

Introductory Profile of Meredith Chapman



Meredith Chapman initially commenced her exposure to Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) by specialising in Vocational Rehabilitation and working within this arena for approximately twenty (20) years. During this time Meredith's outlook on her vocation evolved and she completed post-graduate education in both Rehabilitation Counselling and Workplace Health & Safety. Whilst working as a contractor for a large rehabilitation provider servicing Northern region of NSW, she could see the need for other services given the lack of support for most regional areas. Hence, the development of Rural Rehabilitation & Psychological Services Pty Ltd, specialising in the areas of pre and post employment health screening, promoting safety in the workplace and the provision of effective training for employers and employees.

To follow, Meredith became an accredited Workcover 15% Premium Discount Scheme (PDA – 238) Auditor and then completed further training in Workplace Noise testing, obtained NSW WorkCover accreditation for numerous training courses, Royal Lifesaving First Aid Trainer and Accredited WHS Auditor qualifications.

Meredith's belief is that workers and their employers should work together and interact as a team, coaching each other to ensure an optimal level of safety and health performance, whilst maintaining product/service delivery. Meredith has always expressed a desire to "make a difference" to the safety, health and welfare of our Australian workforce and as a result of this; she travelled to the United States and Canada to source a leading edge custom fitted hearing protection device, Sonomax. This device has now been fitted to various workers exposed to toxic workplace noise as well as recreational sports people (shooters and motor sports), where noise induced hearing loss and litigation is a potential concern.

Other inspirational and innovative areas of interest for Meredith has been writing articles relating to WHS for an equine magazine that has a distribution membership of more than 15,000 Australia wide. Meredith has also development a risk assessment program to successfully match horse and rider capabilities, the aim being to reduce workplace injuries associated with horses. This innovative risk management tool has now been adopted by the AACO (Australia's largest Agricultural Beef Breeder) and researched by the MLA (Meat and Livestock Assoc.)

Meredith has also designed a number of ASQA Accredited training courses; one in particular being an on-line Drug and Alcohol Training for Supervisors and Managers. Meredith has also been leading Manual Handling training programs for many employers for over 18 years, obtaining astounding results in the reduction in workplace manual handling injuries. Meredith is a highly recognised and commended trainer throughout industries.

In 2002, Meredith formed the company Safety In Focus, and in 2008 Meredith became the Company Advisor/Consultant for Logistics Health Pty Ltd T/As Safety In Focus. Meredith is also a member of the Australian Lifestyle Medicine Association (ALMA), that collectively as a group of Health Professionals aims at improving health & wellness awareness for people whilst at work and home. Meredith has recently completed training as a Lifestyle Coach and is registered Rehabilitation Counsellor under the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC).

Meredith has provided consultancy services for many corporate identities some of which include, but are not limited to: Australian Cotton producing and processing companies, AAco, Swire Group, Thoroughbred Racing identities, Ridley Agriculture and Cheetham Salts, Ausgrid, Country Energy and Essential Energy, Sydney Ferries, Shire Councils, Australian Wheat Board, Cargill Australia, Graincorp, New England Area Health Service and Challenge Disability Services, BHP Biliton, Roche Mining, Byrncut, Cadia Valley Operations, Boggabri Coal, Downer EDI Mining, Whitehaven Coal, Straits Tritton Copper, Better Homes & Gardens (TV) and many more. Meredith has also provided consultancy services to NSW Trade and Investment and SafeWork NSW as an Advisor, along with WHS systems development, training and coordinating.

Meredith's main role is now Company Manager/Advisor, however, she also conducts WHS Audits and is a senior Consultant in developing Workplace Health and Safety Management Systems (WHSMS) for companies, ensuring industry and legislative compliance is met. Meredith coordinates many onsite pre-employment and health surveillance assessments, for a team of qualified health professionals, with the capacity to complete up to 120 full medicals in 2 ½ days. Meredith is an approved SafeWork NSW trainer for the Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) 5 Day WHS Act 2011 legislative training course and NSW Return to Work Coordinator (RTW) Training 2 day course. Meredith trains ASQA Cert IV WHS course and usually conducts at least two (2) of these courses every year with approximately 6–10 students each intake. In 2014 Meredith was invited to sit on the ASQA review committee for all nationally accredited courses conducted in Australia, in particular equine training. In 2016 SafeWork NSW engaged Meredith as a key individual and academic who will be consulted in the development and co-design of the NSW Code of Practice relating to humans and horse interactions. Meredith also assists PCBUs in meeting their obligations during and following Enforceable Undertaking Proceedings. Meredith has recently been nominated as a WHS Expert Witness and she has participated in specific training in court preparation and report writing to support this role.

Meredith completed a Masters in Safety Science in 2015 and commenced her PhD WHS Research studies in 2016. In addition Meredith has also completing Graduate Diploma of Accident Investigation. Meredith continues to follow her dream in reducing horse-related human injuries and deaths in Australia and worldwide through her extensive research into incident and accident causation factors, identifying how WHS as a framework can be implemented successfully in the equine industry as it has been in many other workplaces and undertakings.

Meredith has published papers in recognised academic journals and she continues to contribute being granted all honours, benefits and privileges pertaining to the Golden Key International Honour Society based on her academic achievements being in the top 15% worldwide.

Despite her recognition and achievements Meredith still works alongside her valued staff, providing health, safety and allied health services daily to workers, their families and employers throughout regional NSW and other states, including metropolitan clients as well.