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July 9th- 12th 2017

Adelaide Convention Centre

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aquaponic commercial growers

CONTACT

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protectedcroppingaustralia.com



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Front Cover

Protected Cropping Australia Chair, Robert Hayes.
Photo by Raquel Neofit

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Future Growing PCA's 14th biennial conference

PCA meets with HIA



PCA Board Directors Folco Faber, Marcus Brandsema and Robert Hayes met with Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) in February to discuss HIA investment in our protected cropping industry.

Greenhouse Construction Code

Following on from VG13055 Building Codes and Greenhouse Construction, PCA are optimistic that HIA will further invest in this vexed area in a three stage process.

The first step will be to develop a horticultural building best practice code, leading to the adoption of an **Australian Standard for Horticultural Buildings**, and finally incorporation in to the Australian Building Construction Code.

As just about anybody who has been involved in a greenhouse or glasshouse project involving local government approvals will attest - the current situation is a no mans land of inappropriate regulation being applied to horticultural structures because there are no clear guidelines.

Some projects have been dropped, because of the cost of compliance with such key components of the current Building Code including fire risks and hazards.

This has also created significant issues part way through projects requiring unplanned investments way out of proportion to the total value of the project.

New Greenhouse Coverings

Two greenhouse / glasshouse covering concepts were also discussed with HIA.

The first involves the use of glass coatings to create **photovoltaic panels** whilst still allowing light through for plant growth.

The second discussion was about **"switchable glass"** that can change from clear to shade / opaque either automatically or by sensor control.

Both new greenhouse coverings were discussed in some detail and it was agreed that HIA would further investigate and scope any possible investment in to this area.

Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S)

Finally PCA discussed with HIA the significant WH&S issues involving the construction and fitting out of new facilities and compliance with Australian Standards and WH&S regulatory regimes.

This complex area will remain at the top of PCA's agenda for scoping potential investment by HIA.

Overall your PCA representatives were optimistic about the meeting with four HIA representatives and look forward to working with them for the benefit of current and future protected cropping growers.

Robert Hayes, Chair,
Protected Cropping Australia Ltd

FREE PCA Greenhouse Grower Workshops

Join other growers who learn from the best for pizza, beer and networking at the PCA Growers' Workshops, bringing technical how-to technology to your doorstep.

Please let us know where and what you want as far as workshops ahead, or if you are interested in sponsoring the refreshments.

HOW - TO
GREENHOUSE
TECHNOLOGY

6TH APRIL
WOOLGOOLGA /
COFFS HARBOUR
NSW

Berry Nutrition
Blueberry Disease Management
Grafting Cucumbers for Disease
Management
Greenhouse WH&S
Contact Len Tesoriero 0447 623 487
len@pcaust.net

16TH AUGUST
Devonport
TAS

Tomato prices
Greenhouse WH&S
Contact Marcus Brandsema
0409 217 131 marcus@pcaust.net

21ST JUNE
Mandurah,
South Perth
WA

Moving benches for NFT leafy greens
Contact Michael Mifsud 0418 599 294
Sponsored by Powerplants, Cravo +
Trandos Hydroponic Growers

18TH OCTOBER
Virginia Hort
Centre
SA

Andrew Braham of Braham Produce
Contact Nam Ly 0488 449 044
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From the Chair Greenhouse WH&S

Workplace health and safety, WH&S, OH&S and similar are words and acronyms that seem to strike fear and loathing into the hearts of many business operators, big or small.

Ever since the industrial revolution commenced, the basic function of exchanging ones personal exertion in the form of labour, for monetary reward in the form salary or wages has traversed the risks involved in undertaking the activities comprising "work".

A recent case involving a worker in a protected cropping enterprise, resulted in the most tragic outcome for all concerned.

A greenhouse worker fell from a height, was badly injured and subsequently died (see PCA press release).

Undoubtedly, life is full of risks, but risks can be assessed and judgements made on how best to handle them, and nearly always there is a way to eliminate or mitigate the risk to an acceptable level.

A recent report from the University of Sydney's Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety has revealed that farm deaths are on the rise.

According to the Australian Farm Deaths & Injuries Media Monitors Snapshot, the overall number of farm fatalities (69) in 2015 is higher than the deaths recorded in 2014 (54). And these are just the media "reported" deaths. The full picture is still being compiled of actual deaths and injuries. And for every death there are multiple injuries requiring hospitalisation or medical treatment, time off work, pain and suffering and economic loss.

The fact that people continue to be injured and die regardless of the ever increasing regulation and

enforcement is cause to stop and ask the question - why?

In short it's my opinion that it is all about "culture".

