

# Year End Update

December 2020

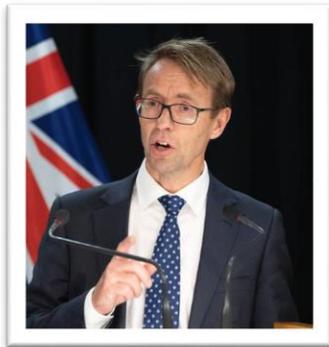
Government  
Health & Safety Lead

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

## 2020 IN REVIEW

2020 has been a challenging year. Covid-19 has tested us all, requiring many of us to go above and beyond our usual duties to keep our communities and workplaces safe. It has been an important reminder that unexpected but foreseeable events like pandemics can happen when we least expect it, and that preparedness and strong leadership are essential for reducing their impact.

As we look forward to the end of this year, let's not forget the positives that have come from this particularly challenging year. We should all feel proud of the work that our Government and public service agencies have done this year to keep New Zealanders safe, leading New Zealand's response and keeping our essential services operating.

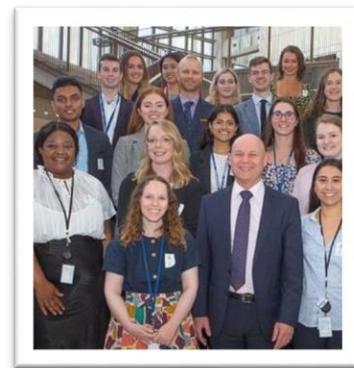


**Director-General Health, Dr. Ashley Bloomfield**  
Photo courtesy of NZ Herald

Strong and decisive leadership from the top gave us confidence that we could keep ourselves and each other safe, and it's likely that the investment we have made in health and safety over the last few years put our sector in a better position to lead and respond to this year's challenges.

It is now 10 years since the Pike River Mine disaster that forever impacted the lives of the 29 men, their whanau, friends and communities. This event led to systemic changes in occupational health and safety in New Zealand; recommendations from the Royal Commission into the tragedy were instrumental in the development of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the forming of WorkSafe NZ and led to further change including the establishment of health and safety sector groups.

Since the establishment of the Government Health and Safety Lead in 2017 we have seen a continued level of senior leadership level engagement in health and safety across our sector, a strengthening of our H&S community, tangible investment in our H&S workforce, and a growing level of maturity and capability in H&S.



**Ray Smith with the 2019/20 GHSL Summer Interns**

The work done last year to review and extend the GHSL function and develop a [Four-Year Plan](#) has set a clear pathway and the team has been steadily making progress towards these longer-term outcomes. This report includes key highlights from our key priority areas.



**GHSL Four Year Plan 2019-2023**

*We wish you a merry and safe holiday season and look forward to working with you all in 2021.*



**Ray, Vince, Tina and the GHSL Team**

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



### BUILDING H&S CAPABILITY

#### Chief Executive Newsletter

In June the GHSL launched a new quarterly CE Newsletter, recognising that freeing up time to attend face-to-face CE forums can be difficult. Each short newsletter explores a relevant topic with some high-level thoughts or narrative, a case study and/or video from one or more CE's, plus links to articles and useful resources.

Read the 2020 quarterly newsletters [here](#).

#### Officer Development Programme

In August we launched a new development programme in partnership with the Institute of Directors, designed for public service agency senior leaders with officer responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.



*Mike Cosman facilitating one of the officer development programme workshops*

The six-month programme explores H&S governance and assurance in a public service context – recognising the dual leadership and governance roles. It includes 8.5 hours of structured workshops (split into four modules), supplemented by ongoing support and access to materials, resources, tools and case studies.

We are now taking expressions of interest for 2021. Read more information [here](#).

#### H&S Representative of the Year Awards

Although the conference was cancelled due to Covid-19, we managed to present our HSR awards with support from agencies who held small local presentations.



