

# **FITNESS FOR WORK (FFW)**

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**Hanson Australia's  
experience**

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## WHAT IS FITNESS FOR WORK ?

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- A package of issues that help manage risks associated with:
  - decreased mental alertness
  - physical ability to work safely
- Fatigue management (alertness, home/life balance & action plans)
- Medical fitness (voluntary & statutory medicals)
- Drug and Alcohol testing (pre-placement medical, self testing, for cause & random)

# LEGAL SUPPORT

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- Motor Traffic Acts
  - Driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol prohibited (zero h/v tolerance)
  - NRTC Medical Guidelines for Commercial drivers
- OHS & Mining Legislation
  - Duty of care to employees, contractors and the public
  - Identified risks must be managed and minimised
- Employment Law
  - Must be ready, willing & able to work

# STATISTICS

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- The International Labour Organisation (ILO):
  - 20-25% of OHS Incidents are drug related
  - 62% of drug & Alcohol abusers are in fulltime employment (300,000 employees)
  - 3 -15% of fatal accidents are related to drug and alcohol use
- Direct cost to Australian industry \$3.7 billion per year (Dept Community Services & Health 1991)

## HANSON'S EXPERIENCE

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- Several incidents, all unrelated, forced us to act and implement our Fitness For Work (FFW) programme including:-
  - Driver falling asleep at wheel of truck
  - Employees smelling of alcohol
  - Drugs found at scene of vehicle accident
  - Drug equipment found at work
  - Erratic behaviour of some employees
  - Recent fatality at competitors quarry where THC was a factor

# FFW PRINCIPLES

## MINIMUM STANDARD

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- Fatigue -
  - Onus on employee to report tiredness or issues with illness
- Medicals -
  - Hanson has the right to insist on medical clearance if any doubt on fitness
  - Helps with early diagnosis of issues that can impact on alertness or physical ability
- D&A -
  - AS 4308.2001 Drug levels for testing
  - PPM, self testing, for cause & random

## TESTS PERFORMED

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- Hanson test for alcohol and other substances in accordance with AS 4308.2001 ie :
  - THC (Marijuana) 50ng/ml  
(50 micrograms per millilitre)
  - Opiates (Morphine) 300ng/ml
  - Cocaine / Benzoylecgonine 300ng/ml
  - Amphetamine (speed) 1000ng/ml
  - Benzodiazopine (valium) 200ng/ml
  - Methamphetamine (ecstasy) 500ng/ml
  - Alcohol 0.05mg/100ml

## OUR D&A TESTING EXPERIENCE

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- Our aim is to reduce the risk of impairment.
- Random testing:
  - In 2002 3.5% positive detection for drugs with more than half being THC followed by heroin, cocaine, ecstasy & valium
  - In 2006 as above but rate dropped to 2.5%
  - To date over 8,000 tests performed
  - Up to 0.5% false positives
  - Up to 0.5% alcohol
- Pre-placement medicals:
  - Up to 50% no show for test or failed test. NB need to check identity of person



# OUR IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

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- Some Union opposition relating to the details surrounding the implementation eg privacy, victimisation, saliva/urine, disciplinary process etc
- Most employees supported programme, but a vocal minority objected
- We won every industrial challenge
- Younger employees concerned about drugs & alcohol
- Middle age employees concerned over fatigue ie possible loss of overtime
- Older employees concerned over medicals ie forced retirement

## URINE V SALIVA TESTING

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- Urine drug testing chosen by Hanson
- Only urine has an Australian or US standard - designed to find people who are “at risk of impairment”. The urine testing levels are clear-cut and understood
- Saliva can only detect very recent THC usage ie minutes not hours
- Benzodiazopines (tranquilizers) not detected by saliva machines
- Urine has fewer false positive results than saliva
- No real privacy issues

## SUCCESS STORIES

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- Medicals have given early detection to numerous personal health issues eg diabetes, skin cancers, high blood pressure, need for glasses, thyroid, sleep apnea etc most of which have led to prevention of potentially serious issues
- Acceptance of FFW programme as being positive & actually helpful to employees
- Safety incident rates have improved
- Several difficult employees have left the company as they did not wish to change their lifestyle
- Several employees have taken advantage of our Employee Assistance Programme to try to change.

# SELF TESTING

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- Every Hanson site has a breathalyser machine & drug testing kits freely available
- Employees are encouraged to test themselves before starting work if they have any doubts
- If an employee tests over the limit, the employee must go home on (sick) leave & no disciplinary action is recorded
- Employees may return to work when they are below the D&A limits & do not need a medical clearance to return

# RANDOM TESTING

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- Every Hanson site has a sign at the entrance &/or induction procedure warning of the drug & alcohol policy & procedure
- Every Hanson site will be subject to a random test & everyone on site will be tested. The only exceptions are casual visitors eg couriers, sales reps etc.
- All visiting truck drivers are tested
- All tests results are confidential
- All positive tests are sent to laboratory for confirmation

# DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

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- If there is a positive test, the employee is sent home & cannot return until a negative result is produced. Job is kept open for up to 12 weeks
- A refusal to test is deemed to be a positive result
- Usually 2 written warnings before dismissal
- If over the alcohol limit & in charge of a heavy vehicle or if an employee has self tested & still works after a positive test then the next positive test will be grounds for instant dismissal
- Record expunged after 2 years of being clean
- Adulterating a sample is grounds for instant dismissal

# ISSUES

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- Privacy – No individuals name or details can be released
- Prescribed drugs & over the counter medication:
  - needs a doctor to state in writing that the individual is still fit for work
  - must be declared before the test
  - individual can remain at work & no further action is taken
  - if lab tests are positive but inconsistent with the declaration then disciplinary action will be taken

# ISSUES

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- It is not an industrial issue, it is a safety issue, do not include it in industrial awards
- Ensure that reference to FFW programme is included in letters of employment, contacts, inductions etc.
- Consultation with employees & unions before implementation is essential, but that doesn't mean negotiation
- All employees can use Hanson's free "Employee Assistance Programme" (EAP) to help overcome any dependency issues



# ISSUES

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- If an employee loses their driving licence & it is a requirement of the job & no alternative work can be found then their employment will be terminated
- Blind testing with no disciplinary action can be used to overcome initial employee concerns for say first 6 months
- The annual fitness medicals only inform Hanson whether the employee is fit for work or not ie no specific details are revealed due to patient confidentiality
- For administration simplicity & consistency reasons we prefer employees to visit company nominated doctors