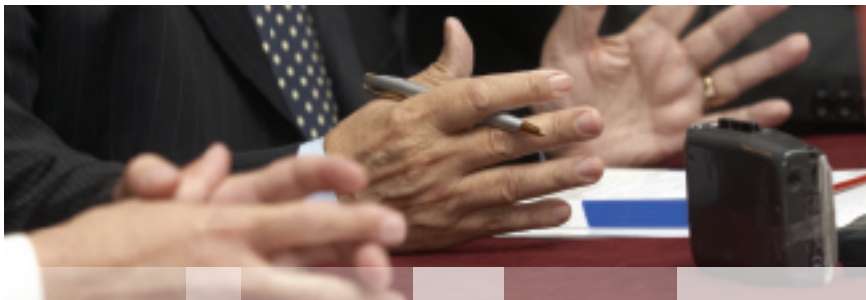


## Gallagher consortium wins Comcover contract



**A Gallagher consortium has been appointed to provide services to the Australian Government's self-insurance fund, Comcover, for the next three years.**

The consortium is led by claims manager Gallagher Bassett Services Pty Ltd (GB). Comcover is the Australian Government's general insurance fund, servicing more than 160 Australian Government agencies.

The Gallagher consortium won an open tender after an extensive process of presentations following the initial submission of tenders almost six months ago. Gallagher Bassett will provide claims management, administration and project management services to Comcover and its clients.

GB Managing Director Jon Winsbury said the total services included risk management advice and training; developing, maintaining, operating and administering a client relationship management (CRM) database; account management and marketing; event management; and insurance and reinsurance advice.

"This is a comprehensive package of innovative solutions to assist Comcover and its clients. The Gallagher group

has demonstrated large-claim-portfolio transition expertise; proven results in reducing claim costs for clients; a unique information management system; consistently superior audit and service results; and demonstrated experience in stakeholder relationship management. These skills will assist us in helping Comcover provide improved services to its clients," he said.

Peter Walker, General Manager – Business Development, said GB was providing tried and tested systems applications for claims management, risk management, CRM and management information reporting. The unique element was that the systems were provided via a dedicated, web-based portal.

"Comcover can log into a secure portal and view instant information across all facets of the various service components. It's a quick, efficient health check of the vital signs of the service being delivered across the scheme."

From that single access point, Comcover can drill down into the underpinning data and conduct cause analyses. It can access file notes and claim documentation.

The agencies within Comcover can also

access information via the secure portal, but their view is restricted to their own agency data.

Peter said the secure portal was seen by GB as essential to meet the contractual requirements. Agencies needed to be able to focus on their own business plans, while Comcover required a more holistic view.

Jon said the contract began on March 1, but the transition to the Gallagher group had started once the contract was announced. The contract value was confidential.

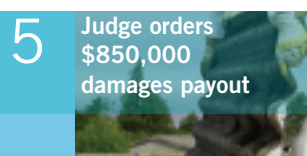
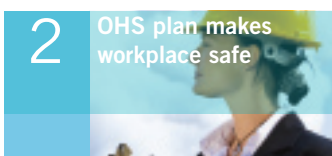
*"Winning this tender provides further opportunities for our specialist team in Melbourne to help the Australian Government achieve its objectives,"*

Jon said. The same team has managed claims for the Australian Government's HIH claims support scheme.

Peter said GB's expertise from the HIH runoff meant the required systems and procedures were already developed, but needed refining to accommodate Comcover's needs.

GB also provides claims management services for the New Zealand Earthquake Commission, WorkSafe Victoria and the NSW WorkCover Authority.

Comcover is administered by the Department of Finance & Deregulation. The contract covers motor, property and liability risks and includes assets as diverse as Parliament House and overseas embassies.



## GB improves in WorkSafe assessment

**Gallagher Bassett was the most improved Agent in the Victorian WorkSafe scheme in 2007-08.**

It was the only Agent of the six in the scheme to have improved across all categories measured.

