

# Year End Update

December 2021

Government  
Health & Safety Lead

Contact us: [ghsl@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:ghsl@mpi.govt.nz) | 0800 HS LEAD

## 2021 IN REVIEW

I'm sure many of us will be happy to welcome the end of what has been another particularly challenging year. With New Zealand's second major outbreak of COVID-19 in our communities, we have all faced ongoing disruptions and challenges, both at work and at home. We cannot underestimate the toll that the last two years has taken on us and our workforce, so it has never been more important that we now take time to relax and recharge over the holiday season. As we count down now to a well-deserved break, we should also take time to reflect and celebrate our successes this year.

In writing this update, it is evident that despite the focus on Covid-19, as a sector we have also continued to progress the work we collectively set out to achieve when we set our [four-year plan in 2019](#). Agencies have focused on the safety and wellbeing of their people, leaders have invested time to lift their own capability, and we have all supported initiatives to build our H&S capability.

At the GHSL's Chief Executive Breakfast Forum in July, WorkSafe Chief Executive Phil Parkes acknowledged the progress that the government sector is collectively making in relation to enhancing our health and safety systems, practices, and cultures in our agencies.

Critical to this success is visible leadership from the top. We have seen many great examples of this over the year, and it was great to be able to recognise Lou Sanson's significant contribution at the Breakfast Forum.



*Lou Sanson, Director-General of Department of Conservation, being presented with a H&S Leadership award by Ray Smith.*

This Year End Update includes some highlights, key milestones, and achievements throughout 2021.

The GHSL team would like to thank you all for your ongoing commitment to the work you do. We wish you all a safe and relaxing holiday break with friends and family and look forward to reconnecting with you in the new year.



**Ray, Vince & the GHSL Team – Tina, Braden, Millie, Debbie, Anita, and Georgia.**

## GHSL TEAM – DIRECTOR UPDATE

After three years in the role of Director, GHSL, Tina Paterson will be leaving this position at the end of 2021.

Tina has been an asset to the team and has worked tirelessly to deliver on the objectives of the four-year plan. Tina has significantly developed the GHSL's network across the sector and has strengthened our relationships with agencies with her ability to connect and adapt to their needs. We would like to thank Tina for her outstanding contributions to the GHSL.

Recruitment is underway for a new Director and in the meantime our Principal Adviser Braden Lister will act in this role.

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



### BUILDING H&S CAPABILITY

#### Chief Executive Forums and Newsletters

The GHSL continues to engage with Chief Executive through *Ray's Quarterly* Newsletters and face-to-face (or online) forums, where appropriate. This year, Chief Executive Newsletters were published in March and June, a face-to-face Chief Executive Forum was held in August, with guest speakers from WorkSafe and MBIE, and online Chief Executive discussions around COVID-19 were arranged for October and November.

We'll look to hold face-to-face or online Chief Executive Forums twice a year from 2022. Read previous Chief Executive newsletters [here](#).

#### GHSL Officer Development and H&S Summer Intern Programmes recognised NZ Workplace H&S Awards

The GHSL was delighted to have two of our development programmes recognised at this year's NZ Workplace Health and Safety Awards.

The GHSL officer development programme, launched in late 2020 in partnership with the Institute of Directors, was recognised as co-winner of the governance category. The GHSL Summer Intern Programme won the sector leadership category.



**Ray Smith, Tina Paterson, Debbie Bridge and Vince Arbuckle – with category sponsors (either side)**

Over 120 public service chief executives and senior leaders have now started or completed the GHSL Officer Development programme.

Find out more about this programme [here](#) or [email us](#) to register for our next course starting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 or to register interest in future courses.

#### HSR Hub / HSR of the Year Awards

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) play an important role in workplace health and safety, and the GHSL Annual HSR of the Year Awards have become an important fixture in the sector's H&S calendar.

When the 2020 Awards Event and conference was impacted by Covid-19, the GHSL sought to find an innovative way to celebrate the awards and to support HSRs across our sector.



**Tracy Klenner (PSA), Natalie Price (HSR of the Year 2021) and Ray Smith**

In addition to a small presentation event for HSR of the Year Finalists, we launched an "HSR Hub" on the GHSL website, with video messages, e-learning, resources, and other information to provide support for HSRs. This enabled us to engage, inspire, and support a much wider audience of HSRs across the sector.



