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Know which way business is heading.

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## STATE SNAPSHOT

Who is weathering the crisis



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### Talk about grief

● In 2006-07, 162 people died in work-related accidents. However, at least 48,000 people are likely to be affected by those deaths, researcher Derek Brookes says. "There are estimated to be 200-300 people affected by every homicide due to the ripple effect of impacts on neighbours, workmates and so forth," he says. "We'd expect something similar from a workplace death when you take into account work colleagues and their families."

Brookes is researching a radical new approach to addressing the harm that spreads through communities and companies when an employee dies on the job – getting the bereaved family and the representatives from the responsible company together to talk about the impact of the death. The technique is used in the criminal

justice system to get perpetrators and victims of crime together. It is called "restorative justice".

After completing a search of worldwide literature, Brookes concluded employing the process to address workplace deaths would be a world first.

The Creative Ministries Network, an agency of UnitingCare Australia, contracted Brookes using a \$50,000 grant from the Legal Services Board of the office of Victoria's Attorney-General, Rob Hulls. CMN helps families bereaved by workplace death to manage and recover from the traumatic aftermath.

An apology is central to restorative justice, which is complicated in the case of workplace death, where the reasons for deaths can be complex and systemic.

"We concluded that it is possible, even in large companies, for someone to take responsibility for a workplace death," Brookes says. "But we don't know if anyone would do so."

Brookes says there are no other services that give both sides the chance to talk about what happened and to make amends in a personal way.

After consulting with bereaved families, affected companies and others involved, Brookes will report on whether such a service is likely to be taken up. Kath Walters

#### NOTIFIED FATALITIES IN AUSTRALIA 2006-07

Place of fatality	Worker	Bystander	Total
At worksite	124	8	132
Vehicle accident <sup>1</sup>			
On public roads	7	7	14
Elsewhere	15	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>162</b>

1 Includes rollovers of mobile mechanical equipment such as tractors, forklifts and construction vehicles  
Source: Australian Safety and Compensation Council

FYI.

## 18th

Australia's ranking in the World Economic Forum global competitiveness stakes

Australia's place in the WEF rankings is boosted by its 7th position in the league table of financial sophistication, even though Switzerland ranks first, the United States second and Luxembourg fourth – all of them nursing ailing or newly nationalised banks.

### Emissions not a dirty word

● Australia's largest companies are more comfortable in discussing their greenhouse gas emissions, the Carbon Disclosure Project reports.

The number of S&P/ASX 100 companies responding to the project's questionnaire jumped 26 per cent to 71 per cent. All disclosed their overall exposure to climate change risks and 79 per cent provided detailed data.

Ninety-one per cent of respondents are worried about how emissions will be regulated, compared with a global average of 71 per cent. Few provided detail on climate change risk management policies. In New Zealand, 72 per cent of NZ50 respondents perceived it as a risk, and the same number also provided emissions data.

The Carbon Disclosure Project is run by the Investor Group on Climate Change Australia/New Zealand, a lobby of institutional investors with more than \$500 billion under management. Kate Burgess

### Angels hover in downturn

● As the stockmarket dives and bank lending freezes, those in the business of introducing business angel investors with start-up entrepreneurs are entering what is usually their busiest period.

"Business angel investment is countercyclical to the business cycle" the deputy chairman of the Association of Australian Angel Investors, Jordan Green, says. "Start-up investments traditionally take two or three years to become fully commercially ready and investing in the downturn gives you the headroom to grow."

"There are also more interesting opportunities

often at a lower valuation due to the downturn."

There are some subtle differences in the types of investment sought, Business Angels director Christine Kaine says. "Some investors are looking to diversify over a broader cross-section, whereas they usually stick to markets they know well."

As bank funding becomes more expensive and harder to source, many entrepreneurs are left with no alternative but to seek private equity.

"Entrepreneurs who rejected offers three months ago are coming back again to see if the offers still stand," a director of finwritingco.com.au, Theo Afkoudias, says. Jeanne-Vida Douglas



THEY SAID...

### Now the loans need the tooth fairy to keep up their values

Lew Ranieri, who invented mortgage securitisation in the 1970s, on how the technique was abused to create now-doomed sub-prime mortgage lending.

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