In respect to the categories of Claims Management, and Service and Processing, an Agent is deemed to have improved if their performance in the current year has improved by more than 4% of that in the previous year.

In regards to the category of Data Integrity, an improved performance means an improvement of more than 2%, compared to the previous year.

The relative performance of all Agents across a range of measures is published in WorkSafe Victoria's Annual Report ([www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)).

The key measures WorkSafe uses to assess Agent performance include claims management and return-to-work (RTW) results and the level and quality of service provided.

The criteria include:

Claims management and return to work:

- timeliness of employer notification of a claim to an Agent
- percentage of RTW plans received within 43 days
- percentage of RTW training conducted compared to target
- growth in expenditure of long term treatment cost
- proportion of workers receiving weekly payments at 13, 26, 52 and 134 weeks after injury.

Service and processing:

- worker satisfaction with services provided by their Agent
- employer satisfaction with services provided by their Agent
- number of valid complaints made against the Agent that are recorded on WorkSafe's conciliation compliance database
- timeliness of payments made directly to injured workers
- timeliness of payments made to providers for treatment they've provided to injured workers
- data integrity.

## OHS plan makes workplace safe



**Two serious incidents at a prominent South Australian business prompted a massive program by Gallagher Bassett to improve health and safety at the premises.**

While GB had managed the client's workers' compensation claims for some time, it had not previously been involved with its OHS.

In the first incident, a worker's arm was caught in a conveyor. With no emergency stopping system in place, the worker was badly injured. SafeWork SA was notified and the company faced a potential \$75,000 fine and was given 30 improvement notices.

Only three weeks later, the same employee was injured when chlorine gas, used to sanitise the plant, leaked. The business was on the verge of being shut down, due to its unsafe work practices.

GB OHS consultant George Zervas was immediately sent to the site and began working with the company to implement improvements.

Consequently he was able to work with the SafeWork SA inspector to downgrade the fine to a warning and use the potential penalty money to assist in OHS upgrades, as the improvements were in progress.

They included modifying equipment, replacing antiquated equipment, guarding machinery and providing employees with personal protection equipment.

"It's a long process, but we've been working through building systems and procedures and having safety inductions for staff," George said.

Safety training has been introduced and there has been "a significant improvement to all parties' attitudes to safety in the workplace".

George said management and employees were now working together to ensure the premises were safe. For example, the shed where chlorine gas is stored is now locked and breathing apparatus used by staff who access the shed.

The business now meets Australian OHS standards. George said the improvements had cost more than \$500,000, including structural upgrades and an international consultant to assist with the building redesign.

GB General Manager – SA Paul Easter said: "GB SA was able to quickly implement substantial changes to work practises at the site and, in so doing, prevent the business from being closed.

"The significance was that the business is the largest employer in that area and closure would have been dire for the district. George's ability to quickly build a rapport with management, employees and, in particular, SafeWork SA was instrumental in turning the site into a very safe workplace and keeping the business operating," he said.

"All the stakeholders pulled together to make it work and the result has been very impressive. Credit must also go to the SafeWork inspector who advised and assisted the team at every step of the implementation."

# Back to Basics

## Site housekeeping



**Every week, 50 Victorian construction workers are injured seriously enough to stop work because basic site safety and housekeeping is not up to scratch.**

These injuries might not be life-threatening, but they are painful, costly, and the effects can be permanent, making it difficult to work in the future.

They'll hurt their back or neck, tear a ligament, cut themselves or break a bone. On average, these injuries will keep them off the job for about 15 weeks. And it's costing industry over \$50 million a year.

Poor supervision, and particularly poor housekeeping, is often to blame. Workers might cut open a leg on an off cut, trip over building rubble or strain a knee stepping backwards off a plank.

Good housekeeping doesn't just happen. Everyone on site needs to do their bit. It's time to get back to basics.

