

## Plant Regulations required for the Australian Crane Industry

The purpose of this article is to highlight what The Crane Industry Council of Australia (CICA) believes is necessary to have a new regulatory process that is applicable to today's environment instead of regurgitating a process that has failed in the past. Safe Work Australia is currently working on a new set of regulations that will be embraced by all States resulting in a common approach and a common use of cranes that is not hindered by State borders. The existing Plant Regulations as they relate to cranes (both mobile and tower cranes) are in disarray and the system is fatally flawed. Continuing on with this approach may result in an industry that cannot conform to what is regulated, nor can the Regulators achieve what is required; a safe lifting industry. This article explores whether the new regulations being proposed, (which are very similar to what we have now) are suitable for now and the future.

The fundamentals of the existing process are not terribly wrong; however the method of policing the regulations is not working at all. We need to look at the issues concerned in the past before we can proceed with our suggestions of how to fix the problems and suggest a path forward.

CICA has been concerned for many years regarding the poor state of cranes in the crane industry, and the very existence of the widely respected **CraneSafe** Assessment Program came about because of the poor state of many cranes in Australia. A paper "Impact in Australia from Used Crane Imports" was prepared by CICA and widely distributed, yet none of the States has acted to arrest the failed processes or indeed to correct the problems that are evident.

In the CICA Used Crane Imports Paper, 15 individual areas of major concern were raised. Nothing has been done by any of the Regulators to correct the problems highlighted. It is just as easy now, as it has been for the past 10 years and more, to bring a crane into Australia that does not meet the existing Plant Regulations, is unsafe, and there is no fear of reprisals unless there is an accident. Some of the old problem cranes have now changed hands two or three times with the current owner not having the faintest idea of his/her vulnerabilities in having a crane that does not meet the basic levels of safety. The owners are directly responsible, yet most haven't got an idea of what risks they are taking. Those who are members of the State Crane Associations and support the CICA's **CraneSafe** program are somewhat protected as their cranes will not be passed unless all of the faults are corrected. Those that don't use **CraneSafe** simply go on blissfully ignorant of their obligations in complying with individual State Regulations.

CICA now has a detailed breakdown of all faults detected in the used crane imports that have been through the **CraneSafe** program and they are damming in the areas where the faults have been detected. Just looking at a single model, the Tadano TR200M, we find there have been 101 units inspected through the **CraneSafe** program. Across the range of the TR200M there are at least 10 variations of design that require Design Registration. We can only find 5 numbers which leads us to believe there are 5 units using a counterfeit Design Number.

Almost every unit failed initially due to some of the following faults; Load Charts that don't conform to AS 1418-5, Load Indicators with wrong load charts, Wrong stability (78%) and instructions in Japanese, No dead man controls, Safety decals in Japanese, No alternative outrigger markings, No English manuals, Wrong wire ropes, No previous history (AS2550-1 mandates a Major Inspection in these circumstances-virtually none have been carried out) and the list goes on and on. The Regulators have failed in allowing these units to work and this example covers just one model of crane. There are literally over a thousand units that have the same issues. CICA would like to make it very clear that Tadano is not responsible for these issues. The units have been bought into the Country by a variety of methods, none of which is the responsibility of the manufacturer, Tadano.

As mentioned previously, the fundamental problems are not with the Regulations, but with how they are administered. Without making excuses, the State Regulators are severely hampered by insufficient staff and this is the primary cause for any lack of action in the States. We are not attacking the many hard working members of the individual State OH&S Departments. They are doing their best, but with the new regulations being formulated means that the Crane Industry and Regulators all have the chance to sit back and analyse where we are going wrong.

First and foremost, CICA is strongly of the opinion that the Design Registration and Plant Registration needs to be run on a National basis for cranes. State by State will not work effectively as it becomes prohibitively expensive to have engineers in each State to effectively monitor whether a Design has been registered for a specific model and have the correct procedures been taken. A central location can far more effectively cover this requirement and with direct access to all of the Manufacturers, no possibility of the wrong Design Registration Number being utilized on cranes with similar model numbers will occur. CICA will make a submission to Safe Work Australia to carry out these functions on behalf of the States. Through a web-based access individual Inspectors and other OH&S officials will have direct access to the National data-base.

Other areas that need urgent attention for the new Plant Regulations follow:

- Manufacturers "birth" certificates, serial number specific, with build and configuration as the unit left the Factory stating which Standards the crane was manufactured to.
- Where the Manufacturer no longer exists, an accredited Australian Engineer needs to verify that the crane can meet the new Regulations before shipment to Australia.
- Third Party Independent Inspection for all cranes whether new or used.
- All cranes to be design registered with no sub-limits.
- Cranes over 20 years of age with no service history or major inspections to be inspected at Port of Embarkation by an accredited Australian Engineer for compliance to Australian Standard AS2550-1 before shipment.