

8 November 2021

The Hon. Ingrid Stitt
Minister for Workplace Safety Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000
Via email: Ingrid.Stitt@parliament.vic.gov.au

Re: Telehandler licensing in Victoria

Dear Minister,

The Telescopic Handler Association of Australia (TSHA) is seeking your support with regards to the requirements for telehandler licensing in Victoria.

It is disappointing that after 3 years of consulting with Worksafe Victoria on their Telehandler licensing reform, to hear that they have no plans to implement much needed change that would bring Victoria in line with the National approach to licencing for telehandlers.

To be clear we support the requirement for a crane licence for a telehandler with a rated capacity greater than three tonnes fitted with an attachment to lift freely suspended loads, ie being used as a crane, but only in Victoria and the ACT are operators required to hold a crane license to operate a telehandler with a capacity greater than three tonnes with forks. This is a problem not only for the construction industry, where operators may be using the telehandler with forks only (and not a jib attachment) but also in agriculture where farmers would have little or no use of the jib attachment. Currently, farmers need to do an additional 5-day dogging license before their 5-day crane licence, all for an attachment on the telehandler they will not be using. This licence is simply irrelevant in ensuring safe outcomes in the workplace, especially in agricultural applications.

The safety concern here is that farmers have gone through training that is not relevant to the type of work and attachments they are using or the environment (including potential hazards) they will be operating in.

As noted in WorkSafe's telehandler reform paper from June 2021, research conducted by WorkSafe found:

- there are a large number of unlicensed operators of telehandlers with a greater than 3 tonne capacity in Victoria
- the cost of obtaining a licence may be a financial burden on businesses without an equivalent improvement in health and safety outcomes
- the length of training can negatively impact family run businesses with few employees
- the majority of operators have to travel great distances to undertake training.

The TSHA is asking that WorkSafe Victoria reconsider their position and align with other states by removing the crane license requirement for telehandlers with a capacity of three tonnes or more with fork. Solutions already exist to deliver better outcomes. There are programs such as the TSHA gold card (mapped to a nationally recognised unit of competence) that are much more relevant to the operator's training requirements to safely operate a telehandler with forks, bale grabs or other attachments used in agriculture.

Please feel free to contact TSHA CEO, James Oxenham on 0410 704 979 for the opportunity to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Walker
TSHA President