

Resources Safety Roadshow Travels across WA

The mining industry is renowned for being tough. However, being tough at work on a mine site does not mean ignoring safety.

It is this perspective that forms the basis for the 2010 Mines Safety Roadshow, which is organised by the Resources Safety Division of the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

The roadshow began on October 12 and will have taken in Newman, Tom Price, Karratha, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Perth by the end of the month.

Executive Director of Resources Safety Malcolm Russell said this year the roadshow looked at the relationship between “toughness and safety”.

“This is to understand how widely accepted ‘tough’ behaviours and communication styles affect safety in the workplace,” he said.

“Participants will work on personal and team action plans to help them rethink what it means to be ‘tough’ at work.

“These plans will help them develop an understanding of their own behaviours and the behaviours of others, so the need to be ‘tough’ and the call to be ‘safe’ don’t have to work in opposition.”

This year’s roadshow has featured hands-on workshops run by Dr Dean Laplonge, a leading researcher in gender and safety culture.

Dr Laplonge has a good understanding of the types of issues involved in mining workplaces, having worked with resource companies throughout the State.

“We see toughness as a natural part of being a man. Men are encouraged to be tough every day. We are surrounded by the Rambos and the Terminators who reaffirm that toughness equals real maleness,” Dr Laplonge said.

“In the mining industry, a lot of people—men and women—try to match these ideals of toughness.

“But our attempts to be tough are not always good for personal safety. I’m hoping this roadshow can encourage people to reconsider the kind of toughness they want in their lives and workplaces.”

The workshops have focused on gathering “evidence” about the nature and extent of risk-taking “tough” behaviour, and discussing what might be done about it at both personal and industry levels.

This culminates in a brainstorming session on the types of resources and training that could be developed for workplace use.

Presentations have incorporated other relevant resources safety topics, including an introduction to the Reform and Development at Resources Safety (RADARS) strategy.

These reforms will aid Resources Safety to more effectively regulate safety in the sector, and enhance the performance of industry by supporting a shift towards resilient safety cultures.

The findings from the regional roadshows will be collated and presented, giving participants an insight into what workers think about being tough and how toughness affects their safety performance.

Dr Laplonge will review the plans that regional participants have drawn up to help them address the issues, and also the types of supporting materials that could assist in the process.

Roadshow Dates were:

Newman – Tuesday, October 12
Tom Price – Wednesday, October 13
Karratha – Thursday, October 14
Bunbury – Tuesday, October 19
Kalgoorlie – Friday, October 22
Perth – Thursday, October 28

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Department of Mines and Petroleum