



**MELBOURNE HEALTH**

in partnership with



**NORTHEAST HEALTH  
WANGARATTA**

Safety Development Fund  
Aggression Prevention and  
Management Project

**Rural Health 2006  
– Going for Gold**

**OH&S FORUM**

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*Hagen Tuschke and  
Deborah Smith,  
Project Officers*

# Project Brief

- Prevent and manage aggression within the Victorian health sector
- Develop and trial sustainable and integrated systems for managing occupational violence with respect to in-patient, community and residential services
- Implement these systems across a number of metropolitan and regional Victorian Health Services

## Project Brief cont.

- Key objective is to implement a risk management-based system that meets a wide range of challenges

# Objective

- Priority is to ensure safety of staff at risk of occupational violence
- 'Reframing' of adversarial thinking
- Holistic approach to integrate and balance OH&S obligations with Duty of Care owed to clients

# Application of OH&S Framework

- Integrated (and practical) approach to the prevention of client-initiated aggression
- Cohesive, multi-faceted organisational approach
- Multi-faceted strategies
- Recognition that industry sector involves unique issues and challenges, requiring a range of particular responses
- Involves application of the “Hierarchy of Controls”
  - ‘designing out risk’ is most preferred
  - Aggression Management training alone is least preferred

# Higher Level Strategy: Design/Engineering

- Layout
  - Design
  - Refurbishment
  - Immediate Surroundings
  - Placement of Fittings
  - Furniture, etc.
- ❖ ***Design changes are comparatively inexpensive compared with the ongoing cost of violence.***

# Policy Development

- Policies
- Procedural Guidelines
- Checklists
- Audit and Risk Assessment Tools
- ❖ ***Current focus on incident management***
- ❖ ***Paradigm shift required to ensure proactive, systematic and coordinated approach***

# Workplace Violence Management Training

- Currently central part of the strategy for combating work-related violence and aggression
- Towards bottom end of “Hierarchy of Controls”  
*If training does not reflect a sound understanding of need, the impact of training is at best negligible and at worst negative.*

Zarola and Leather, 2006

- Urgent need to carry out a rigorous evaluation of impact and effectiveness
- Evidence of effects and benefit of training

# Contact Details

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*Information on the Project is also available on the following website:*

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ohs/research.htm>