



Guest editorial New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice

Vol 3; edition 3; October 2026

Author: Joe Bain, Interim Executive Director, HASANZ

Email: info@hasanz.org.nz

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11696>

Welcome to this special edition of the New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice on due diligence. It has been a pleasure to be asked to be the guest editor for this edition. The conference edition with abstracts from the HASANZ and HFESNZ conferences will follow before the end of the year.

Due diligence and other subjects

Officer's duties have been in the spotlight in recent years, especially considering the Maritime NZ v. Gibson case. By their nature, these duties are somewhat abstracted from day-to-day work in organisations. Ultimately, adequate discharge of officer's duties relies on 'due diligence' being achieved – but this can be quite a nebulous concept, with the risk that it means different things to different people at different times.

In this special edition, we bring together a range of papers which collectively cast light on the concept of due diligence, explore what it can mean in different circumstances, and provide a range of lenses that due diligence can be viewed through.

In a letter to the editor, Simon Connell (2026) reminds us of the multi-fatality event due to a landslide at Mount Maunganui in January this year. There had been repeated reports warning about this natural hazard but no action taken (Davison, 2026). Was this a failure in due diligence?

Three law students from the Victoria University of Wellington Law School (Mac White, Gemma Bennion and Harriet Fuller) introduce us to the origins of due diligence and issues in the law (White et al., 2026). Their article will help officers, workplace health and safety practitioners and professionals understand where section 44 of the Health and Safety at Work Act came from and its importance. Olivia Lund (2026) then takes us through some structured, practical legal guidance for health and safety practitioners who may be advising CEOs, executive teams, and boards.

In 2025, the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management ran a series of six webinars, each focusing on a reasonable step in section 44(4) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Each webinar concluded with attendees suggesting ways that health and safety professionals could help officers demonstrate due diligence. Chris Peace (2026) draws together those ideas to provide a catalogue of options that updates earlier work (Peace et al., 2017).

Ideas for systematic improvement to aid due diligence are explored by Michael Boyle (2026) and by Roya Gorjifard & Steve Schroder (2026). Individually and together, these articles suggest structured approaches to due diligence. Gorjifard and Schroder also remind us of the Whakaari eruption in 2019, an earlier multi-fatality disaster due to a natural hazard.

Moni Hogg (2026) and Brent Sutton (2026) each take us through leadership, high energy risks, WAI and WAD and their relationship with due diligence.

Chris Clarke (2026) uses a case study involving safety by design to show where workplace health and safety problems may occur. Rebekah Stephens (2026) reports a small-scale research project linking safety culture, worker knowledge, management understanding and the future of safety. Together these articles suggest issues the HASANZ professions need to tackle and areas for further applied research.

We also publish a request for help from Rodgers Mundembe, a PhD student at Victoria University of Wellington, who needs your help with responding to his anonymous, online survey about excellence in health and safety management. We urge everyone who can to put their hand up to help.

This edition concludes with a book review by Joanne Crawford (2026). The book, by Helen Pearson (2026), is about evidence – the evidence we rely on, who and what to trust. The book mentions one approach perhaps still used in America: *GOBSAT = Good Old Boys Sat Around a Table*.

At the risk of sounding an excessively political note, have we in New Zealand been suffering from *PODGE = POLitical Dogma into Government Edicts? Or BODGE = Bullsh** or Dogma Getting Everywhere?*

I hope this edition provides you with food for thought, inspiration, and a useful contribution to your continuing professional development. I also hope that reading this edition inspires you to submit a paper of your own to the journal.

Please encourage colleagues to subscribe as readers (tell them it's free!).

References

- Boyle, M. (2026). Due diligence – health and safety: a performance review, and what next? *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11257>
- Clarke, C. (2026). Safety by Design Under Strain: A Case Study in System Convergence. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11139>
- Connell, S. (2026). Another preventable disaster. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11370>
- Crawford, J. (2026). Book Review - Beyond Belief: How evidence shows what really works *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11642>
- Davison, P. (2026). *External Review into the Mount Maunganui Beachside Holiday Park Landslide on 22 January 2026* [Enquiry Report]. Tauranga City Council, Tauranga. <https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/council/external-review-into-mount-beachside-holiday-park-landslide>
- Gorjifard, R., & Schroder, S. (2026). Officer Due Diligence After Gibson and Whakaari and HSWA Amendment 2026 – A Five-Stage Verification Framework. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11137>
- Hogg, M. (2026). Reimagining Safety Leadership: Principles of Team Autonomy, Energy Control, and Adaptive Capacity in High-Hazard Operations: A Practitioner-Researcher Thesis. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.10942>
- Lund, O. (2026). Officer Due Diligence: Gibson v Maritime New Zealand. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11519>
- Peace, C. (2026). The due diligence duty of officers in New Zealand: origins and implementation. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11141>
- Peace, C., Mabin, V., & Cordery, C. (2017). Due diligence: a panacea for health and safety risk governance? *Policy and Practice in Health and Safety*, 15(1), 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14773996.2016.1275497>
- Pearson, H. (2026). *Beyond Belief: How evidence shows what really works*. Princeton University Press.
- Stephens, R. (2026). From Systems to Practice: What a New Zealand Safety Culture Pilot reveals about worker knowledge, management understanding and the future of safety. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11285>
- Sutton, B. (2026). From Controlling Work to Understanding Work: The Evolution of WAI and WAD “Operational Learning” and the Significance of Maritime New Zealand v Gibson. *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11140>
- White, M., Bennion, G., & Fuller, H. (2026). Due Diligence? Due Now! *NZ Journal of Health and Safety Practice*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26686/nzjhsp.v3i3.11639>