



# Media Release - SafeWork SA

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Wednesday 22 April 2009

## CATHOLIC CHURCH FINED OVER CAMPING INJURY

**A camping mishap, which left a school student severely burned, has resulted in the school's operator being fined in SA Industrial Relations Court today.**

The **Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie** was fined \$19,125 after pleading guilty to breaching section 22(2) of the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986* for failing to take reasonable care to avoid harm to people through an act or omission at work.

The Diocese was prosecuted in its role as the operator of Caritas College based in Port Augusta.

SafeWork SA prosecuted over an incident, which occurred on a school camp near Wilpena Pound in August 2004. At the time, a 15 year old Year 10 student suffered burns to his hands, legs, face and left ear when gas released from a canister ignited.

The student was helping another to assemble her camp stove, when the canister vented gas as it was being installed into the stove apparatus for use. The male student was engulfed in a ball of flame when the gas ultimately ignited.

After investigating the circumstances, SafeWork SA found that:

- students were not trained or supervised in safely assembling the camp stoves
- supervisors were not aware of let alone trained in what aspects they had to supervise
- the general risk assessment was inadequate.

The school has since upgraded its safety procedures for camps, and while it pleaded guilty, Industrial Magistrate Richard Hardy expressed the opinion that the matter could have and should have been resolved sooner had the defendant not sought adjournments to await the result of an appeal in another case. (*i.e. Diemould/Santos*)

Magistrate Hardy said that while the student has largely recovered from the physical effects of his burns, he has suffered considerable psychological trauma and restrictions to his lifestyle, and that the incident was of concern "*because of the mix of children, gas and fire.*"

SafeWork SA said the identification and assessment of hazards and risks on adventure activities cannot be half-hearted, especially where the safety of children is concerned.

"This case proves that nothing should ever be taken for granted, as it apparently had been on a camp that had previously been run successfully for 20 years.

"The failure to account for the fire hazards posed by the gas canisters could well have had far more serious consequences in this case," said Acting Executive Director, Juanita Lovatt. [more]



## **FINE OVER SAW INJURY**

**An Adelaide flooring business was fined \$14,400 last Friday after an employee cut his hand on a circular saw.**

**Parquetry Flooring Company Pty Ltd** had already pleaded guilty to one count of breaching section 19(1) of the of the *Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986*, admitting that it failed to provide a safe system of work and maintain plant in a safe condition.

In June 2006, a male employee was using the saw to cut timber at a Marden residence. The machine was inadequately guarded and did not possess an accessible emergency stop device. SafeWork SA also alleged that training and any safety analysis in the use of the machine were both insufficient.

In the process of cutting, the timber caught and kicked his left hand onto the blade, severely lacerating tendons, nerves and ligaments of two fingers.

It's expected the worker will make a full recovery, while the company has since replaced the saw and upgraded its safety procedures.

*For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, call SafeWork SA's telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209*