Nominations for our 2022 H&S Representative of the Year open on **31 January 2022**. An awards event is planned for **2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022**. Further information will be published on our website in mid-January.

## Career Pathways for H&S Generalists

Health and Safety (H&S) is still a relatively young profession in New Zealand. Unlike accountants or lawyers, there is no clearly defined pathway to support entry into a H&S role, or to support progression. This makes it difficult for those starting out in H&S, or looking to progress their careers, and for managers looking to recruit or develop H&S staff.

The GHSL recognised this as a problem but knew it needed to be addressed through collaboration with others to develop a career pathway for New Zealand (not just the public sector). In 2000, we actively engaged with various industry stakeholders and were fortunate that the Health and Safety Association of NZ (HASANZ) was able to secure funding from WorkSafe New Zealand to lead this work.

For the past year, we have worked closely with HASANZ, Van Schaik Consulting, NZISM, NZ Safety Council, WorkSafe NZ and other stakeholders including public and private sector organisations to contribute to the development of a Career Pathway for H&S Generalists.

Work is now complete (pending final sign-off) and the new pathway will be launched in early 2022.



**Wellington engagement workshop, July 2021**

## Early in Career Programme for H&S Practitioners

The GHSL launched a new development programme this year designed for new H&S practitioners. The programme includes four three-hour workshops, facilitated by Impac. These are spaced out to allow practitioners time to apply and build on their learning.

Feedback has been positive, and we are looking to run another programme in 2022. You can [email us](#) to register interest or find out more information.

## GHSL Summer H&S Intern Programme

The fifth annual GHSL Summer Intern Programme started on 22 November. Twelve interns from eleven agencies are participating this year, with interns working in Wellington, Auckland, Palmerston North, and Blenheim.

The programme is successfully achieving its goal to attract graduates into H&S careers, with more than 31 of the 59 interns from previous years now working in H&S roles.

## GHSL H&S Leader & Practitioner Forums

The GHSL's regular forums have continued throughout 2021, with most now run online via MS Teams.

Our Small Agency DCE Forum (SMAF) and Heads of Health and Safety (HOHS) Forums run every second month. The GHSL works closely with the (rotating) chair for each meeting to build an agenda that engages leaders in robust discussion on relevant H&S topics.

The GHSL H&S practitioner forums are typically led by GHSL with guest speakers or panels engaged to create a more educational focus, usually focused more on technical H&S topics.



## SECTOR PERFORMANCE & MATURITY

Through our workforce and agency surveys the GHSL continues to look at some high-level indicators related to sector maturity and performance overall. A sector performance dashboard is produced annually for agency Chief Executives. Some key insights:

- 72% of GHSL agencies reported that they have had a form of external assessment undertaken within the last two years (e.g., a Safe Plus Assessment or ACC AEP Audit).
- Our 2021 H&S workforce survey showed an increase in respondents who reported being a member of a H&S professional body. NZISM membership increased from 27% in 2018 to 48% in 2021.
- Senior leader perceptions of sector support, direction and importance of H&S placed by sector have remained steady since 2018. Perceptions of sector collaboration dropped off in 2019/20 but has increased again this year. Self-assessed performance is also steady.

The GHSL also conducted a review of agency 2020/21 annual reports and noted continued improvement and

uplift in descriptions of health and safety performance across the sector. There is still room for further development, particularly in the description of how workers have been engaged over health and safety.

## HARM REDUCTION

### Critical Risk Maturity

Earlier this year, the GHSL launched the [Critical Risk Management Improvement Roadmap](#).



This roadmap was developed as a tool to support conversations about improving maturity of how critical risks are managed. It was released via a Chief Executive newsletter and was accompanied by a [case study from the Department of Conservation](#) on how they have approached critical risk management.

### Violent & Aggressive Behaviour

Violent and aggressive behaviour is a common critical risk for many agencies and is an ongoing focus for the GHSL. Insights from last year's forums with social sector agencies highlighted a need for greater focus on preventative measures as well as innovative detection mechanisms, both within the social sector and more broadly.

Through engagement with agencies this year, we identified key areas of interest for further exploration including a series of case study examples. We provided input to work being led by Protective Security Requirements (PSR) to review the NZ Information Classification System, which will include information sharing. We had planned a series of workshops and engagement opportunities with agencies to take place in our final quarter of 2021, however had to postpone this to focus on providing support for COVID-19. We intend to revisit this in the new year.

