for **FREE**.

If you would like to get involved in seeing that our younger generation transitions into work and not ‘the dole’, please give me a call. I can not only help you make that step, but I can also help you find your next star employee.

Alicia Oelkers,

Group Training & Recruitment Manager

GBC & CERTIFICATION - FAIRER RECOGNITION

Persistence pays off. Following our success in Australia, it looks like other Green Building Council’s around the world are also starting to take a fairer and more realistic view on certification with the Italian Green Building Council also now recognising PEFC.

<http://www.pefc.org/index.php/news-a-media/general-sfm-news/news-detail/item/690-green-building-council-italia-to-promote-certified-wood>

The agreement between PEFC and GBCI, that can be downloaded at the bottom of this web page, reads very positively. Perhaps industry needs to peruse a similar statement with the GBCA.

Alastair Woodard, Wood Products Victoria, TPC Solutions (Aust) Pty Ltd

Membership Anniversaries

For the month of JANUARY the following TABMA Queensland members are celebrating their membership anniversaries. Thank you for your fantastic support of the Association!

**PEACHESTER
TIMBER CO.
- 7 Years -**

**TRADEWARE
BUILDING SUPPLIES
- 6 Years -**

**HUDSON BUILDING
SUPPLIES
- 3 Years -**

LINKS FOR FLOOD RECOVERY RELATED INFORMATION

DONATIONS NEEDED:

This email is from our member **WAYNE NORMAN TIMBER & PLY** who have been extremely active gathering and distributing donations! Please contact Carol to give her your email address if you can help with the information provided below:

*I have just had a call from a flood relief co-ordinator in Goodna, she advises that in about 3-5 weeks they will be requiring full replacement of household items for approximately 150 families. As you can imagine this is a huge amount of items, they currently have enough things to get them all through at the moment. When the list of items required comes through I will email you all and if you are able to provide any of the items will have you tick off the list and return to me so we can co-ordinate an organised approach. We **cannot** hold any more items at our work place at the moment, so if you all wish to hang on to your items until such a time as the list is available, I will be able to assist in the distribution after that, thanks again for all your help.*

Carol Norman :: Ph: 5546 8685 :: Email: wntimbernply@bigpond.com

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment:

http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/emergency/severe_weather_dec10_dirs.htm

Business Flood Relief/Subsidy Forms:

<http://www.business.qld.gov.au/risk-management/flood-business-financial.html>

BSA: (Guidelines for Flood Recovery Construction including Safety Checklist & Other Documents)

[http://www.bsadisasterrecovery.qld.gov.au/Pages/Home\(default\).aspx](http://www.bsadisasterrecovery.qld.gov.au/Pages/Home(default).aspx)

Master Builders: (Guide for Working on Flood Damaged Premises)

<http://www.masterbuilders.asn.au/>

Zero Harm at Work aims to build a positive safety culture in Queensland workplaces to help reduce the number and seriousness of workplace health and safety incidents in Queensland. Zero harm means no harm to anyone, anytime while at work. Industry leaders play a vital role in achieving this. Through committing to share innovation, knowledge and experience with others, the Zero Harm at Work Leadership Forum members can make a significant contribution in raising the standards of workplace health and safety across the state.

In agreeing to become a member, you are agreeing to:

- commit to the goal of *zero harm at work*
- support the Zero Harm at Work Leadership Program charter principles
- report to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland within one year against the program reporting criteria attend networking events with your industry peers; and
- have your organisation's name published on Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's website as a Zero Harm at Work Leadership Program member.



The Zero Harm at Work Leadership Program encourages industry to work together to find new and innovative ways to improve the culture of safety not just in individual workplaces, but across industry more broadly. The program targets industry leaders who have the capacity to significantly influence the way in which not only their own organisation operates, but also that of their supply chains.

A commitment to the Zero Harm at Work Leadership Program is a commitment from the director, owner or CEO of an organisation. This is not a program for a designated safety officer within your organisation, although they will have a role to play in your organisation and industry in promoting the zero harm message.

Zero Harm at Work Leadership Forum

- Provides an ongoing forum to foster and promote leadership in workplace health and safety
- Provides examples of good practices and lessons learnt that can assist other workplaces to improve
- Motivates and encourages workplaces to voluntarily strive for zero tolerance workplace health and safety
- Promotes the adoption of a Zero Harm at Work culture through co-operation and knowledge sharing, and
- Provides leaders with materials and tools to promote a culture of Zero Harm at Work.

