



Media Release - SafeWork SA

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SERIOUS HAND INJURY INCURS \$20k FINE

The principals of a Barossa Valley engineering firm have been convicted and fined by an Industrial Magistrate today over a workplace incident, which cost an employee several of her fingers.

Trevor and Robyn Haydon (trading as T&R Manufacturing) were jointly charged and had already pleaded guilty to breaching section 19(1) of the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986* in failing to provide plant in a safe condition and appropriate instruction, training and supervision.

SafeWork SA's investigation after the incident in September 2007 found that a female production worker had been asked to operate a heavy press used to manufacture brackets. During this task, a moving part made contact with her left hand resulting in serious injuries, which necessitated the amputation of four fingers from that hand.

Victim Impact Statements tendered to the court indicate that aside from the traumatic physical injuries, the employee has suffered disturbed sleep, flashbacks, anxiety and frustration due to restrictions in her social activities and ability to find "gainful employment".

SafeWork SA submitted to the court that the machine was inadequately guarded. Most notably, a pair of vice grips had been attached to the finger guard at the front of the press, restricting its full range of movement and allowing access to the main moving parts during operation.

SafeWork SA also argued that the level of information, instruction, training and supervision with regard to use of the machine was insufficient, especially since the employee concerned did not use the machine regularly.

The court was told that the machine itself is no longer used and considerable measures were undertaken to improve safety. Industrial Magistrate Michael Ardlie said that despite there being workplace safety policies and procedures in place at the time of the incident, "those procedures were deficient".

He recorded convictions and fined the two defendants \$10,000 each after discounts of 20% for their guilty pleas and cooperation with investigators.

"Insufficiently guarded machinery remains a major cause of workplace harm around Australia," says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

"This case highlights an issue that remains a priority for us, as our inspectors work with manufacturers to improve their safety systems *before* someone is hurt, not after."