### Start with a clean slate

Ensure housekeeping is included in all work activities, from planning through to start-up and completion.

**Contracts:** State in the contract that each trade is responsible for cleaning up after themselves and that

penalties might apply if they don't.

**Site rules:** Before work starts, develop site rules that include housekeeping responsibilities, and make sure everyone on site knows them.

**Safety plans:** Ensure the site layout supports good housekeeping, eg designated delivery and storage areas, waste management, walkways and vehicle parking.

### Supervise, supervise, supervise!

Once the site is established, proper supervision is critical to ensure everybody follows the site rules.

Principal contractors and sub-contractors should:

- monitor the work and fix any problems
- ensure contractors and visitors know who the site supervisor is
- ensure the supervisor is available and contactable
- ensure all workers and visitors receive a site induction
- ensure the site is maintained in a tidy condition.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the site housekeeping inspection check list visit the WorkSafe web site on [worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)

## Gentle Bears Project expands

**Gallagher Bassett has expanded its Gentle Bears Project to include the Victorian children's welfare organisation Berry Street.**

The Gentle Bears Project was modelled on an overseas example and involves emergency service workers and charities having teddy bears on hand to give to children in trauma situations.

The gentle bears, with GB footprints, wear tiny t-shirts in the GB signature blue, emblazoned with the words "hug me".

GB donated 250 bears to Berry Street. Berry Street Chief Executive Officer Sandie de Wolf AM said the donation was "an amazing contribution to the cause".

"The very warm feeling a kid gets when they receive a teddy bear from a stranger is significant. It means a lot to them," she said.

GB have recently delivered 200 Gentle bears to the Salvation Army Coordinator on site at the scene of the Victorian Bushfires. We contacted the centre to offer our services and the Gentle Bear Program was mentioned.

The response to the bears has been outstanding, as an area of particular concern during the recent devastation, has been the traumatic effect on the children.

GB launched the Gentle Bears Project in South Australia, where police cars now carry gentle bears to give to children who are victims of accidents or trauma.



## Judge orders \$850,000 damages payout



**A court has ordered an Australian firm that admitted causing a pensioner's mesothelioma more than 20 years ago to pay the woman almost \$850,000 in damages.**

Amaca Pty Ltd, formerly known as James Hardie & Co Pty Ltd, will have to pay \$847,089.50 after Hilda McNamara, 71, contracted the fatal disease through inhaling asbestos dust from building products used in her Canberra home between 1972 and 1983. The products were manufactured by Amaca, which admitted liability at the Dust Diseases Tribunal of NSW.

The court heard Mrs McNamara was in a healthy condition before the onset of the disease in 2008 and played regular golf and tennis. She had also cared for her disabled common-law husband, Alan Hardman, since 2005.

In April 2008, Mrs McNamara began to experience shortness of breath, which got progressively worse. By the time she saw her general practitioner three weeks later, she was able to walk only 25m without having to stop.

On April 24, Mrs McNamara was admitted to the Gold Coast Hospital, where X-rays showed fluid had caused her left lung to collapse and more fluid on the right lung. Mesothelioma was diagnosed after the fluid was drained.

Mrs McNamara underwent "a radical and aggressive procedure" to remove

the fluid in July 2008. She then agreed to a course of chemotherapy, despite witnessing that similar treatment, when administered to her brother, who died from mesothelioma in 2000, and her daughter, who died from cancer in 2006, left them with significant side effects for little benefit.

Mrs McNamara told the hearing she suffered "significant and extreme emotional anxiety," thinking about her life expectancy and Mr Hardman's future needs. Judge James Curtis said:

**"It is unnecessary to describe the extreme physical suffering and despair which will be visited on Mrs McNamara before her premature death."**

Judge Curtis gave a breakdown of the award, with \$250,000 for general damages, \$1,250 for interest on the damages, \$17,500 for loss of expectation of life, \$50,368.50 for past medical expenses, \$60,000 for future medical expenses, \$50,000 for past and future care of her husband and \$417,971 for the loss of capacity to perform domestic services.