### Online De-escalation Training with WorkSafe Reps

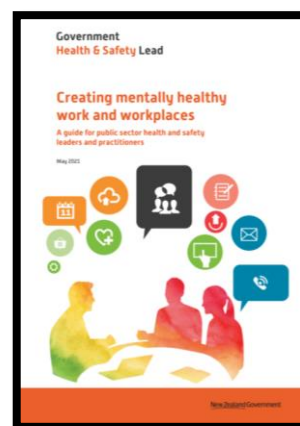
The online de-escalation training programme launched in 2020 has continued to be popular this year. WorkSafe Reps run the online programme regularly and 210 people have completed the course in 2021.

Dates for 2022 courses are available [here](#).

### Mentally Healthy Work

This year the GHSL focused on building the understanding of mentally healthy work across the sector. Building on work done last year to align to a common framework, our work this year has focused on enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the 'what' and the 'how' when implementing effective systems to manage psychosocial risks.

We held a workshop with H&S leaders and practitioners which explored and finalised key components of our guidance [Creating mentally healthy work and workplaces](#), which was later released and published on our website.



We have also begun developing the GHSL website to include a mentally healthy work 'hub' which will pull together a wide range of helpful tools, resources and information for H&S leaders and practitioners, including our popular leaders and employee guides.

On 17 December, we hosted a webinar on supporting worker mental health during Covid-19, with guest speakers including Dr David Tappin from the Healthy Work Group at Massey University and Chris Jones from Corrections.

In 2022, we will be launching a new Community of Practice for H&S Professionals working in mental health and wellbeing, with regular engagement planned for throughout 2022. Register your interest [here](#).



## Driving

The GHSL works closely with Waka Kotahi on how to improve the management of this risk area within the sector. As the Road to Zero strategy is being updated, the focus has been moving to a Work-Related Road Safety (WRRS) System approach.

The GHSL has established a community of practice group looking at defining what the core components of a WRRS system should include and to identify areas of good practice where elements have implemented programmes of improvement across the sector. The group has met a couple of times and is open to new members working in this area – register your interest [here](#).



## SECTOR INITIATIVES

### Covid-19 Support and Guidance

The GHSL team has continued to provide support and guidance to the sector in relation to Covid-19. Most recently we have worked with Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission) to develop risk assessment guidance for inclusion in the public sector Covid-19 workforce guidance, and we have also run forums for H&S leaders and practitioners and coordinated two Chief Executive forums on Covid-19.

### Personal Accident Insurance

In 2019 the GHSL coordinated a group procurement process for Life and Permanent Disability Accident Insurance. Seven agencies joined the policy in 2019 and the GHSL supported Corrections procurement team and Crombie Lockwood to manage 2020 renewals and additions.

No action has been required in 2021, however there will be another renewal process in 2022 which will provide an opportunity for new agencies to join the scheme. [Email us](#) for further information.

### Worker Engagement & Participation Guidance

The GHSL has worked with Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission) and PSA to review a range of worker participation agreements to identify model wording that can be used for new agreements. If any agencies are looking to develop a new worker participation agreement, we are keen to test the template we have developed prior to finalising this work.

In 2022, we will be contributing to work led by WorkSafe NZ to develop guidance on effective worker participation and representation, as part of their HSR Discovery Project.

[Email us](#) if you are interested in contributing to either of the above projects.

### Supporting Positive Workplace Cultures

At the beginning of the year, Chief Executives revisited their commitment to creating positive workplace cultures and agreed to use the Positive Workplace Cultures (PWC) [workbook and change framework](#) with their leadership teams to guide their conversations about areas to continue to develop.

In June, Te Kawa Mataaho, The Public Service Commission, commissioned an academic literature review seeking to identify factors that contribute to positive workplace culture, with a specific focus on effective and practical implementation steps. The research generally aligned with the current approach and reaffirmed the importance of all elements within the PWC change framework.

We held a forum with H&S and HR leads in August to understand how their positive workplace culture initiatives were tracking, as well as identify gaps and opportunities. This revealed a diverse range of activities and efforts both within and across agencies that are in place to make the public sector a better and more positive place to work. Our discussions in the forum also identified some key areas to keep building on, particularly visible leadership and monitoring/evaluation.

Ray Smith and Rebecca Kitteridge will re-engage with Chief Executives in the new year to confirm the sector focus for 2022.