Australia's pervading ethos has its roots in the challenging environment in which we have developed and still live - hail, snow, storms, drought, flood, fire, our environment is one of extremes.

Over the past few centuries since the arrival of the first fleet, the survival of the new Australian individual has been continuously challenged by the environment in which we have established our farms, towns and cities.

It has resulted in a risk taking ethos that underlies our behaviour and the way we think and act.

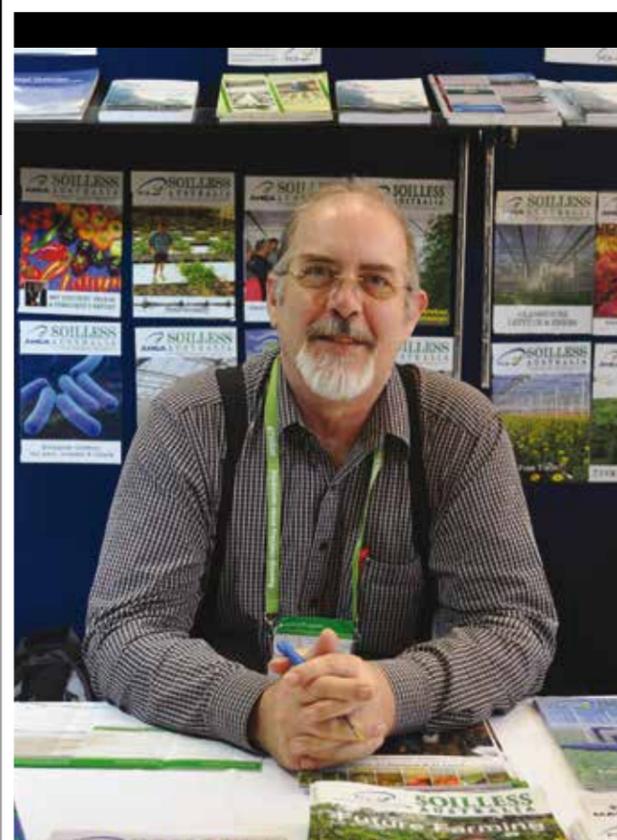
This has resulted in an almost cavalier cultural attitude towards risk taking that even decades of regulation, enforcement, education and persuasion has still not entirely overcome.

It is the fundamental basis of the culture of the individual taking responsibility for themselves and their own actions.

On the face of it, it is something I agree with. However having said that, I place one very big qualification on this acceptance.

It was a very conscious shift I, and my staff made decades ago when confronted with a staff member and workplace incident that whilst ultimately benign, had the potential to literally "fry" that person alive.

Whilst we had taken every reasonable precaution to avoid the incident, and the equipment had been properly maintained a design fault resulted in a potentially disastrous fire.



**PCA Chair Robert Hayes
Looking out for greenhouse growers**

It was this incident and the very success of the precautions that had been put in place, which changed the workplace culture from the top down.

Undoubtedly, life is full of risks, but risks can be assessed and judgements made on how best to handle them. Nearly always there is a way to eliminate or mitigate the risk to an acceptable level.

First the workplace risks have to be identified, then evaluated, and finally judgements made as how best to remove or mitigate them.

We all deserve to go home to our own mother or father, our partner in life and our children, unharmed and our health unaffected by the work we have done on this and every other day.

PCA will be actively pursuing a number of initiatives in this area in the coming months and years, and we are aiming for better outcomes for our members and all their staff.

**Robert Hayes
PCA Chair + herb grower**



Hydroponic Farm Workplace Death

The death of an employee at Austral Hydroponics P/L tomato farm is a sad and shocking reminder of the obligations of everybody in the protected cropping industry to place Work Health and Safety (WH&S) at the core of everyday activities on our farms, and in and around our greenhouses.

This was arguably a preventable incident, and as the NSW Court determined, could and should have been anticipated and measures taken to stop it happening in the first place.

All growers with plastic and glass covered structures should be familiar with the risks associated with working at heights when working on the roof or replacing the covering.

Historically many manufacturers and builders have been in breach of their statutory and common law obligations to design, manufacture

and ultimately sell to growers, structures that are compliant with Australian Standards, WHS Act and Regulations, and which can be used and maintained safely.

However it is equally incumbent on growers to specify the products that they buy are compliant, and are then used, operated and maintained in a safe manner.

The key issue cited in this case was that the incident was foreseeable.

Any risk assessment undertaken beforehand should have identified the severe risk of injury and or death when working at such heights, and the appropriate control measures put into place to avoid it happening at all.

Workplace health and safety is not an obligation to be endured, but a basic human right that gives an employee the confidence that they will go home to their family

every day after work, free of injury and able to enjoy their life.

