

Training costs but the life saved may be yours

Safety comes at a price, which we should all be prepared to pay.

While ever some cowboys can get away with taking safety short cuts, it won't be a level playing field for those, like ACRA members, who are committed to "doing it right".

Consider this true story of two projects going on side by side in Sydney recently.

The bad

This contractor (whose application for ACRA membership was rejected) allowed his men to get away with working off extension ladders propped up on bricks on sloping ground.

Men walked around on top of balcony handrails without harnesses. And there were no barricades to be seen anywhere on site.

This work might well have been won on a shaved tender price made possible by shaving the cost of site safety!

The good

By contrast, the contractor on the adjacent site had in place appropriate scaffolding, barricading and catch nets and had their men working in safety harnesses where necessary. At a cost.

The better

Even so, to show how tough things are becoming, the Work Cover officer who visited this site deemed that even these provisions were not enough.

The contractor was instructed to provide full scaffolding to all work areas and work was not to continue until this was done.

Clearly all at further cost.

Members must!

But notwithstanding the cost, **ACRA requires its members to maintain a proven commitment to safety training** (as it does training on other work practices, diagnos-



tic and repair technologies) and supervision.

Training can either be in-house or structured external training courses and can include some aspects of formal TAFE or university courses.

Additionally, ACRA, in a co-operative venture with the Australasian Corrosion Association, has produced a training scheme for concrete repair work.

(This is in the final review stage, and **the first course will be run in the near future. Watch this space!**)

Of course, courseware also costs—proving ACRA's commitment to safety and other issues that impact on a successful outcome for all concerned. **And ACRA polices its members to provide building owners with the highest level of confidence in members' work.** More cost.

Pay the price

Clearly, the cost of proper training and site supervision means that the "cheap" tender does not necessarily deserve to win.

Thankfully, this view is gaining acceptance among building owners, to the point where **several major asset owners are becoming involved in ACRA work.**

Work Cover has also made it clear that it will not let contractors cut corners (and costs) at the expense of safety.

ACRA's "do it right" approach is clearly the right thing to do.

So please **don't undermine this by rewarding the safety-out-the-window quote. The life you save might be someone you know!** ■