Judge Curtis also ordered Amaca to pay Mrs McNamara's costs. (DDT of NSW, McNamara v Amaca Pty Ltd, 8190/2008).

## Training program assists employers



**Gallagher Bassett has implemented a comprehensive training program that involves a combination of courses presented by GB and external providers.**

Topics covered include:

- Return to Work co-ordinator training
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislative compliance
- claims management
- contractor safety
- premium issues.

To register for a course, complete the Booking Application form in the brochure or email:

**NSW:** [nswemployertraining@gbtpa.com.au](mailto:nswemployertraining@gbtpa.com.au)

**VIC:** [trainingwcv@gbtpa.com.au](mailto:trainingwcv@gbtpa.com.au)

**QLD:** [workerscompclaims@gbtpa.com.au](mailto:workerscompclaims@gbtpa.com.au)

The Return to Work (RTW) co-ordinator package is a two-day course developed by the respective WorkCover authorities in Victoria and NSW in consultation with key stakeholders and carries their endorsement.

Completing the course will enable participants to:

- relate the importance of RTW to OHS
- understand and fulfil the key responsibilities of the RTW co-ordinator's role
- create and complete RTW plans and offers of suitable employment.

Most training sessions are free for Gallagher Bassett clients. All courses can be tailored to suit individual client needs or conducted onsite. Tailored courses may incur additional fees. For a copy of our National Training Calendar download from our website or contact our office.

## GB South Australia tackles long-tail claims head on



**Long-tail workers' compensation claims are extremely challenging for employers and require a different skill set to manage them.**

In South Australia, GB's role within the workers' compensation system differs to that of NSW and Victoria, where it is an agent for the statutory government-operated schemes. In SA, GB provides consulting services in injury management and OHS. In recent years, GB SA has focused its core business around managing long-tail claims.

GB General Manager – SA Paul Easter said “stuck claims” were expensive in terms of actuarial liability, but frequently needed only a fresh set of eyes, a review of the options and implementation of a GB-designed, specific methodology to get the worker back to work or into an alternative position that better suited their post-injury situation.

Often the log-jam was simply a lack of communication. “We have a can-do attitude,” Paul said. “If an injured worker wants to get back to work, we must think outside the box to treat the injured worker and their circumstances individually.”

In typical short-tail claims management scenarios, case managers have myriad cases to manage, but each follows a fairly regular pattern. Long-term claims are different.

“GB takes a holistic approach to the entire claim history, reviewing the claim from inception to identify what has caused any changes in behaviour and

communication that may impede the return-to-work focus. For example, it might be a medical report that says the person can't work for six-12 months, and the time just stretches on. We need to look at why the report said that and whether the reasons were connected to the original injury,” Paul said.

GB has demonstrated time and again in the public and self-insured sectors in SA its ability to resolve long-tail claims. “We are unable to compete in the registered employer market, due to the single agent contract currently in place in SA,” Paul said.

He acknowledges dealing with long-tail claims, particularly where the claim may have been ongoing for many years, is “a tough job”. But, as an independent third party, GB can challenge historical assumptions about the case and get results. It requires more patience and the ability to examine the root cause of the barriers to get the injured worker back into suitable employment. “It's not always a medical condition,” Paul said.

At times, the legislation is not being applied. For example, a worker may not be attending rehabilitation sessions, as required by the law.

GB's goal is to get the worker back into a better physical and mental shape.

Its success in achieving the goal was demonstrated in a recent email from an injured worker who had suffered psychological injuries and was unable to return to her former job. The injury occurred in 2005 but, six months ago,

GB took on the case and, after more sessions with a psychologist, was able to get the worker a new role, transitioning her into a well-paid, ongoing position.

