

## What the GHSL Does

The [Government Health and Safety Lead](#) (GHSL) was established in 2017, at the request of the Public Service Commissioner. Ray Smith, then Chief Executive of the Department of Corrections and currently Director-General of Ministry for Primary Industries, is the functional lead for Health and Safety for the public sector.

With a growing membership of more than 60 public sector organisations, the GHSL provides practical support to chief executives, senior leaders and health and safety teams to strengthen their leadership of health and safety for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Our areas of focus include to:

- Strengthen system capability
- Build cross-sector relationships to sustain learning
- Raise awareness of emerging risks & opportunities
- Support proactive sharing
- Develop resources, where it is practical to do so

## The Digital Leadership Challenge

The public sector faces challenges to improve service delivery, retain and improve trust with New Zealanders, while continuing to reflect today's society. Themes recently expressed by the Public Service Commissioner touch on less use of bespoke software, reducing organisational silos and increasing collaboration, enhancing leadership capability and encouraging innovation. The cost of retaining the status quo is high, with change underway to accelerate the adoption of digital and AI technologies, such as the establishment of the Digital Delivery Agency.

Senior leaders increasingly operate in high-tempo, digitally mediated environments. Traditional governance channels such as email briefings, forums, and paper-based updates, struggle to compete for attention and fail to create sustained leadership presence.

At the same time, Health and Safety teams across the public sector seeking to satisfy the 'reasonably practicable' test with others and progress their work more efficiently, are sharing high-value knowledge in ad hoc, temporary ways, with no enduring, accessible record to support learning and improvement for the wider sector.

Our challenge was to explore how we can refine health and safety leadership across the public sector so that it becomes more connected, evidence based, proactive and better integrated into modern ways of working.

## The Opportunity

In March 2025, Ray Smith identified that modernising executive leadership practice required a shift toward mobile, real-time information sharing and governance. Simultaneously, the Ministry for Primary Industries Microsoft SharePoint migration revealed an untapped opportunity - an ability to create external collaboration sites.

The GHSL initiated two projects to scope and design solutions to support health and safety governance and enable greater collaboration between member agencies of the GHSL.



Ray Smith (far right) presenting to the [Public Service Leadership Team](#)

## Two Sector-Wide Digital Leadership Platforms

### 1.) [The Safe-Gov mobile app](#)

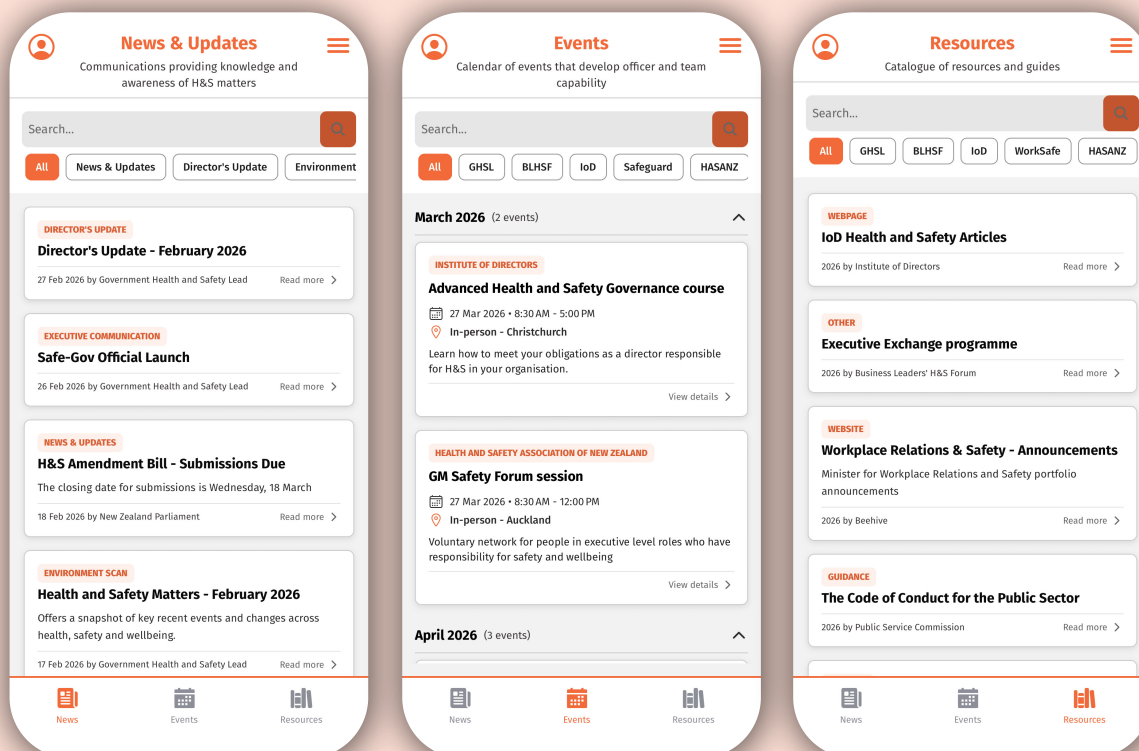
**Panel members are encouraged to download and explore public elements of the app. Search for 'Safe-Gov' in you mobile devices Google Play or Apple App store.**

