

# **kNOw Cancer in the workplace**

## **Challenges in preventing chemically induced chronic disease: SMEs & Workplace Chemicals**

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# Uncontrolled exposure to hazardous chemicals can lead to occupational cancers

- In 2005 estimated 5820 Australians developed invasive cancers caused by their occupational exposures
- While most due to exposures from work practices which have occurred sometimes decades earlier - we know many workplace exposures are still occurring
- 80% of Australians work for SMEs - we *know* many SMEs struggle to effectively control chemical exposures
- Our challenge – how to use what we *already know* about preventing chemically induced diseases to ensure that OHS practices protect all Australians workers *including* those in SMEs

# SMEs are key stakeholders in preventing chemically induced diseases

- OHS risks often higher in SMEs than larger businesses
  - “primarily because arrangements for preventive health and safety ....are unsatisfactory” (NOHSAC,2009)
- 60% small enterprises with an OHS disruption lasting more than 9 days go out of business
- Our huge challenge is effectively reaching SMEs- due to the large number of workplaces, diversity of business types & scattered locations

# Disconnect between our existing knowledge & SMEs' practice

- Health risks & effective control strategies for carcinogens well *known* by scientific community & regulators
- Regulators provide guidance material
- SMEs usually know controlling exposures is a legal requirement, but often
  - unaware or under rate health risks
  - do not always know what controls are required
  - where they do know they don't always routinely and consistently implement controls

# SMEs have unique challenges

- Commercial pressures felt more keenly & immediately
- OHS usually viewed as less important
- May know there is a problem but don't have financial resources to implement controls
- Often have staff & skill shortages
- Limited access to specialist or external sources of advice & support
- Limited knowledge or interest in OHS Acts, regulations & codes of practice – need practical & cost effective solutions



# Key OHS influences

- Previous serious OHS incident
- Family members, owner/managers/co-workers, industry peers' attitude & practice
- Trade suppliers (advice, labels, SDS)
- Large customers demands for good OHS
- Need for authorisations (licenses, registrations, permits) for use, storage & handling of substances
- Others
  - OHS regulators,
  - OHS advisors,
  - Insurance companies
  - Industry associations & Unions
- Our challenge is using these key influencers to increase SMEs motivation to improve OHS

# SMEs have particular problems managing chemical hazards

Micro, SMEs vary greatly in OHS sophistication but generally

- Under estimate risks
- Reactive risk control & manage *obvious* risks
- Relatively poor knowledge of long term health effects
- Not sufficiently aware how to control exposures
  - Controls decided by custom & practice - not risk assessment
  - Believe don't have time or money to implement controls
  - Don't know what compliance looks like
- Rely on workers to manage OHS & 'use commonsense'
  - poor work patterns often passed on to new employees
- Over rely on PPE
- Over estimate their ability to manage emergencies

Our challenge is to help SMEs effectively manage *known* hazards associated with workplace chemicals

and

- provide them with precautionary strategies to help them manage suspected hazard
- We need to
  - increase awareness of hazards
  - provide knowledge about cost effective controls
  - motivate people to implement controls & monitor their success

# Meeting the policy challenges: developing a robust and responsive Australian OHS regulatory framework



# Duties of the persons conducting a business or undertaking

In current & future legislation they

- must as far as reasonably practicable, ensure health & safety of workers & other persons
  - put controls in place & monitor their effectiveness
  - ensure correct storage, handling use, disposal of hazardous chemicals
  - consult with workers
  - provide appropriate training

# Upstream duty holders can help SMEs by eliminating or reducing risks

*Designers, manufacturers, importers & suppliers of plant, **substances** & structures, so far as is reasonably practicable, must ensure those things are safe & without risks to the health of any person*

- They should **anticipate** use & foreseeable misuse....
- Hazardous substances must be
- correctly classified
  - accurate & acceptable SDS provided
  - correctly packed
  - correctly & clearly labelled

# Australian hazardous chemicals regulations

- 2012 GHS will be used as basis for classifying substances to determine which ones will be regulated as workplace hazardous chemicals
- Sets parameters for information on product labels & SDS

# Australian chemicals regulations

In current & future legislation will include requirements for:

- hazard identification & risk assessment
- risk controls, including hierarchy of controls
- precautionary statements & first aid instructions
- monitoring & health surveillance
- restrictions on some high hazard substances



