

AWU FACT SHEET

Victorian Traffic Management Industry – Speeding Vehicles



Industry background

About 5,000 workers are employed by more than 100 traffic management companies in Victoria to control the flow of cars and other vehicles at road works or during special events.

- Most traffic management workers are casuals or labour hire employees for sub-contractors
- 25% of roadside worksites in Victoria were not compliant with safety standards when visited by WorkSafe Inspectors during the SWAT (Safety for Workers and Traffic) Campaign in 2004-06
- The industry is subject to a “race to the bottom” to cut corners on safety, training and pay rates as it is effectively unregulated because lawful standards are not enforced
- Working conditions generally are ‘dangerous’, ‘difficult’, and sometimes ‘appalling’ (Workplace Rights Ombudsman’s Report on the Contract Traffic Control Industry in Queensland, 2009)
- Most workers have no job security or bargaining power to improve safety, training or wages

Workplace deaths

Separate fatality and injury statistics are not officially collected for the traffic management industry, but it contributes to the following data, which does not count commuting to or from work:

- Nine people killed at roadside worksites in Victoria in 2004 and 2005 (WorkSafe Victoria 2006)
- 18 workers killed on the job in road crash-related incidents in Victoria in 2005-06 (Australian Safety and Compensation Council – ASCC 2008)
- 37 workers and 7 bystanders killed in work-related road and transport incidents notified to OHS authorities across Australia in 2007-08 (ASCC 2008)

Speeding in Reduced Speed Limit zones at road works

- Many motorists exceed Reduced Speed Limits applied at road works under safety standards
- To improve public confidence, the AWU has proposed more flexible limits that are reduced to the lowest levels only when workers are on site
- Speed kills - a person hit by a car travelling at 50km/h has an 80% chance of being killed, but this drops to 20-30% if hit at 40 km/h. The risk of a crash causing casualties is doubled by every 5km/h travelled over the limit in a 60km/h zone (Transport Accident Commission - TAC)
- The AWU Victorian Branch’s public campaign to improve Occupational Health and Safety for traffic management workers uses the message ‘**Slow Down @ Road Works – Speed Kills**’

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