



# News Release - SafeWork SA

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## **SA joins Aust-NZ effort to reduce manual handling injuries in manufacturing.**

**A new Trans-Tasman workplace safety campaign will target manufacturing in a bid to reduce injuries and disease resulting from heavy lifting, repetitive tasks, and sustained awkward posture.**

'Body stressing', the term given to muscular stress due to hazardous manual handling or repetitive movement, is a major social and economic burden to the manufacturing industry.

It accounted for 44% of all of the industry's workers compensation claims in 2003/2004.

The campaign will focus on educating employers to work together with their employees to effectively identify and manage manual handling risks.

Each jurisdiction has selected an industry sector for the national campaign.

The priorities were determined after examining workers compensation claims, and from information supplied by field inspectors as well as being drawn from previous campaigns.

In South Australia, the priority industry sector selected is Automotive Component Manufacturing.

"What we've found is that Automotive Component Manufacturing has a disproportionately high percentage of body stressing injuries reported to our workers compensation authority," says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

According to WorkCover figures, there were more than one thousand musculo-skeletal injury claims in the sector totalling more than 2-million dollar's worth, during the financial years from 2002-2005.

"All stakeholders in this campaign have been advised of what's in store, and we're grateful for the manufacturing sector's cooperation in this important initiative."

"Such campaigns always work best when coupled with education and advice, so the national initiative will also include industry forums where employers and employees can learn first hand what the requirements are under the law, and how to manage manual handling risks," says Ms Patterson.

The Trans-Tasman campaign will run until mid-2007 after which the results and feedback will be collated and evaluated to determine its effectiveness.