**The woman told GB:  
“I wanted you to know  
how much I have valued  
[the case manager's]  
work with and for me  
over the past  
six months”.**

[Her] work has assisted me to get to this point - perhaps quicker than I thought possible. Her calm, focused, supportive and accountable approach has been really terrific.

Nothing has fazed or fussed her and her constant affirmations and supportive tone and words have really assisted my recovery. To be treated with such respect, compassion and focus has been terrific to experience.”

Rosslyn Jachmann, SA Operations Manager, said the case manager had been able to “get everyone working together to achieve a sustained outcome”.

Long tail claims have been a solid success story for GB in Australia and, with the excellent work being undertaken in all GB's jurisdictions, the firm is quickly becoming recognised as experts in the field.

## Fundraising for a good cause



### A group of GB employees last year completed the Certificate IV Frontline Management.

As a component of the successful completion of the certificate, teams were required to develop a project from beginning to end. Team members Nicole Williams, Patrick Hogarth and Donna Cathles were allocated a task to devise a fundraising project for a GB client, Berry Street.

Berry Street is a facility that has been protecting and caring for children since 1877. It is the largest independent child and family welfare organisation in Victoria.

Berry Street looks after thousands of Victorian children and young people who have been denied the most vital ingredient for human development - a good childhood; cannot live safely at home because of traumatic family violence, serious abuse and neglect; or will not recover from what has been done to them, unless they urgently receive the help they need and deserve.

Children are mainly referred by the Children's Court or Child Protection. Ms de Wolf AM, Berry Street Chief Executive Officer said Berry Street tried to assist as many children as possible, but resources were always limited.

Ms de Wolf said soaring rates of substance use, family violence, child abuse and neglect mean that increasing numbers of Victorian children were suffering terribly. Berry Street was able to ensure more children experienced a

good childhood that equipped them to become healthy, functioning adults.

"That means our community will be a better, safer place to live for all of us - with less crime, mental illness, substance abuse, violence and homelessness."

Berry Street provides an extensive range of services and, for the past 21 years, has held a foster care camp for children and young people in foster care and home-based care programs in the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria. Each year 180 children, young people and their caregivers attend a summer camp in Anglesea.

As Berry Street depends on the support of government, business, individuals and the community for funding its programs, the GB team established a goal to sponsor three children to attend the camp.

The GB team held three fundraising activities to promote the cause, including selling homemade chocolate truffles, marathon sponsorship and staff donations to enter a casual clothes day with a yellow and blue theme that promoted Berry Street's colours.

GB employees' generosity and enthusiasm was most successful and the project raised \$1,397.45. The amount raised was beyond the team's expectations and will enable four children to attend the next camp.

To donate to Berry Street, go to [www.berrystreet.org.au](http://www.berrystreet.org.au)

## WorkSafe Victoria calls for award entries

### WorkSafe Victoria is calling for entries for its 21st annual awards.

The awards recognise businesses and individuals whose ideas, initiative and innovation help Victorian workers get home safely each night.

The 2009 categories are:

- Health and Safety Representative of the Year
- Health and Safety Committee of the Year
- Best Design for Workplace Safety
- Best Health and Safety Initiative in a Small Business
- Best Solution for Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Best Solution to a Health and Safety Risk
- Best Strategy for Health and Safety Management
- Outstanding Leadership and Contribution to Health & Safety

Entries can be submitted online, by fax or by post. Forms are available at [worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)

To register online, click through to the Awards Login page to register your contact details, and follow the prompts to select either the online or hard copy application form. Full guidelines on the requirements are on the website.

All entries must be received by Friday, April 24, 2009.

WorkSafe's Awards Coordinator can advise entrants on any aspect of the entry process. Phone Juliana Pecar on (03) 8663 5033 or email [awards@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:awards@worksafe.vic.gov.au).

Once the awards close, WorkSafe will assess entries and draw up a shortlist. After validation visits, finalists will be selected. The winners are announced at a dinner on October 29, 2009.

