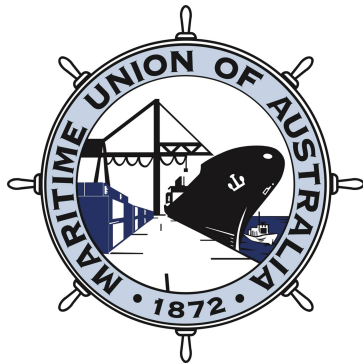




# MUA Safety Update

May 2014



## Pressure mounts for prosecution over QUBE lead dust exposure

MUA is mounting a case for QUBE to be prosecuted over an incident in Melbourne in which workers were exposed to a lead dust concentrate.

In June 2012, MUA members unloading steel from the *Dronaught* were shocked to discover they were covered in a powdery black substance. They raised the alarm. The members, who were legitimately concerned about poisoning, refused to deal with the contaminated cargo until adequate arrangements could be made. Work on the vessel only resumed once the correct Australian Standard masks, overalls, and gloves were supplied, with handling procedures, taking into account the wind.

Bob Patchett, MUA Assistant Secretary, Victorian Branch supported members at the scene, 'The MUA members at QUBE should be congratulated for their stand. Lead poisoning is an extremely serious issue. Thanks to their actions, many more workers were saved from being exposed.'

Since then, the union has been working behind the scenes to build a case for QUBE to be prosecuted for one or more offences under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.



# MUA launches action against QUBE over safety

**MUA has initiated a prosecution of QUBE under the Victorian OHS Act 1994.**



**For more information contact MUA National Safety Officer Matt Goodwin Ph 0458 023 460**

Authorised by Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith, Maritime Union of Australia

## MUA pushes for prosecution over lead dust exposure

The MUA is seeking to have QUBE prosecuted under of the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which gives unions the power to seek prosecution if there is no action by the regulator within 6 months.

Under state health and safety law, the employer is under a legal duty to establish a safe system of work.

If an employer fails in this duty, it may be an offence under the Act.

At this stage we can't make much comment about the particular facts while there is a live prosecution before the courts.

## About lead poisoning

Lead is a heavy metal used in manufacturing such as batteries. It is extremely toxic when inhaled or ingested.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) - which is an Australian government agency which develops health advice for the Australian community - advises that even small amounts of lead can be toxic.

NHMRC warns that lead is particularly hazardous for children, with impacts on development, behaviours, and learning

## Stopping the job on safety – your rights

The union congratulates the delegates, members and HSRs who took a stand over this issue.

All members are reminded: never hesitate to cease work if there is a serious safety issue.

You will receive the absolute and full support of the union.

All workers have the right to cease work where there is a reasonable concern, of a serious risk, which is immediate or imminent.

Trained HSRs can also issue a PIN notice, which is a legally binding direction to fix a safety issue.

## Acting collectively

It has never been more important to adopt a united approach to safety.

We are always at our best when we are united. There is no issue more important than our safety at work. Stronger together.