



To the Beehive

Your association's representatives met the Minister of Labour at his Beehive office this month and took full advantage of the opportunity. It allowed us to bring him up to date on the issues affecting our industry. Most of our face-to-face activity is with officials and it was good to get to the seat of power to set out our views.

During our time with the Hon Trevor Mallard we had what we believe were fruitful discussions. Our delegation met a Minister

who showed a keen interest in what the Association does and what we are trying to achieve on behalf of the industry and members.

Representatives from the Association will work closely with Department of Labour officials in the next month to resolve the problems that we brought up with the Minister. We hope to make progress on the Code of Practice for Cranes, which we consider should not have been signed off in its present form.

A meeting planned for 8 April with the Minister of Transport Safety was postponed but will happen now in May. Again, as with the Minister of Labour, we will raise issues that concern membership and try to advance any that are unresolved, with the Hon Harry Duynhoven.



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Opportunity – The Training Organisation flourishes

The future of our industry's recruitment and training organisation looks rosy as it makes great progress on unit standards and expansion of its programmes.

Opportunity – The Training Organisation is the ITO responsible for cranes and also scaffolding, rigging, industrial rope access and elevating work platforms.

Six Unit Standards have been developed for elevating work platforms and the resource material is available from the office (it's similar in format to that used for cranes). An evaluation panel to accredit some assessors is established and anyone who has experience as a trainer on these machines and who wants to be an assessor should contact the office. Any company wishing to train and have staff master the unit standards should also contact the office for details.

We have also included with this letter some material relating to the training of staff in the Middle East with a New Zealand link, which we thought might be of interest. (*see page 2*)

2009 conference - offshore?

A considerable number of members responded to our request seeking opinions on to the possibility of holding the 2009 conference offshore. By a large majority, those who contacted us were in favour of the idea. However, rest assured that the decision won't be made until the matter has been debated at the AGM and then the membership will decide.

From the President

Registrations that started as a trickle for the conference have - stayed at a trickle. There is only a slow response so far and we would like to get you registered and booked in for this big event. Although registrations are slow, we have some that are from members and their partners who haven't attended the conference before and that is encouraging. Please don't leave registration until the last minute because after 20th June accommodation at the hotel in Wellington cannot be guaranteed.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, members with photos of their work should supply them (preferably electronically) to the office and we can feature them in the newsletter. Grab the chance at some free publicity by showing off your work, expertise and equipment.

*Malcolm McWhannell,
President*

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NZ crane skills in demand in Doha

A New Zealander is getting first-hand knowledge of the Middle East construction boom by teaching Kiwi work and safety practices to workers in Doha. Vadim Spice, a tutor at Tai Poutini Polytechnic and an assessor for the ITO is in Doha, State of Qatar, to deliver height safety training in harness use, and loads slinging, at the request of local companies.

Doha has literally grown up too fast to develop a formal health and safety policy like ours.

"Doha is the size of Christchurch with staggering growth and it will eventually cover an area the size of Auckland. On the city limits they're digging the foundations in the desert!" Vadim says. He says a crane not working shuts down a site and work continues for 24 hours a day so cranes are well cared for. But the crane operators emerge after only 5, 3-hour night classes and that's with no prior experience.

On showing the clients the Crane Association Safety manual, and outlining how we do things in New Zealand he was offered the use of a tower crane yard as a training venue and guaranteed the use of crane and materials whenever he needed. Vadim's course is a practical, watered down version of the New Zealand slinging course. He's also doing practical training in scaffolding, and harness set up and use.

"As little as 10 years ago there were very few paved roads, so there's a real clash of cultures." Vadim says. "The new generation Arab is driving a Hummer or latest Euro Sports car and his parents never drove a car. There are lots of car crashes."

Doha's wealth comes from natural gas, and pearls.

Vadim is teaching an immigrant workforce of Indians and other Asians, and Labour is very cheap. "They send 5 guys to do 1 man's work. It's sometimes cheaper to



Cranes drive development and are treated gently. They don't mess with them as a crane not working shuts down a site



Engineers tried to follow international safety practice but failed as evidenced by the workers wearing harnesses, but doing so dangerously.



The Doha skyline as the city into the desert. The cranes swing 24 hours a day to meet building deadlines.

get 50 labourers to dig a trench 1-kilometre long than to tie up an excavator," he says. Vadim says the Arabs are proud people, unhappy at the death rates on sites, so trainers like him are being invited in.

Vadim welcomes e-mail contact with New Zealanders in the industry for comments and advice:

vadims@tpp.ac.nz

Traffic control at Bridges

There have been good discussions between our Association, the New Zealand Heavy Haulage Association and Transit officials over the development of new NZQA unit standards for overweight vehicles. Our main interest relates to bridges and we are grateful to the NZ Heavy Haulage Association for the work that they have done on this matter. There is more to be done but we've made good progress.

2008/09 Crane Register

The latest version of the register is with the printers at present and it's planned to send it out by the end of the month. Many thanks to all the companies who provided up-to-date details. Once you receive your copy please advise our office if you need more.

2008 Conference

As the President mentioned, registrations are slowly arriving for the Wellington 2008 conference and this is just a reminder that we will book your accommodation but send us only the registration money, because you pay the accommodation direct to the hotel.

New transport agency

Geoff Dangerfield, currently Ministry of Economic Development head, will be the first chief executive of the New Zealand Transport Agency. The agency results from the merger of Land Transport New Zealand and Transit New Zealand. It will aim at integrating transport planning, funding and delivery. The merged agency starts on 1 July this year.