

Environment Scan:



Health and Safety Matters, offers a snapshot of key recent events and changes across health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) for Tier Two (T2) Leaders with HSW responsibilities. For more information on the GHSL and how we can support our senior leaders across the public sector please visit our [website](#) or email the team at ghsl@mpi.govt.nz

PROGRAMME UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the programme last year. After the evaluating the programme feedback, the overall consensus saw value in the programme as an effective support for HSW leadership and supported its continuation.

Key messages from the feedback:

- The programme provided a sense of value, community and relevance
- Breakfast events were the clear favourite, followed by webinars.
- The timing, frequency of events and opportunities to connect informally was perceived as about right.
- Interest in hosting and co-hosting future T2 events was high.
- Future topics for the programme clustered around themes such as critical risk management & assurance, governance and officer due diligence, psychosocial risk & behaviour-based issues, legislative/WorkSafe updates, and benchmarking/dashboard.

The general feedback was *"Keep doing what you are doing."*

Shortly we will be sending out placeholders' invitations for all the T2 events throughout the year for your diaries.

The first breakfast event will be on 11 March 2026 and will feature Sir Brian Roche. Brian will talk about and take questions on the general direction of the public service and some of the challenges ahead.

If you are interested in [hosting or co-hosting](#) a T2 event, please contact Lance Goodall at Lance.Goodall@mpi.govt.nz

FAREWELL TO RICHARD GRIFFITHS

Richard Griffiths, one of our original T2 Champions has now left the public service and returned to the private sector. Richard, alongside Janine Hearn, has been instrumental in establishing, directing and promoting the T2 programme and encouraging senior leaders to participate. Richard's commitment, leadership and advocacy have played a key role in making the programme a success and we are grateful for his valuable contribution. With Richard's departure, we are now seeking a new T2 Champion to work alongside Janine, to continue building momentum and grow the value of the programme. If you would be interested in helping, please contact Lance.

SAFE-GOV APP



We're delighted that the Safe-Gov mobile app is now publicly available to download in both the Apple App and Google Play stores.

Safe-Gov has been created by GHSL to assist public service executive leaders, directors and officers stay informed about H&S matters and exercise due diligence. The app allows you to access H&S News and Updates, Events, Resources and to record your learning, personal reflections against H&S responsibilities and details of any site visits undertaken, including photographs. Ray Smith will be formally presenting Safe-Gov to the Public Service Leadership Team (PSLT) on February 26th.

As a T2 HSW Leader, you have been pre-authorized to sign-in using your work e-mail and to start using your own profile including the site visit, learning register, self-assessment, delegation and export functionality. [Access the user guide here.](#)

Over the coming weeks we'll continue to publish more quality content from trusted sources and partners in the News & Updates, Events and Resources sections visible to the public. If you have relevant resources or events that we can help promote through the app, please let Liam Bourne know at liam.bourne@mpi.govt.nz

AROUND THE SECTOR

A snapshot of cases and issues we have seen from New Zealand, Australia and further abroad.



Health and Safety at Work Amendment Bill

The [Health and Safety at Work Amendment Bill 244-1 \(2026\)](#) is now available on the Parliamentary website.

Much of this is as anticipated, based on feedback through the consultation process. Initial public feedback suggests that some elements of the Bill have been well received, with the most significant criticism being that small organisations (an average annual FTE of 20 or less) are being required to focus on critical risks only. Whereas data indicates that 75% of ACCs work injury costs come from incidents that would not fall into this category. Submissions on the Bill will now go to the Select Committee.

Height safety basics missed - KiwiRail vs WorkSafe NZ

KiwiRail has been fined \$220,000 after a worker fell 10 meters sustaining serious injuries. The fall occurred while installing a new type of telecommunications pole.

Despite this being a significant change, there was no detailed specific risk assessment conducted, no dedicated procedures were developed, and workers lacked training in risk assessment for complex work at height. WorkSafe investigation found a fall arrest system was installed but not in use at the time.

This case highlights the importance of conducting a full risk assessment and considering what changes are needed when infrastructure is changed.

