

MEDIA RELEASE

Occupational noise-induced hearing loss publication launched

25 August 2010

Safe Work Australia Chief Executive Officer, Mr Rex Hoy, today officially launched the *Occupational noise-induced hearing loss in Australia: overcoming barriers to effective noise control and hearing loss prevention* publication at the Hearing Awareness Expo, run by the ACT Deafness Resource Centre.

Safe Work Australia undertook the research for this publication, which presents the findings of research on the control of workplace noise exposure and prevention of noise-induced hearing loss.

Occupational noise-induced hearing loss is a significant health and economic problem in Australia. From July 2002 to June 2007 there were approximately 16 500 workers' compensation claims for industrial deafness involving permanent impairment due to noise.

The publication provides a greater understanding of why occupational noise-induced hearing loss continues to be a problem among Australian workers, despite the fact that each Australian jurisdiction has regulations for exposure to occupational noise.

The results of this research provide insight into the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies and interventions for facilitating more effective occupational noise control.

Mr Hoy said that the economic burden of occupational noise-induced hearing loss is borne by workers and their families, business owners and managers and the wider society.

"It is important that we continue research into this area in an effort to reduce exposure to excessive occupational noise, which can be associated with many adverse effects besides loss of hearing. It has also been linked to annoyance and fatigue and to serious health conditions such as hypertension.

"Proper workplace and equipment design and adequate management practices can control occupational noise levels and workers' exposure, thereby reducing the risk of hearing loss and other adverse outcomes", said Mr Hoy.

The Hearing Awareness Expo, held at the Hellenic Club in Canberra, is run during Hearing Awareness Week, which is an annual event held from 22 – 28 August. The aim of the week is to raise awareness of hearing loss, hearing services and the risk of exposure to loud noise.