Integrating WH&S on the farm does not have to cost the earth, but it does require a culture of putting it at the centre of daily activities and building it in to everything that happens.

All staff members from the casual labourer to the company director have a right, and an obligation, to look at what they are doing or asking their staff to do, and to ensure that the risks associated with that task are identified and managed appropriately.

Protected Cropping Australia urges all employers and employees involved in our industry to review their safety systems, programs and work practices to ensure that there is no repeat of this sad occurrence.

**Robert Hayes
PCA Chair + herb grower**

Businesses urged to review safe systems www.safework.nsw.gov.au/

Safe Work NSW is warning workers and businesses to take extreme precaution following the death of two workers and eight others seriously injured in falls from heights since January 2016.

SafeWork NSW Executive Director Peter Dunphy said businesses should have safe systems in place as working from heights can be risky.

On 7 January, a Newcastle builder was killed after falling from a mobile scaffold while repairing a property at Hamilton East near Newcastle.

An asbestos removalist died later that month after falling approximately eight metres while removing sheets from a factory roof at Greenacre.

A barman at a Manly golf club suffered a fractured skull after a ladder fall and a 33-year-old labourer broke his leg after falling approximately three metres while removing sheets from a roof.

"These incidents highlight that a fall, even from a relatively low height, can result in serious injury or death," said Mr Dunphy.

"Tragically, most of these incidents could have been prevented had safe work systems such as safety harnesses or work platforms had been used."

"During 2013/14, there were 4,170 workers' compensation claims for falls from heights at a cost of more than \$49 million."

"We're urging NSW businesses to review their safe systems so that no more workers are injured."

Work health and safety laws require businesses to have safety systems in place to protect workers from injuries.

"Whether it's making sure a step ladder is positioned properly or that a new worker is inducted and aware of the risks, everyone in needs to work together to prevent falls from heights," said Mr Dunphy.



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THRIPS



TWO SPOTTED MITE



WHITEFLY

BIOCONTROL SOLUTION



APHELINUS



APHIDIUS 'C'



APHIDIUS 'E'



DIADEGMA



DALOTIA



HYPOASPIS 'A'



HYPOASPIS 'M'



APHYTIS



CUCUMERIS



ORIUS



CALIFORNICUS



OCCIDENTALIS



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The Senate Environment And Communications References Committee is conducting an inquiry into the risks and opportunities associated with the use of Tasmanian *Bombus terrestris* (Apidea) (Bt) bumblebees for commercial purposes.

A Tasmanian glasshouse trial cannot proceed unless the Senate agrees to amend existing legislation. Protected Cropping Australia has replied to the request below with a submission that comprehensively addresses the Committee's terms of reference.



PCA also circulated all members an email notifying the closing date and with a sample submission. The Senate Committee is due to report on 22/6/16.



THE SENATE

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

10 February 2016

Mr Robert Hayes
Company Chair
Protected Cropping Australia
PO Box 538
NARRABEEN NSW 2101

Dear Mr Hayes

Inquiry into the risks and opportunities associated with the use of the bumblebee population in Tasmania for commercial purposes

On 3 February 2016, the Senate referred to the Environment and Communications References Committee a range of matters relating to the risks and opportunities associated with the use of the bumblebee population in Tasmania for commercial purposes for inquiry and report by 22 June 2016.

The full terms of reference are below.

The Committee invites you to provide a written submission addressing issues that may be of relevance to you. The submission should be lodged by 3 March 2016.

The Committee will consider all submissions, and may invite individuals and organisations to give evidence at a public hearing.

Should you require further information, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3526.

Yours sincerely

Christine McDonald
Christine McDonald
Secretary



SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the risks and opportunities associated with the use of the bumblebee population in Tasmania for commercial purposes

The following matter be referred to the Environment and Communications References Committee for inquiry and report by 22 June 2016:

The risks and opportunities associated with the use of the bumblebee population in Tasmania for commercial pollination purposes, including:

- (a) the existing distribution and population density of exotic bumblebees;
- (b) productivity and economic benefits of the commercial use of bumblebees for agricultural producers;
- (c) the potential environmental impacts associated with the commercial use of bumblebees, including whether their use is likely to:
 - (i) impact the conservation status of a species or ecological community,
 - (ii) impact biodiversity,
 - (iii) cause unintended ecological impacts, and
 - (iv) contribute to a wider distribution of bumblebees;
- (d) the implications for Australia's biosecurity regime of any approval to use bumblebees in Tasmania for commercial purposes;
- (e) the potential economic outcomes;
- (f) the effectiveness of alternative pollination options; and
- (g) any other related matters.