Visit the Zero Harm at Work website <http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/zeroharm/index.htm> to view the guidelines, reporting requirements, resources section and partner organizations.

For more information about the Zero Harm at Work Leadership Forum program phone the Workplace Health and Safety Infoline on 1300 369 915. The Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website also provides Zero Harm at Work fact sheets and checklists and the practical case studies to help you understand how Zero Harm can work in your organisation and industry.

QUEENSLAND JOBSEEKERS FAILING DRUG TESTS

DRUG and alcohol testing is on the rise in blue-collar workplaces, with Queensland jobseekers having the worst failure rate of any other state or territory in the country. Recruitment firm Labourforce managing director Regan Brown said 35 per cent of Queenslanders seeking a job through his company tested positive for drugs or alcohol at application.

"It's a very, very big problem, it's just not spoken about much," Mr Brown said. Queensland's failure rate is 10 per cent higher than the national average, with Labourforce rejecting 25 per cent of applicants nationwide for failing their tests. Mr Brown said it was a statistic industry could not afford to ignore.

"If it was 1 per cent it wouldn't be a worry but when it's one in four people who don't work for us then we know that its a serious problem out there," he said. Brown said marijuana accounted for 78 per cent of positive results followed by amphetamines at 30 per cent and opiates at 4 per cent.

Across occupations, the highest failure rate comes from manufacturing process workers and machine operators, with 58 per cent of applicants failing their drug and alcohol tests, followed by forklift operators (53 per cent) and truck drivers (34 per cent).

Mr Brown said the number of companies demanding drug and alcohol tests at recruitment was increasing because of safety concerns, insurance and fears of lost productivity due to substance abuse. Australian Human Resources Institute national president Peter Wilson said the increase in workplace testing was a response to the prevalence of substance abuse in society at large.

By Anthony Gough, the article above appeared in the Courier Mail on November 27, 2010.

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY - REVIEW TIME?

A no-tolerance policy is common when it comes to the issue of drugs and alcohol in the workplace. It is especially important in the timber industry as staff regularly operate potentially dangerous machinery, drive vehicles and work with heavy product. Safety is paramount for ethical and legal reasons due to an employers duty of care and requirements under the Workplace Health and Safety Act. TABMA Queensland has 'random drug and alcohol testing' incorporated into our Drug & Alcohol Policy.



Should you wish to introduce a similar concept in your organisation, I spoke with the Chamber of Commerce & Industry advice line to find out how it should be implemented. Attached to this newsletter is a fact sheet they produce that includes the following information:

- What a drug and alcohol policy is.
- Why an employer should have a drug and alcohol policy.
- Consequences if the employer doesn't have a drug and alcohol policy.
- What a drug and alcohol policy should contain including testing guidelines.
- The process to follow when implementing the policy.
- Additional considerations.
- The severity of a drug and alcohol policy breach.

Once this policy is in place, it was recommended that the most proactive management approach is to follow through with random drug testing if you have suspicions at any stage. Then all staff are aware that you DO follow through and this could act as a deterrent. If you implement this program you must ensure that you use a fully accredited testing provider or the results may not be valid if you make an employment decision based on a positive result and have either administered the tests yourself or used an unaccredited provider. **An estimated 90% of Australia's drug and alcohol testing programs are currently not compliant.** Attached to this newsletter is an article about Drug & Alcohol Testing Compliance that was presented at the Safety Institute of Australia's 2010 conference on the Gold Coast.

We have arranged a deal for TABMA Queensland members with the only fully NATA accredited onsite Drug & Alcohol Testing

Random Testing

organisation based in Queensland. Attached to this newsletter is a brochure about their organisation, **Fit4Duty**. Contact Darron Brien, Managing Director on 1300 660 908 to discuss your business with him directly, and be sure to mention you're a TABMA Queensland member. Below is some key information to consider from their website, www.drugtest.com.au.



