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THE DOMINION POST

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Why she
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Bosses auditing personal calls

EMILY WATT

THINKING of making a quick call to the spouse on your work cellphone? Think twice – your boss may be watching.

A leaked audit shows the Accident Compensation Corporation has gone to great lengths to uncover inappropriate staff phone use, and experts advise employees to be prepared for similar scrutiny in any workplace.

An audit of seven senior staff with high mobile-phone bills found that some made more than 90 per cent personal calls, yet none of those calls were repaid.

One man spent \$900 on calling one number more than 5000 times in four months.

The ACC has been tightening the belt as it tries to rein in a \$4.8 billion blowout in expected costs, but the report shows it is not just clients who are feeling the squeeze.

The auditors created detailed reports on each ACC staff member, counting the number of calls to their commonly called numbers and providing percentage breakdowns of personal and work calls.

Auditors said they uncovered “questionable practices” including overuse of datacards to access the internet from the phone, staff using phones for text parking, and “lack of managerial oversight” leading to “an uncontrolled increase in use and cost”.

ACC is now planning a wider survey of more staff.

Employment experts advise workers to be aware that the use of any work equipment could be subject to the same scrutiny, especially in such frugal times.

Employment lawyer Alan Knowlesley said that anyone using a work mobile phone, computer or car should be billed separately.

aware the boss could be watching. Every employer would differ in what they allowed, he said. Some allowed “reasonable” personal calls, others not at all.

“You’ve got to look at what’s the rule the employer’s laid down. If they haven’t specifically allowed it, it’s probably not allowed.” He said misusing phones could be a sackable offence.

Unions say the audit displayed a lack of trust that is counter-productive in the workplace.

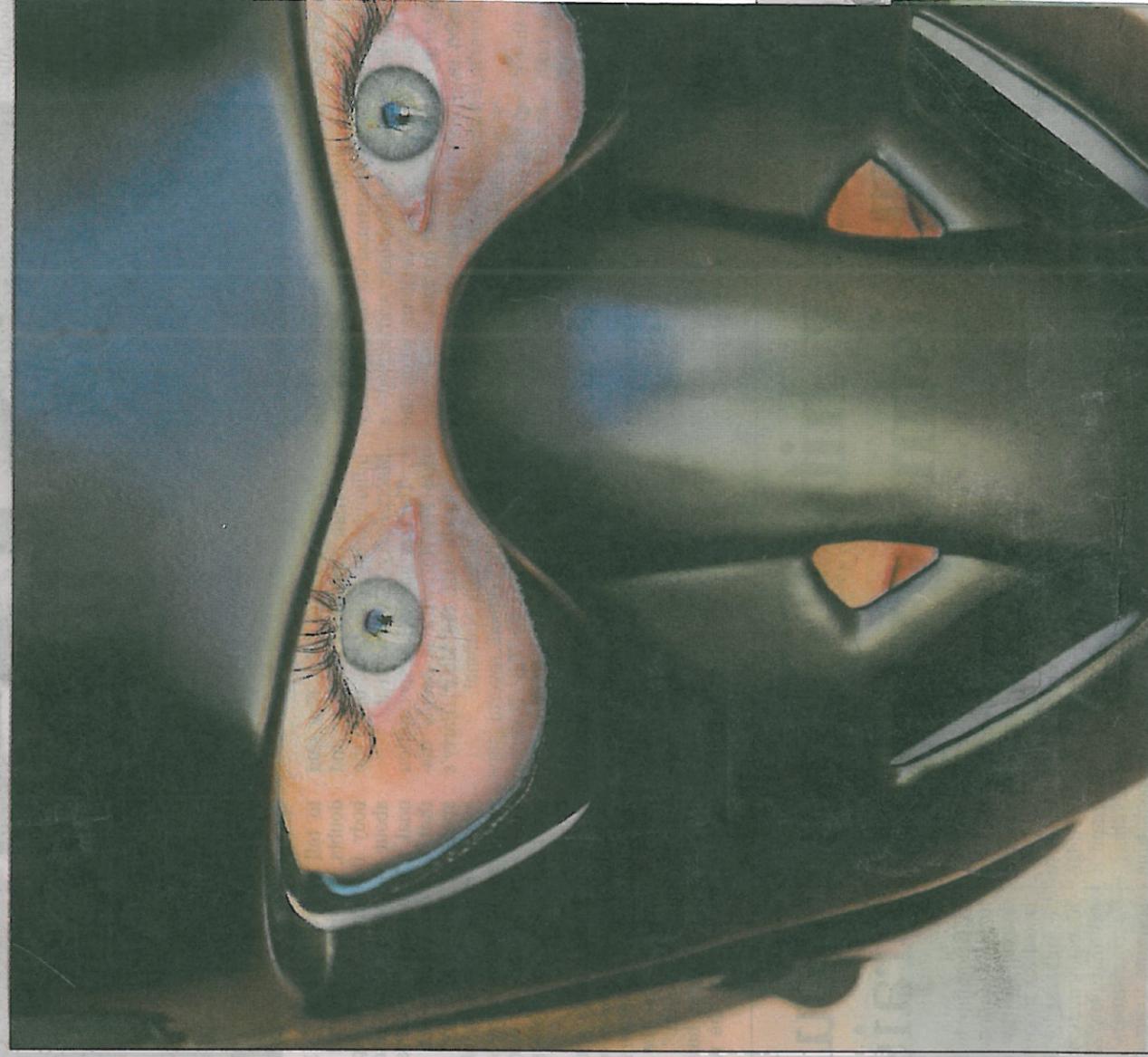
Council of Trade Unions president Helen Kelly said employers should focus on staff performance, not phone records. “Workers need to know that employers can have a lot of surveillance about the place, but it’s an incredibly low-trusting thing for an employer to do, isn’t it? If they’re checking everybody’s phone, they’re telling them they don’t really trust them.”