# GHS communication elements

- Safety Data Sheet
- Label-standardised elements:
  - Signal word
  - Pictogram
  - Hazard statement
  - Precautionary statement



# Improved Safety Data Sheets

- These should provide detailed information & must be made available but ....
  - may not be accurate/ up to date
  - SMES may not have them (never provided, lost or not with product when it is being used)
  - tend to not read *or* use them
- SMEs rely more on what they are told by suppliers & what is on the label



# Example GHS label

Pictogram



Signal word

Danger

Hazard statement

May cause cancer

Precautionary statement

Wear respiratory protection

# Improving guidance material

- 2008 research showed these should be
  - More industry specific
  - Use plain language, concise, practical ‘how to’ advice & solutions, drawings, diagrams, photos
  - Use checklists & tools for use in implementation
  - Demonstrate compliance
  - Reference other resources & contacts
  - Free or low cost
- 2011 implementation of model legislation will include *simpler* codes of practice & guidance material



# Improving guidance material for SMEs

Essential Chemical Controls for Australian Printers  
an example of a successful model of guidance  
for SMEs

- helps printers manage tasks where hazardous chemicals are used
- provides information on controls: ventilation, PPE, training & supervision
- indicates when health surveillance required
- housekeeping tips & checklists



- Health & Safety menu**
- National OHS strategy
- OHS standards, codes of practice and related guidance
- OHS in the Public Sector
- Research and Emerging issues
- Hazardous substances and dangerous goods
- Hazards and safety issues
- Essential Chemical Controls for Australian Printers
- Training, OHS skills and worker licensing

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## Essential Chemical Controls for Australian Printers

 <b>Essential Chemical Controls</b> for Australian Printers	» How to use this package
	» Control Guidance Sheets
	» Reference pages
	» Assessment table

### New Australian guidance to help control hazardous chemicals in printing.

#### What is Essential Chemical Controls for Australian Printers?

- It is guidance material to help printers manage tasks where hazardous chemicals are used.
- The guidance is directly applicable to your printing operations.

## ESSENTIAL CHEMICAL CONTROLS FOR AUSTRALIAN PRINTERS

# P20

## Screen printing

### PRINTING WITH HIGHER-VOLATILITY INKS AND EXTRACTED RACK DRYING

#### ACCESS AND PREMISES

- > Only allow authorised staff access to the print room.
- > Provide good facilities for washing, skin care, and for eating and drinking.

#### EQUIPMENT

- > Provide a good standard of general ventilation. Use powered wall- or

### About Essential Chemical Controls for Australian Printers

This information is intended to help printing companies comply with the regulations for managing exposure of workers to hazardous chemicals, to protect workers' health.

It is useful information for

# OHS advisor programs for SMEs

- Most OHS authorities provide SMEs with free information & advice to support their compliance
- OHS resources are finite ... our challenge how to build effective partnerships with stakeholders to help SMEs improve the health and safety of themselves and their workers

# Challenge to have effective targeted research to inform policy & action

- Toxicological & epidemiological research on health effects of exposure to mixtures & interactions with other risk factors
- Effectively communicate known health hazards & required controls to different age groups, industry sectors & people who are at different stages of readiness to change
- Economic pressures & technological innovations and their impact on workplace exposures
- Exposures patterns across sub industries & business size
- Are chemical controls used & are they effective?
- SMEs motivations, attitudes, & perceptions to chemicals

# Our future policy challenges

- Ensuring a responsive & timely evidence informed regulatory framework
- That research evidence & technical information is translated into useable and *used* advice for SMEs



# Key Sources

- Safe Work Australia (2008) Review of the key characteristics that determine the efficacy of OHS instruments  
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[<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/swa/AboutUs/Publications/ResearchReports/BarriersandEnablerstoControlofHazardousChemicalsinSMEs>]
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- EU Agency for Safety and Health (2009) Occupational safety and health and economic performance in small and medium-sized enterprises: a review [[http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/TE-80-09-640-EN-N\\_occupational\\_safety\\_health\\_economic\\_performance\\_small\\_medium\\_sized\\_enterprises\\_review](http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/TE-80-09-640-EN-N_occupational_safety_health_economic_performance_small_medium_sized_enterprises_review)]

