



AMIEU
NEWCASTLE & NORTHERN

**REPORT INTO JBS SCONE
HIDE PULLER INCIDENT
OF 16 JUNE 2017**

SUMMARY

The AMIEU believes that JBS Scone management failed to heed the advice of workers and breached its duty of care to staff by allowing operation to commence with a damaged hide puller in place.

The AMIEU will be providing the company with recommendations, as well as working with JBS Scone management to assist in the election and training of fully qualified Health and Safety Representatives throughout the plant.

The AMIEU will be supporting the injured hide puller operator to ensure that he receives correct workers compensation and is not financially impacted by the events of the incident.

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BACKGROUND

The hide puller machine in question is a Steraline Engineering Single-Ram Static Downward Hide Puller. The carriages and supports were replaced in August 2013.

The AMIEU understands that the hide puller has been undergoing regular repairs every few weeks due to an ongoing issue with a crack forming in the carriage support.

The AMIEU has requested a maintenance log for the hide puller machine under the *Work Health & Safety Act* which at the time of writing has not yet been provided.

Testimony from a number of workers indicates that the issue has been brought up with supervisors on a number of occasions and the crack continues to re-appear and be 'patched over'.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The following timeline reflects the events of Friday June 16 2017.

All times are approximate.

0800 A slaughterman with JBS Scone reports concerns about the safety of the hide puller passenger carriage to his supervisor.

The supervisor inspects the wrong area, looking at another, different area that was previously repaired on a prior occasion.

He pronounces the puller safe for operation.

0815 The kill commences and the hide puller begins operation. Hide puller operator Shayne Crowfoot commences work in the hide puller carriage as the passenger. He is joined by hide puller driver on the other carriage.

1100 The driver of the hide puller was raising the puller when he noticed that the weld supporting the carriage around Shayne Crowfoot had broken and immediately stopped the chain.

Roughly five seconds later, the weld completely gave way, tipping the cradle 90 degrees in an instant.

Shayne Crowfoot is sent flying from the carriage, hitting his head on the railing on the way down before landing on his back on the concrete floor three metres below.

A number of employees notice the chain stop and look over to see why, catching the moment that the support snaps and Shayne tips over the edge of the carriage.

1101 A supervisor who was returning from a meeting saw Shayne on the ground and immediately attended him. The other supervisor immediately called for the nurse over the two-way.

Over the next few minutes, multiple calls are made over the radio for the first aid nurse to immediately attend the slaughter floor.

No ambulance has been called at this time.

1105 Shayne is moved from the area and placed sitting in a chair roughly 10 metres away from the broken hide puller.

1115 JBS Scone first aid nurse arrives to treat Shayne Crowfoot. A decision is made to transfer Shayne from the slaughter floor to the first aid room. This is a five minute walk down several flights of stairs. Shayne walks to the first aid room with the assistance of the first aid nurse and a maintenance worker.

As Shayne is walking to the first aid room, another worker from the slaughter floor has notified the training room to call an ambulance.

1120 Shayne Crowfoot is given oxygen and a change of clothes in the first aid room.

1125 The ambulance arrives on site. The paramedic asks to see the accident site and after inspection determines the need to call the Westpac Emergency Chopper for an urgent airlift.

AMIEU organiser Jason Roe is notified that an incident has taken place and notifies the Branch Secretary, who advises he will attend the site.

1200 AMIEU Newcastle & Northern NSW secretary Grant Courtney and organiser Amanda Harvey arrive at JBS Scone and conduct interviews with senior management in relation to the event. They then hold a general meeting with the workforce and begin taking testimony from workers who witnessed the event.

ACTIONS IN RESPONSE

1. Repair and engineering report

The AMIEU notes that the JBS Scone management have fully cooperated with the AMIEU investigation and been forthcoming in their discussions with union officials.

The AMIEU understands that the company undertook an immediate repair of the hide puller carriage using Brooks Bros. Engineering & Steel in Scone.

An independent engineer's report using an engineer from the same company was commissioned by JBS Scone.