Public Service Association national secretary Richard Wagstaff said the audit was evidence of an organisation under extreme financial pressure, but micro-managing staff was not the solution.

ACC phone policy says personal use of a mobile phone is “not a staff benefit”, but personal calls under \$25 a month do not have to be paid back. Staff members with ACC phones number 770.

People and Business Services general manager Denise Cosgrove said investigations were still continuing and disciplinary action had not been decided. “Naturally any confirmed breach of policy will be viewed seriously and appropriate action taken.”

Telecom has a service for business customers that allows staff to separate out personal from business calls by pressing a code or the hash key before they dial the number. These are then billed separately.



Self-preservation: Annabel Goslin wears the face protector she designed after suffering a broken nose and broken eye

She won't take any s

SIMON WOOD

ANNABEL GOSLIN was temporarily blinded after a hockey ball hit her in the face – now she wants to make sure no-one else suffers the same fate.

The 22-year-old Massey University design student has fashioned a protective mask to protect vulnerable defenders. Miss Goslin plans to pitch her design to companies in the hope of reducing the numbers of injuries.

Her prototype is being displayed as part of BLOW 09, the university's annual creative arts festival. Also featured is a stool that converts into a makeshift

shelter for trampers. Miss Goslin suffered a broken eye socket, a broken nose, two black eyes and blindness for a week in 2005 after a ball hit her in the face.

“I was in a tournament and I was participating in a penalty corner when the girl taking the shot undercut it right into my face.

“I had a ball coming up, and a piano exam as well, so it really came at the wrong moment.”

She had to practise for her exam without seeing the keys, and attended the dance with



Annabel Goslin

blurred vision. Since then, Miss Goslin has seen at least five other players in her team suffer eye-socket injuries and she decided to do something about it.

While other face masks are already on the market, she says hers has an advantage because it has extra features like a detachable sweat lining and extra holes to provide ventilation.

Hockey injuries cost ACC more than \$9.5 million in the past five years, from more than 1600 forr ture