Safe-Gov is the first mobile app developed for use by multiple government agencies, helping executive leaders and board members (officers described by section 44 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015) stay up to date with health and safety matters and to exercise due diligence.

Launched February 2026, on time and within budget, it provides a single, trusted channel for system-wide visibility. Safe-Gov assembles high quality Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) information in one place, such as the monthly GHSL Directors Update, environment scan 'Health and Safety Matters' and Tier 2 HSW Leaders Programme events. These sit alongside content from other trusted H&S sources and on complementary topics (e.g. integrity, emergency management and security), supporting better governance.

Partners from across the system such as WorkSafe, Public Service Commission, Business Leaders' H&S Forum, HASANZ, NZISM, Institute of Directors, Safeguard and others have each agreed to presenting content, with more continuing to be added regularly.

## Three sections are publicly visible for anyone, anywhere - News & Updates, Events, and Resources



*'I am delighted that the Safe-Gov app is now a reality, helping to support senior leaders and board members across the public sector to undertake their health and safety responsibilities in an easy and accessible manner'*

*- Ray Smith  
MPI Director-General and functional H&S Lead*

Users from GHSL member organisations when signed-in are provided additional functionality to record individual due diligence activities.

- **Site visits** – A simple form for recording with supporting photos and audio
- **Learning** – Populated directly from the events section or create custom entries
- **Self-assessment** – A reflection exercise with six questions every officer should consider
- **Push notifications** – Appear in the device notification feed when News and Updates are published
- **Profile access** – The ability to delegate to a support person to act on behalf of, and
- **Export** – For sharing selected records within their organisation

*'Congratulations on the launch of the Safe-Gov app! What an amazing resource to share knowledge, create visibility of resources and to promote H&S leadership across the public sector. Very well done and thanks to everyone involved'*

*- Sharon Thompson  
CE WorkSafe*

**New Site Visit**

**Findings**  
Document your observations and findings

Describe your findings

250 characters remaining

**Supporting Evidence**  
Details of evidence supporting your findings

Describe supporting evidence

250 characters remaining

**Actions**  
Actions taken or required

Describe actions

250 characters remaining

**Photos**  
0/10 images

Camera Upload Image

**My Learning**  
Place to record learning and development activities

New Entry From Event

Search...

**TRAINING** Completed  
**Officer Development Programme (Course 15)**  
Government Health and Safety Lead  
12 Mar 2026 • 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
View / Edit >

**MEETING** Completed  
**Sir Brian Roche - Direction of the Public Service**  
Government Health and Safety Lead  
11 Mar 2026 • 7:25 AM - 8:30 AM  
View / Edit >

**MEETING** Completed  
**Integrity Champions**  
Public Service Commission  
4 Mar 2026 • 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
View / Edit >

News Events Resources Site Visits Learning Self-Assess

**Create Self-Assessment**

Due Diligence Self-Assessment

Please reflect on how you meet your officer due diligence duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. This questionnaire helps you assess your understanding and implementation of health and safety responsibilities.

**Date of Self-Assessment \***

Thursday, 19 March 2026

**How well do I understand my role and responsibilities as an officer under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015?**

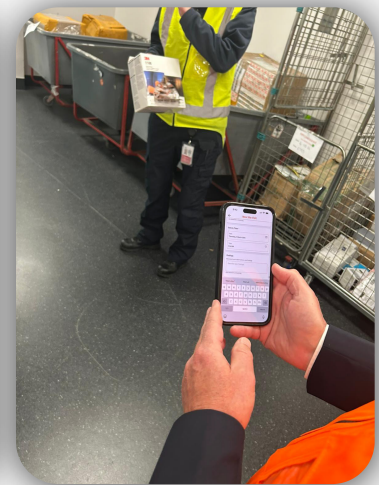
250 characters remaining

**What are the critical risks in my agency, and how confident am I that they are well managed?**

250 characters remaining

News Events Resources Site Visits Learning Self-Assess

Ray Smith using Safe-Gov during a site visit to the new Auckland Mail Depot.