The report was sighted by AMIEU organiser Jason Roe on Monday June 19 prior to the kill commencing.

Jason Roe also spoke to the Health & Safety Representative responsible for the hide puller, who was satisfied that the machine was safe to operate. All operators spoken to also indicated they were comfortable with the repairs made to the machine.

The Health & Safety Representative was briefed about the content of the engineering report and made the decision to begin the morning kill.

2. Election of more Health & Safety Representatives

AMIEU organiser Jason Roe visited the JBS Scone site in the morning of Monday June 19 to discuss the situation with workers.

During the visit, workers voted to elect four more Health & Safety Representatives. Three of these representatives will be located in the slaughter floor and the remaining one in the tripe room.

The AMIEU notes that JBS management have agreed to assist with the rollout of more elected and trained HSRs across the rest of the JBS Scone operation.

The AMIEU will work with JBS management to ensure that the required time off is given to these workers so they can receive fully qualified training in the necessary workplace safety issues.

FAILURE OF PRIMARY DUTY OF CARE

After speaking to workers on site, the AMIEU believes that JBS Scone acted negligently by failing to properly assess worker concerns about the safety of the hide puller carriage.

The AMIEU is deeply concerned that the hide puller was allowed to continue in operation despite being reported as unsafe on many occasions.

The AMIEU does not believe that it should take a serious workplace accident to make the company undertake an independent engineering report and repair work. Such a report and such work should have been undertaken a long time ago to prevent accidents like this from happening.

Section 19 of the *Work Health And Safety Act 2011* outlines that the employer must:

ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

(a) workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person, and

(b) workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the person,

while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking.

This kind of reactionary approach to worker safety reflects exactly the kind of attitude which directly caused the injury to Shayne Crowfoot and is in the view of the AMIEU an unacceptable breach of JBS duty of care to workers.

LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE INCIDENTS

The AMIEU notes that JBS Scone management have treated the issue very seriously and undertaken to urgently repair the broken carriage.

The AMIEU also notes that JBS Scone management have committed to assist in the training and rollout of qualified Health & Safety Representatives plant-wide.

The AMIEU remains attentive to the concerns of workers but at this time has not received any information to indicate any other serious areas of high risk.

AMIEU RECOMMENDATIONS

Following consultation with its members and pending discussions with JBS Scone management, the AMIEU will be undertaking to:

1. Improve the numbers of Health & Safety Representatives on site

The AMIEU will be undertaking a recruitment campaign within the JBS Scone site workers to increase the number of Health & Safety Representatives on site.

This will empower the workers with the training required to detect hazards and to act with authority under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*.

2. Review of injured worker transport procedures

The AMIEU is concerned that injured workers requiring transport from the JBS Scone slaughter floor are not able to leave the area freely and quickly in the case of an emergency.

In the event that a worker on the slaughter floor is unable to walk under their own power and needs to be assisted, no simple way to carry or stretcher an injured employee exists and they are required to navigate multiple flights of stairs.

The AMIEU will be working with JBS Scone Health & Safety Representatives to review the layout of the area and the procedures and come up with recommendations for the company.

3. Improve the number of registered first aiders

The AMIEU will be pressuring JBS Scone to undertake a training drive to improve the number of employees with registered first aid training across the production areas.

The AMIEU believes the current numbers of registered first aiders are insufficient to address the size of the workforce.

4. Ongoing safety meetings

As a result of this incident, the AMIEU will be holding regular safety meetings on site until workers concerns are fully addressed.

The AMIEU will liaise with JBS Scone management to hold these meetings and ensure workers are given time to attend.

AUTHORITY AND CONTACT DETAILS

This report was prepared by the AMIEU after consultation with dozens of JBS Scone workers, two on-site meetings, and the collection of dozens of verbal and written statements.

The AMIEU believes that the information in this report is true and correct to the best of our understanding.

Some names of employees have been withheld from this report to protect their privacy.

For more information, contact:

Grant Courtney

Secretary

AMIEU Newcastle & Northern Branch

PH: 02 4929 5496