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## Work Safety tops my New Year's Agenda

Article by John Nicolaou CCI, West Australian column

Happy New Year.

I, like many people, have started the New Year by making resolutions to ensure this year is even better than the last. For some it is exercising more, drinking less, or taking less work home at night and on weekends.

One of my key resolutions for 2012 is to be more vigilant when it comes to safety at work and at home, and to look critically at whether my actions and behaviours exemplify to others a real commitment to effective workplace safety management.

Safety should be at the top of everyone's agenda, especially at the workplace where we can control to a large extent the work environment, the work we are doing and the skills our people possess. We owe it to our staff, contractors and visitors to ensure that they can return home safe and well to their loved ones at the end of the working day .

Sadly, too many people are seriously injured or killed at work each year, impacting the lives of family, friends and co-workers.

In Australia there were 111 workplace fatalities in 2009-10, and in November 2011 there were six fatalities in Western Australia alone.

It is a fact that all workplaces, whether an office setting, mine or construction site, have their dangers; however there are effective steps that can be taken to either eliminate or mitigate the risk they pose to persons at or near the workplace.

A healthy, safe and productive workplace is good for business. Staff will look to managers to display appropriate behaviour and provide a safe and healthy environment, systems of work and safeguards to prevent injury. A manager who champions the safety message in this way sets the foundation for the way in which employees and others also embrace workplace safety.

There are several simple steps employers can take to improve their safety culture.

1. Conduct a due diligence review of the business activities in order to fully understand the extent of its safety risks, and develop a strategic plan to

address these through a properly functioning and documented safety management system;

2. Communicate the organisation's commitment to safety as a fundamental key objective and vision that is driven down and supported from the top;
3. Establish and implement workplace health and safety system performance monitoring and improvement processes, and
4. Engender and foster an open and just reporting culture that makes it safe to admit, report and learn from incidents.

CCI has been working actively in the development of the new national harmonised safety laws and the new regime requires that all managers with the ability to influence workplace safety and health exercise this influence following a due diligence approach.

CCI's team of skilled safety professionals provide a range of services such as conducting compliance audits, working with you to establish and implement or improve your safety management system, conducting training and preparing your organisation for the new requirements under the new laws. Working together, we can achieve Western Australia's safest workplaces.