FITNESS FOR DUTY THROUGH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE:

We believe that the objective of conducting workplace drug & alcohol testing is to change behaviour, rather than a "witch hunt" for positive results. To achieve this behavioural change (and obvious improvement in workplace safety) there are three fundamental aspects to an effective program; Policy Development, Staff Education and Testing. Fit4Duty extends much further than simply a testing agency. They can provide Self Testing Equipment designed to encourage responsible self-management and secure result reporting/ statistical analysis that is unrivalled in this industry. Our reporting services include secure summary statistical reporting (which can be automated for every testing visit), secure record storage (for up to 9 years), secure PDF result notification and periodical statistical reporting to assist you in monitoring the success of your program.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PHASE

A Fitness for Duty Policy serves many purposes and is vitally important if you intend to conduct testing in your organisation. A Drug & Alcohol Policy should;

- serve to explain the testing procedures (including any ramifications to staff)
- act as a guide for supervisors and should clearly explain all aspects of the testing process in clear and unambiguous detail
- be developed in consultation with Staff
- be operationally, legally and scientifically feasible.

These aspects can be extremely tough to achieve without expert direction. Preparing a policy in this field from the "ground up" can be an onerous task. Fit4Duty frequently review existing policies and our experience is that many of these contain simple errors and mistakes, made by organisations both large and small. A legal challenge might focus heavily upon the written policies and procedures adopted; accordingly this aspect should be given considerable attention.

Some common mistakes include:

- **incorrect cut-off levels** - for example 50 ng/mL (or mg/L) is NOT the confirmatory cut-off level for Cannabis, this is the screening level. We estimate that at least 30% of Policies in Australia reference incorrect cut-off levels.
- **incongruent terminology** for example references to "zero tolerance", "impairment" or "under the influence" are likely to seriously compromise a program facing a legal challenge.
- implementing an **"instant dismissal" approach**. Industrial Commissions tend to be intolerant of Policies that do not include opportunities for rehabilitation (allowing at least 3 confirmed positive results prior to dismissal).
- **failing to accommodate legitimate pharmaceuticals** - a small number of pharmaceuticals can produce positive results. Organisations that fail to accommodate individuals taking legitimate pharmaceuticals as prescribed would most likely be deemed to have applied harsh, unfair and unjust treatment.

Fit4Duty can assist your organisation in developing a "Drug and Alcohol Policy" designed to be as accurate and detailed as possible, whilst achieving the underlying objective of changing people's behaviour in the interests of workplace safety. An effective policy should include procedures for the method of testing to be used, training and education for employees, communication of results and appropriate actions (including employee assistance) in the event that an employee is found positive for presence of drugs and alcohol and medications.

EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION PHASE

Many Industrial Relations cases relating to drug & alcohol testing appear to focus on the communication of the policy and program to staff normally. The method of staff communication that we promote focuses on the testing methods used, privacy protection measures and addresses many of the myths of Drug & Alcohol testing. Fit4Duty can provide Instructors, educational aids (digital projectors etc where required), PowerPoint presentations and Questionnaires to assist in this process. Fit4Duty have a variety of presentation templates that can be delivered to staff as part of initial program awareness.

> Industrial Relations Fair Work Information Sheet Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace

This fact sheet is relevant to all employers in Queensland.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

A drug and alcohol policy is a formal written document that outlines the expectations placed on employees while at work with regard to drugs and alcohol. If an employee breaches the policy, the employer may be able to undertake disciplinary action. Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) consultants are able to draft or review drug and alcohol policies to suit your workplace needs.

Why have a drug and alcohol policy?

Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, employers have an obligation to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for employees. Failure to do so may result in penalties and other liabilities. To help comply with this requirement, employers often implement policies and training programs. This raises awareness of employee obligations and provides some protection against vicarious liability should an incident occur.

From an internal perspective, a drug and alcohol policy can be instrumental in counselling and terminating employees who attend for duty in an unfit state. If an employee is aware of a policy, and understands the consequences of breaching it, the employer is in a stronger position to take disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (as long as the policy is reasonable in the first place).

Having a strong stance supported by a policy on drugs and alcohol at work can also reduce costs associated with:

- Absenteeism;
- Poor performance;
- High staff turnover; and
- WorkCover premiums.

Certain industries, such as mining and transport for example, are subject to strict codes of practice in relation to drugs and alcohol. Non-compliance with these codes can result in severe penalties, including monetary fines, bars against tenders and criminal charges.

What if the employer doesn't have a drug and alcohol policy?

The absence of a drug and alcohol policy at the workplace does not prohibit an employer from testing or disciplining an employee - it just makes it more difficult. An employee may be able to argue that they didn't understand the expectations of them, or that they weren't advised on appointment that testing was a term of their employment, so the employee may consider it an unlawful or unreasonable direction.

What should a drug and alcohol policy contain?