## Solomons mission equips James for challenges



James Murphy on duty in the Solomon Islands.

**After spending six months with the Army Reserve in the Solomon Islands, James Murphy can handle the challenges of a new role at Gallagher Bassett with ease.**

James has been a member of the Army Reserve for 13 years and holds the rank of corporal. When the Reserve called for volunteers to spend six months working with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), James was quick to put his hand up.

He's now back on the job in GB's North Sydney office in a new role as Team Leader, Product Operations Support. The skills he learned in the tropical jungles are coming to the fore. "You've got to be ready to do something for which you are sometimes unprepared and not be daunted by the challenge," he said.

RAMSI is a joint project by 15 nations to:

- ensure the safety and security of the Solomon Islands
- repair and reform the machinery of government, improve government accountability and improve delivery of services in urban and provincial areas
- improve economic governance and strengthen the government's financial systems
- help rebuild the economy and encourage sustainable, broad-based growth

- build strong and peaceful communities.

RAMSI was established in 2003, following political turmoil on the island nation in the South West Pacific Ocean, 2,000km north-east of Australia.

As a youngster, James had considered a military career, but when he began work in insurance he decided to stick with that, but joined the Reserve to get the best of both worlds. When the opportunity came up for the RAMSI project, he was keen to put the practical training of the past 13 years into action and "do the real job".

**Most of the time he was based in the Solomons' capital, Honiara, but the real challenges came when he and his small team had to go into the jungle assisting the Australian Federal Police to track criminals.**

The team operated in hot, humid conditions on very steep terrain. "It was difficult," he says. Nights were spent in the open, but James laughs off the hardships. "We're used to it."

Cultural and language differences were a barrier, but he enjoyed the experience. "Working with my fellow soldiers as a team is always rewarding."

He further honed his skills in leading others during "tough, challenging times". Keeping his fellow soldiers motivated and "on the job" was a great experience.

James appreciates the assistance GB gave him in being able to take time off work to participate in RAMSI. But, while he would consider such an opportunity again, it won't be in the foreseeable future.

He is building a new team in his new role and plans to invest his energies into that. James was previously a Team Leader with the triage and early intervention team.

The new role entails managing registration of new claims, overseeing recoveries and providing technical assistance and support to the claims operation.

So the Army Reserve work will return to one weekend a month, Tuesday nights, and a couple of weeks off each year.

James's other leisure activities echo his love of the outdoors – at weekends you'll find him camping, boating, fishing and four-wheel-driving.

## GB examines likely changes in NZ's post-election climate



**With a new government installed in New Zealand following the November 2008 election, there are likely to be myriad changes across government-run schemes and projects, including the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC).**

Following the election of the National Party Government, led by John Key, Dr Nick Smith was appointed Minister for the ACC, the sole and compulsory provider of accident insurance for all work and non-work injuries. The ACC scheme is administered on a no-fault basis, so that anyone, regardless of the way in which they incur an injury, is eligible for cover.

GB Managing Director Jon Winsbury and General Manager – Business Development, Peter Walker, held high-level talks in New Zealand in February to determine the likely ramifications of any proposed changes to the ACC scheme.

They had confidential discussions with Dr Smith, the ACC Chief Executive Officer Dr Jan White, Business NZ, and a broad span of other business and government leaders.

Peter said the discussions were private, but GB was keen to determine what the ramifications may be for GB's NZ operations if the ACC scheme were opened to some degree of competition.

"We want to be able to refine our claims management services to deliver whatever the ACC scheme may require," he said.

The new NZ Government was conducting reviews and proceeding through a consultation process. "GB remains at the forefront of workers' compensation claims management and injury management globally, having been operating in these markets for more than 40 years," Peter said.

"We have the experience to assist the NZ Government in the consultation process and will continue to liaise closely with government and industry leaders."

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