*Overall winner Yuet Foong from Oranga Tamariki with Chief Executive Grainne Moss*

Our 2021 H&S Representative of the Year awards event is planned for 6 May.

#### GHSL Summer Intern Programme

21 interns participated in our 2019/20 programme and another 9 interns started the 2020/21 programme on 23 November. Since the start of the programme, 60% of all interns that have completed study are now working in H&S positions (95% in government).



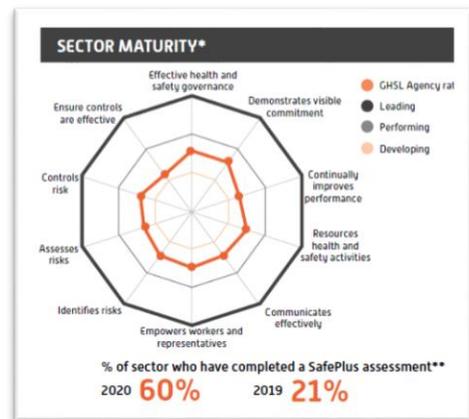
*2020/21 Summer Interns with Vince Arbuckle*



### SECTOR PERFORMANCE & MATURITY

The GHSL has continued to encourage agencies to engage with [SafePlus](#) as a useful indicator of maturity and we have seen an increase in uptake from agencies (21% to 60%) in the last year.

SafePlus can be completed for free via online self-assessment, or through a more comprehensive independent assessment. Using SafePlus as a common tool also allows the GHSL to build a picture of sector maturity and opportunities for development.



*Sector SafePlus assessment results (only includes agencies who completed a full SafePlus assessment)*

## HARM REDUCTION

### Social Sector Safety Forum

Throughout the year we held four workshops with social sector and other agencies who have frontline workers exposed to violent and aggressive behaviour. With the support of Mike Cosman, the workshops explored various controls already in place and where there may be opportunities to improve.

Workshop findings have been compiled into a report. Further work will be done in 2021 to explore the recommendations.

### Online De-escalation Training

In partnership with WorkSafe Reps, the GHSL developed a new de-escalation training package, delivered via zoom. 138 people have now completed the programme, which will continue to be available in 2021.

Find more information [here](#).

### Mentally Healthy Work

This year the GHSL has worked with agency H&S leaders to select a common framework to discuss mental health and wellness interventions and explore any gaps or opportunities, using an evidence-based approach.

We used the [Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum \(BLHSF\) Framework](#) to understand where agencies are currently placing their effort and completed a sector heat map against the framework to identify gaps and opportunities.



**BLHSF framework**

The heat map highlighted a gap in primary interventions, particularly the focus on way work is designed to eliminate or minimize psychosocial risks (referred to as “protect” activity under the BLHSF framework).

This led to the development of a **Mentally Healthy Work H&S Leaders' and Practitioners Guide** which is currently out for consultation.

We also facilitated a workshop with WorkSafe's Mentally Healthy Work Lead, John Fitzgerald to explore [WorkSafe's position statement](#) and forward work programme.

Traditional health and safety has always been around fixing the problem – the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Better work [as it relates to] mental health, is about designing workplaces and work practices in the right way at the beginning. If we can design workplaces and work practices to enable success, health and safety will take care of itself. **Phil Parkes, Chief Executive, WorkSafe NZ**

## SECTOR INITIATIVES

### Covid-19 Support and Guidance

Throughout the year the GHSL team worked closely with Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission), WorkSafe NZ, the Government Property Group and the Public Service Association to develop (or contribute to) agency resources and guidance, to provide support to agencies during Covid-19.

### Sector Guidance – Working from home

The GHSL released sector guidance that covers health, safety, privacy and security matters relating to working from home. This was developed with input and support from WorkSafe NZ, PSR and the Government Property and Privacy Functional Leads and is available [here](#).

### 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.

### Worker Engagement & Participation Guidance

Work is underway with the GHSL, Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission) and PSA to develop agency guidance on worker engagement and participation, to include model wording for worker participation agreements, due for release in 2021.