[Read the WorkSafe NZ full article here](#)

WorkSafe sets new direction to strengthen health and safety at work

WorkSafe New Zealand has released its Statement of Intent 2025–2029. The four year plan places stronger emphasis on educating and engaging businesses, providing clearer, practical guidance and support, while maintaining proportionate enforcement where needed.

WorkSafe will prioritise managing critical risks that cause the most serious harm, with a focus on the high risk sectors of agriculture, construction, forestry and manufacturing.

[Read the WorkSafe NZ full article here](#)

Failure to manage psychosocial risks - Australian Department of Defence convicted after RAAF worker's death

The Australian Department of Defence has been convicted and fined over the death of a Royal Air Force technician caused by failure to manage psychosocial risks.

The worker took his own life while on duty on 28 July 2020. It was known to his supervisors that he was in distress and ill-health, but he was not referred for support or placed on leave, nor were steps taken to relieve his obvious stress.

[Read Comcare full article here](#)

Risk of failing to identify fatigue - Onkar Group Pty Ltd v Work Safe Australia Victoria

In Australia, Onkar Group Pty Ltd was fined \$1,350,000 and the sole director was fined \$80,000 after a crash resulting in the fatality of a delivery driver who was 12-hours into an overnight delivery run.

The driver had completed the same 796-kilometre delivery run for seventeen consecutive nights, most including shifts exceeding 12 hours, without adequate breaks of time to rest and recover between shifts.

[Read WorkSafe Victoria full article here](#)

INSIGHTS AND RESOURCES

Current resources and insights from experts on health and safety.



How you communicate can make or break the boardroom | IoD NZ

Dr Meredith Marra explains in this article how we communicate at work—especially in group and board settings—has become increasingly important as social expectations evolve. Effective boards don't just rely on what is said, but how it is said.

Linguistics expert Dr Meredith Marra shows that strong group dynamics at board level depend on flexible communication—reading the room, adapting language to purpose and people and balancing direct, task focused talk with relationship building small talk. Greater awareness of language, power and participation can significantly improve decision making and overall board effectiveness. The article explores how gender, culture, and leadership shape who gets heard, and why becoming more aware of how language works can help groups function more effectively.

[Read the IoD full article here.](#)

GHSL Guidance - Reporting for Governance and Executive Leaders

This new Guide clarifies the reporting needs for individuals with a governance role as compared with those in a senior or executive management role. Intended for those in a governance or senior management role, the Guide will also be of assistance for managers and technical experts who support those officers and senior managers to meet their duties. [Click here to access the Guide.](#)

Health15 – Supporting Workforce Wellbeing

This not-for-profit initiative, established by Stroke Aotearoa NZ and the Building Intelligence Group, delivers on site sessions to help workers identify early health risks while removing common barriers to accessing care. For organisations, Health15 addresses underlying health risks that contribute to absenteeism, reduced capacity and long term harm—supporting healthier people, safer work and more sustainable performance. Contact [Stroke Aotearoa NZ](#) here.

Public Service Commission (PSC) - Strengthening integrity and conduct

The PSC has been delivering their [action plan to strengthen integrity](#) and performance across the public sector, resetting expected standards of integrity and conduct. At the end of last year, PSC launched the [Speaking up Model Standards, Your Complaint, Your Rights Guide](#) and consulted on the [Public Sector Code of Conduct.](#)

Operational Excellence and Safety events

The Business Leaders' Health & Safety Forum (BLHSF) is hosting two events explores why organisations achieve sustainable performance improvements when they design better systems rather than relying on individual compliance or blame:

- CEO only masterclass - Rob Fisher, a US expert on leading operational excellence and safety, will share real-world success stories from around the world on why operational excellence and safety go hand in hand, and how sustainable performance improvements start from well-designed systems and leadership mindsets.

[Read more about BLHSF masterclass here](#)

- Senior leader workshop: Practical tools for making safety as an outcome of operational excellence – this two-hour workshop with Rob Fisher, covers moving from concepts to application. Senior leaders will learn practical tools and approaches they can immediately deploy within their teams to strengthen learning and embed safety as an outcome of operational excellence.

[Read more about this workshop.](#)