

Safety Bro wins OH&S award for civil contractor

Gosford, NSW based civil contracting and road maintenance company Sharpe Bros, has taken out the Best Workplace Health and Safety Practices in Small Business prize in the 2007 WorkCover NSW Safe Work Awards.

THE FAMILY-OWNED business developed an innovative response to complacency in the workplace by creating a playful green mascot – Safety Bro – to promote OH&S around its worksites.

Sharpe Bros spokesperson Michael Sharpe, said the original idea developed from the iconic Big Brother character from George Orwell's novel Nineteen eighty-four who is always watching and ever-present.

"Unlike the oppressive Big Brother however, Safety Bro is a nice guy and soon became everybody's best mate. Safety Bro has become an integral member of the team and has inspired renewed enthusiasm for safety issues. Safety Bro stickers are plastered all over our worksites and machines; we send his safety messages in regular text messages and OH&S announcements, and he even has his own website and MySpace page.

"Safety Bro's encouraging messages about safe work practices such as 'What would Safety Bro think?'" have become favourite catch-cries for our staff."

The WorkCover Awards judging panel, made up of employer groups and specialist OH&S bodies, commended Sharpe Bros for involving staff and their families in the development and success of their awareness campaign.

"This is an innovative response to complacency in the workplace, while maintaining genuine enthusiasm and a family business feel through integration of safety into their work," the judges said.

Sharpe Bros. was one of only six award winners from a record-breaking 111 entries, and will now go on to compete in the Australian Safety and Compensation Council's National Safe Work Australia Awards in 2008.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industrial Relations Virginia Judge, who presented the awards, said the annual program showcases innovation and excellence and recognises best practice by highlighting industry achievement in workplace safety.

"It is encouraging to see such a high standard of entries with ingenious solutions developed by employers and workers as part of their commitment to create safer workplaces," Judge said.

The innovative and interactive Safety Bro program is now available to other companies looking to reinvigorate concern for safety in their workplaces. □

More information: www.safetybro.com.au



From the left: Anny Slater (Slaters Lawyers), Virginia Judge (Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations), Michael Sharpe (Sharpe Bros) Jon Blackwell (CEO of WorkCover NSW), Hayden Sharpe (Sharpe Bros).