

16 April 2017

Saxon Energy Services convicted for safety breach

Saxon Energy Services Australia has been convicted and fined over an incident in which two workers were injured on a drilling rig platform.

The Industrial Court convicted the company over the incident, which was its first work health and safety offence, and imposed a penalty of \$210 000 plus costs.

On 28 April 2013, while working on Rig 188 in the Cooper Basin, Dempsey Reweti and Andrew Calderbank were trapped between two pieces of plant after another operator inadvertently remotely extended the hydraulic arm of one machine. Both men suffered multiple injuries and neither has been able to return to similar work.

Following investigation by SafeWork SA, Saxon was charged with offences under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) for exposing the men to a risk of serious injury.

Magistrate Lieschke said more than one person had been able to remotely control the same piece of equipment. He found all reasonably practicable precautions were not taken to guard against the potentially lethal interaction between employees and powered plant when drilling holes.

“The risk of injury arising from its flawed system of controlling powered plant was readily foreseeable and identifiable,” he said.

“The risk had very serious consequences for two skilled employees, and put them at some significant risk of death.”

Magistrate Lieschke reduced the initial fine of \$350 000 fine because of Saxon’s early guilty plea.

SafeWork SA Acting Executive Director Dini Soulio said the case highlighted the need for all business operators to effectively identify foreseeable risks to health and safety, appropriately consult, and implement control measures to eliminate or minimise risks.