

ConocoPhillips donates to East Timor health outcomes

CONOCOPHILLIPS AUSTRALIA'S \$250,000 donation to a Perth-based Catholic health care charity is boosting training opportunities for East Timorese nurses and improving medical outcomes in the small Asian nation.

The donation, made on behalf of the joint-venture partners of the Bayu-Undan project, located 500km offshore Darwin in the Timor Sea, will enable St John of God Health Care to facilitate the first hospital-wide training at Dili's national hospital since the country gained independence in 2002.

The investment will also fund Timorese nurses' participation in facilitated training placements at some of Australia's best hospitals, making a significant contribution to improving nursing standards.

"We are delighted that ConocoPhillips has invested in the Nursing Development Program that we operate in partnership with the Timorese Ministry of Health, which helps improve nursing and standards of health care in Timor-Leste (East Timor)," says St John of God Health Care Group CEO, Dr Michael Stanford.

"This is the first major investment in one of our international health development programs from a corporate entity and a resounding endorsement of our commitment to nursing in Timor-Leste.

"We are very pleased to have the support of ConocoPhillips and hope we can continue to work together on community investment and capacity building that will benefit a large proportion of the Timorese population."

President of ConocoPhillips Australia-West, Todd Creeger, says the investment demonstrates the company's commitment to be an active and valued member of the local communities in which it operates.

"ConocoPhillips, together with our Bayu-Undan joint venturers — Santos, INPEX, Eni and Tokyo Timor Sea Resources — are proud to support this important capacity building program to improve the health and wellbeing of the Timor-Leste community," says Creeger.

With 13 private hospitals across all Australian states, St John of God Health Care is the country's largest not-for-profit private health care group and employs more than 9,700 people. Its Nursing Development Program trains and mentors nurses to develop skills and competencies.

A team of eight expatriate nurses currently work in East Timor's Guido Valadares National Hospital, within the wards with the highest morbidity and mortality rates. **RP**

Employer wins latest drug testing ruling



AMANDA COCHRANE

THE ABILITY FOR employers to uphold work health and safety procedures as they best see fit has received a boost with the Fair Work Commission (FWC) recently ruling it was in an employer's right to terminate an employee who refused to undergo a urine-based drug test.

The AWH Pty Ltd employee was dismissed for twice failing to comply with a direction to undertake a drug test. He challenged the employer's decision before the FWC on the basis that he was

entitled to choose another method of testing available under the employer's policy.

"In this case the particular method of testing procedure the employer adopted for drugs was a matter for it to decide upon. The respondent's policy requiring employees to be subject to urine testing for drugs was reasonable," Fair Work Commissioner Williams noted while ruling in the employer's favour.

The decision is a strong outcome for the company given the reasonableness of urine-based testing has often split the opinion of Australia's industrial tribunal.

In ruling that AWH Pty Ltd's OHS risk policies were 'reasonable and legitimate', Commissioner Williams partially contradicted

the controversial Endeavour Energy Full Bench decision which in 2012 indicated an employer could only implement the less-effective oral swap testing method.

AMMA director legal and migration services, Amanda Cochrane, acted as counsel for the company and says the outcome was 'a positive development in the ongoing debate over an employer's ability to enforce legitimate and effective safety measures in the workplace'.

"Every worker has the right to feel safe and not at risk from the potential influence of drugs and alcohol in the workplace and employers take the responsibility to uphold these practices very seriously," says Cochrane.

"The ability to choose the appropriate method of drug and alcohol testing is particularly important in the resource industry where employees are working long shifts, side-by-side and often in hot climates.

"This decision reinforces that urine testing is a reasonable method for assessing drug and alcohol in today's workplaces. Importantly, the Fair Work Commission recognised that the most appropriate party for ensuring the safety and well-being of workers is the employer.

"Employers can now proceed with confidence in directing urine tests consistent with the stringent health and safety policies especially designed to protect their workers." **RP**