



By Ben Cochrane

Industrial relations (IR) issues have been big news recently and will remain contentious as the union campaign

continues. *Precedent* will take a closer look at IR in the New Year, focusing on the federal changes. In this edition we concentrate on the related issue of occupational health and safety (OH&S).

Rita Mallia of the CFMEU writes on the special reforms targeting the building and construction industry. As well as detailing startling new powers to monitor and police union activity on construction sites, Rita's article makes the point that increased safety through OH&S regulation has been a chief success of the union movement.

Greg Combet made the same point when addressing the national day of community protest in November. OH&S standards face challenges both from these changes to IR law, as well as possible federal workers' compensation changes.

Other practical articles cover fatigue and the use of OH&S experts. Peter Long is back with an interesting suggestion on how PI lawyers, particularly in the country, can capitalise on

their legal expertise while reducing work injuries in the process. Dr John Quintner returns with an article on archaic medical attitudes to working women and 'hysteria', which would rank as medico-legal esoterica if it weren't for the lamentable fact that these attitudes persist today.

Case notes in this edition feature the High Court case overturning *Sullivan and Gordon*, and developing insurance industry attacks on doctor/patient confidentiality.

While IR and OH&S are important areas for *Precedent* to consider in the current climate, deep inroads into human rights also command our attention. Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister of the ACT, is rightly regarded as making possible real debate on the anti-terror legislation by publishing the draft laws on his website. He has also spoken on the issue, and we are proud to present an edited version of one of those speeches. ■

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