The screenshot displays the 'Government Health and Safety Lead' workspace. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Agency Contacts', 'Leadership and Planning', 'Worker Engagement, P...', 'Risk Management', 'Capability and Capacity', 'Emergency Managemen...', 'Overlapping Duties, Su...', 'Incident Reporting and...', 'Review, Evaluation and ...', 'Change Management', 'Claims and Injury Mana...', 'Wellbeing and Culture', and 'Past Events'. The main content area features a security warning: 'This shared workspace has a security classification up to IN-CONFIDENCE and is not suitable for any information rated at a higher level.' Below this is a welcome message: 'Welcome to the GHSL Member Health and Safety Resource Hub' and a description: 'This site is to facilitate collaboration and sharing between GHSL members'. A 'Document Libraries' section contains six categories: Leadership and Planning, Worker Engagement and Participation, Emergency Management and Business Continuity, Overlapping Duties, Supply Chain and Procurement, Change Management, and Claims and Injury Management. An inset window shows a document list with columns for Name, Modified, and Document ID. The list includes documents such as 'MBIE - Governance Driving Dashboard (Nov 2025).pdf', 'WFA - Safe Driving Emergency Response Risk Assessment (Jan 2026).pdf', and 'GHSL - Safe Driving Working Group Terms of Reference (Nov 2025).docx'.

## [2.\) Member Health and Safety Resource Hub](#)

Launched December 2025, the Member H&S Resource Hub enables the collective problem-solving of complex and systemic issues. It replaces fragmented sharing of information via e-mail and meeting exchanges with a more secure, enduring, collaborative knowledge environment.

Structured around the ACC Accredited Employer Programme assessment areas it offers:

- A common H&S taxonomy for system-wide alignment
- Shared documents, policies, procedures and real world examples
- Controlled collaboration spaces for working groups
- Access to previous events summary notes and presentation slides
- A contact list for members to easily connect with each other

Nominated personnel (usually managers, principal advisers, or programme leads) are granted full edit permissions to simply drag-and-drop pieces into the hub, or work together on a document within it.

*'The Health & Safety Resource Hub is a fantastic platform to enable the safe sharing of information and resources on topics common to many of our workplaces, supporting the safety and wellbeing of our people. By working in collaboration with members and sharing foundational documents, we can support one another without having to reinvent the wheel. Shared knowledge is powerful, and ultimately supports safer and healthier workplaces across the system. NZ Police is proud to support this initiative and the value it offers to all members committed to keeping their people safe'*

- Superintendent Melanie Aitken  
Director Safer People, NZ Police

## Overall Strategic Impact

With well over half the GHSL membership on-boarded to Safe-Gov and the H&S hub within the first quarter, these two digital solutions have already significantly enhanced H&S public service connection and collaboration.

During the Safe-Gov launch period, 36 member organisations activated profiles, with ten requesting access for their entire Executive or Senior Leadership Team. Over 300 e-mail addresses have been authorised to sign in. As engagement continues to increase, governance attention can shift from episodic, to continuous and integrated. Safe-Gov is the first mobile tool of its kind in the public sector, with lessons learned informing work underway by other System and Functional Leads, and Heads of Profession.

The Member Health and Safety Resource Hub has been accessed and used by 68 managers, H&S leads and technical experts across 34 member organisations. More than 150 digital artifacts have been uploaded or linked to, with several examples of collaborative work underway including:

- Activity by the Driving Working Group to inform a principled and balanced approach to risk and reporting
- Several drug and alcohol policies & procedures used to inform a key public sector organisations position
- Critical risk and control mapping, so agencies can identify and work with others that share
- Integrated approaches to workplace wellbeing and psychosocial risk management

The hub continues to be populated as the year progresses, strengthening the Health Safety and Wellbeing community that are using it now and into the future. It positions the sector well in preparation of the AI tools and agents that will become increasingly common, ready to provide diverse and validated operational artifacts for their models to consume. When teams and practitioners embark on a new piece of work, they will be able to quickly and easily refer to pre-existing examples - reducing duplication of effort, stimulating innovation and facilitating efficient use of resources and capability across the sector.

Both solutions will be reviewed after year one, to quantify uptake and their most used elements of, deepen understanding of value added in practice and identify any opportunities for further enhancement.

Through Safe-Gov and the Member H&S Resource Hub, the GHSL is transforming the way leaders lead, teams collaborate and the system learns – advancing public sector practice and leadership of Health, Safety and Wellbeing in New Zealand.

*'Well done and congratulations on getting these exciting initiatives operational. I appreciate the huge amount of effort gone in by everyone, supporting government agencies and the wider health, safety and wellbeing system. The exemplary leadership, collaboration and value the GHSL demonstrates is world class'*

- Mike O'Brien  
HASANZ Independent Chair