Why the policy is necessary

It is important to explain why the policy has been put in place. An employee who sees worth in the policy is more likely to follow it. The statement might say that the policy is necessary for compliance with workplace health and safety laws, due to contractual obligations, or in light of the special nature of work that the employee performs.

When the policy applies and who the policy applies to

The policy may not cover all employees; it may only apply to those employees in a particular area or those performing a particular task. Sections of the policy may apply differently to different categories of employees and this should be outlined in the beginning of the policy. It is also diligent to advise when the policy applies. You may wish for the policy to only apply during work on a specific project, or you could specify that it applies at all times, even at work functions and whilst on-call.

The employee's obligations

The employee must be advised in no uncertain terms exactly what is expected of them. The employer may wish for employees to attend for work with no trace of drugs or alcohol in their system, or may tolerate a 0.05 blood alcohol content limit as set by the police. This decision will be influenced by the reasons for implementing the policy and the accuracy of the testing procedures available. If drug and alcohol testing will be implemented, the employee should be advised that they are required to submit to the testing, and what the consequences will be if they refuse.

Selection for testing

The policy should stipulate how employees will be selected for testing. Targeted testing would involve only selecting those employees who are suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This method is recommended if the main reason for the policy is to manage drug or alcohol related performance issues. Managers may decide to test a person based on their behaviour, speech, odour or appearance, or a third party report. It is important when selecting an individual for testing that care is taken not to harass that person. The policy should also stipulate that the decision to test is at the sole discretion of the employer.

Random testing is usually recommended when an organisation has a very strict requirement for a drug and alcohol free workplace. If possible, indicate how often employees are likely to be tested, and how many are likely to be tested at this time. This ensures that employees are prepared for the testing if approached, and do not feel singled out.

What the testing will involve

Employees should be aware that testing will take place during paid working time; at no cost to the employee and that results will be kept confidential. Giving consideration to cultural constraints, costs and the need for accuracy, determine how the testing will be performed (e.g. blood sample, urine collection, saliva swab). Also outline what quality assurance measures are in place (e.g. retesting of positive results, margins of error, tester qualifications).

Test results

The policy should outline what should happen if the test yields a positive or negative result. A negative result may not result in disciplinary action under the drug and alcohol policy, however does not prevent the employer from undertaking disciplinary action under another policy (i.e. absenteeism, dress policy). A positive result will usually bring about disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It is important that an affected employee does not resume work, and is not disciplined until they have regained sobriety.

Implementing the policy

The policy is only enforceable if the employees are aware of and understand it. The following steps are recommended to ensure maximum effectiveness.

- Provide new employees with a copy of the policy to sign prior to commencement;
- Ensure a copy of the policy is readily available for employees to access;
- Train all managers in the correct, fair and consistent application of the policy;
- Conduct training for all employees, and test their understanding;
- Consider having a grace period, for employees to raise concerns or adjust to a new policy.

Additional considerations

- Complement your policy with guidelines for work functions where alcohol may be served.
- Some genuine pharmaceutical products can produce a positive result when broad spectrum testing is performed - ensure that validation procedures are in place to manage this risk.
- What measures will you put in place to keep the test results confidential? Who will have access to them and where will they be kept?
- Consider engaging the services of an Employee Assistance Program provider. They can provide counselling to employees with personal issues including substance abuse.
- Special consideration may need to be given to employees who disclose an addiction to drugs or alcohol, especially if they are receiving treatment. In severe cases, addiction can be deemed an impairment, which is an attribute subject to anti-discrimination legislation.
- Consider involving employees in the policy drafting process.

How serious is a breach of a drug and alcohol policy?

The gravity of a breach of any policy must be taken in context, however when an employee risks their own or another persons health and safety, immediate and decisive action must be taken. The Fair Work Act recognises the severity of intoxication at work by categorising it as serious misconduct that may warrant instant dismissal.

The Fair Work Act Regulations defines intoxication as “*an employee is taken to be intoxicated if the employee’s faculties are, by reason of the employee being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a drug (except a drug administered by, or taken in accordance with the directions of, a person lawfully authorised to administer the drug), so impaired that the employee is unfit to be entrusted with the employee’s duties or with any duty that the employee may be called upon to perform.*”. Of course all disciplinary action should be in accordance with the workplace policy, and giving consideration to the nature of the employees’ work.

For further information contact the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland’s Employer Assistance Line on 1300 135 822 or lodge a query at our Online Portal found on the CCIQ website under Employer Assistance Line.

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