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war on
trolleys

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sunshine

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property

Property Lift out

Fined \$500,000

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A Keysborough former business has been convicted and fined \$500,000 over an industrial accident that claimed the life of a 29-year-old worker.

Carlos Araujo was crushed by a concrete tower-tube that rolled from the tines of a forklift in the yard of Specialised Concrete Pumping Victoria (SCPV) on 12 November, 2015.

It was an "improvised" procedure that Judge Claire Quin of the Victorian County Court described as "inherently and obviously unsafe".

Steps to avert the dangerous act would have been "simple" and available to SCPV at the time, Judge Quin said during sentencing on 15 February.

"You have clearly fallen short of your duty to ensure the safety of your employees."

SCPV, which is in liquidation and ceased trading in 2016, pleaded guilty to two breaches of workplace safety.

It was charged with failing to ensure a safe system of work and failing to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision.

Each offence carried a maximum penalty of \$1.6 million.

Mr Araujo and two other workers had been in the process of disassembling a tower tube for transportation to Queensland.

A forklift driver elevated the tower tube to allow workers to loosen bolts from the sections - each section weighing about two tonnes.

However the driver lifted the load before Mr Araujo and a colleague had cleared from the area.

The tube rolled from the tines, crushing Mr Araujo against a brick wall. He died at the scene.

WorkSafe inspectors found SCPV workers should have instead used a crane to fully or partially disassemble the tube.

Though SCPV didn't direct workers to use the forklift, it failed to issue written instructions to use the crane instead.

It failed to specifically instruct them not to use the forklift, and didn't supervise them to ensure that it wasn't used for the task.

The workers instead were "effectively left to their own devices".

In sentencing, Judge Quin said there was no suggestion any other aspect of SCPV's operations were unsafe.