MEDIA RELEASE

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SafeWork blitz results in improved construction safety

A 12-month construction industry blitz aimed at reducing falls from heights has resulted in improved working at heights safety and compliance.

SafeWork NSW Executive Director, Tony Williams said inspectors visited 1,000 sites around NSW after nine workers died in 2017 and many more were injured in an alarming spike in the number of reported falls from heights.

“Falls from heights is the number one killer on construction sites. We undertook a concentrated education campaign for tradies and provided rebates for small business,” Mr Williams said.

“Since the start of the blitz, we have given more than $86,000 of rebates to 186 small businesses to help them work safely at heights.

“While inspectors have observed troubling levels of non-compliance, they are working with employers to educate them and taking enforcement action where needed, including issuing on-the-spot fines.

“SafeWork inspectors issued 1,258 notices to stop or improve work processes throughout the visits, which included 93 on-the-spot fines when the falls risk to workers was imminent or serious, or if the workplace was a repeat offender.

“Since the blitz began, inspectors have seen an improvement of up to nine per cent in compliance when it comes to scaffolds, formwork, ladders, safety planning documents, site inductions and tool box talks, but industry still has a long way to go to secure safety.

“Over the next two years, SafeWork will continue to work on those areas of highest risk in the construction industry. This includes working on roofs, ladders and non-compliant scaffolds, as part of a broader falls from heights action plan SafeWork NSW is releasing today,” Mr Williams said.

The Falls from Heights Action Plan identifies the top at-risk industries and occupations for fatalities and serious injuries, and details how SafeWork is working with industry to secure compliance and ensure they meet their workplace safety obligations.

For more information on the construction safety blitz and falls from heights action plan visit www.safework.nsw.gov.

Media contact: 0438 108 797