

Date: 10 May 2019

Paralympian shares story of workplace injury with Real Pet Food Company

Paralympic powerlifting champion Kahi Puru made a huge impact on employees at Real Pet Food Company in Ingleburn when he visited them to share the story of his workplace injury.

Kahi was 29 years old when he lost his left leg after being crushed by a forklift at work. As a member of the [icare Paralympic Speakers Program](#), he visits workplaces around NSW to help support a culture of safety at work and drive down workplace injuries.

“I’ve experienced first-hand the devastating effect of a workplace injury and the ramifications it has on your loved ones and your workplace. By sharing my experience, I can make people more safety-aware. Being able to prevent one workplace injury is worth its weight in gold.

“I wanted to reinforce with the guys at Real Pet Food that life is precious, and they should never be afraid to speak up about unsafe situations in the workplace,” said Mr Puru.

Kahi spoke to 35 plant operators, forklift drivers, managers and other support personnel during Wednesday’s night shift at Real Pet Food’s Ingleburn site.

“Kahi’s attitude towards life and the injury he had to overcome definitely made me think”, said Jake De Farria, Freezer Team Leader and Safety Committee member.

“His story reminded me that I should never be complacent – there’s so many unexpected things in a workplace.”

Real Pet Food Company General Manager, Logistics, Manufacturing, Distribution Sue Wood, said she would encourage other employers to invite Kahi into their workplaces.

“Kahi is amazing man and he fully engaged with our team at Ingleburn. We were overwhelmed and humbled by Kahi’s life story and I’d like to thank him from the bottom of my heart for sharing his story with my team and making the issue of workplace safety ‘real’”, said Ms Wood.

Body stressing is the leading cause of injury for manufacturing workers, which includes muscle strains and back injuries caused by manual tasks like heavy lifting and repetitive movements¹. icare’s General Manager Workers Compensation Jason McLaughlin, said icare’s Speakers Program was a great way to spread the message of workplace health and safety.

“With almost 11,000 manufacturing workers injured at work in the past 12 months¹, education, training and tools are crucial in building a safer work environment,” Mr McLaughlin said.

“Stories like Kahi’s bring home the ‘why?’ around injury prevention.

“Through the Paralympian Speakers Program and our Protect Together (P2) injury prevention program, we’re working with employers to develop practical improvements and build a culture focused on strong safety behaviours,” he said.

Employers can book an icare Paralympian Speaker for their next safety event by visiting <https://www.icare.nsw.gov.au/icare-speakers-program/>

[icare NSW](#) provides workers compensation insurance to more than 326,000 public and private sector employers in NSW and their 3.6 million employees.

¹ icare Workers Insurance, Policy Renewal Year 2017 policies and claims data

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