New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice
He rangi ta matawhaiti
He rangi ta matawhanui
A person with narrow vision has a restricted horizon
A person with wide vision has plentiful opportunities
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Editorial: The Times They Are A-Changing …

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Author: Christopher Peace, Senior Lecturer Occupational Health and Safety, Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka

Email: christopher.peace@vuw.ac.nz

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Why we are here …

Sixteen years ago, on 19 November 2010, 29 men went to work in the Pike River coalmine. At 3.45pm a methane gas explosion blasted through the workings. Almost certainly, the 29 men working there were killed instantly.

For a thorough and sobering account of the disaster read Rebecca Macfie's (2021) book. It helps show why the Health and Safety in Employment Act was replaced with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Other documents provide different insights (eg, Adams et al., 2014; Jager et al., 2013; Royal Commission of Inquiry, 2012). More recently, Lips-Wiersma and Lamm (2018) asked "why did so many individuals remain silent over the lethal working conditions prior to a major mining disaster?". But why do so many workers still remain silent in their workplaces where, for example, systems of work are unsafe, machines are inadequately guarded and hazardous substances used without effective controls? Why does New Zealand still have a poor record of serious injuries and fatalities at or because of work – see Eaqub and Collins (2026) for current details.

One of the recommendations of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety was that WorkSafe should facilitate the development of tertiary education. That led to the start of Master's programme at Victoria University of Wellington, with teaching and research at postgraduate level. This complements work at other universities in NZ. This Journal exists because of the Pike River disaster.

The story so far …

The New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice was founded in 2024 to enable dissemination of applied research and opinions, mainly from Aoteoroa New Zealand but slowly and steadily from elsewhere.

We started intending to be open access (ie, no charge for subscribing) with no article processing fees for authors from HASANZ member organisations. We still are open access, and articles are anonymously peer reviewed.

Including this edition, we now have 1,600 readers and have published 10 editions and 113 articles and conference abstracts. This has exceeded our hopes. So, thank you to our all our authors and reviewers since 2024. We hope to see more work from you and from other members of all the HASANZ professional organisations.

Some of the articles were responses to consultation on respirable crystalline silica in 2025 (eg, Sissons & Harper-Slade, 2025) but we must wait for a policy decision from the next Minister. Perhaps the use of engineered stone will be outlawed here in 2027 as it already has been in Australia and elsewhere.

Other articles were responses to consultation by the last Minister on reform of workplace health and safety legislation. Our responses and subsequent submissions to the Select Committee resulted in no substantive change to the proposals other than to delay their implementation in April 2027.

In this edition

It is again a pleasure to showcase an article by Deborah Cameron about her practice and experience plus 16 abstracts from the HASANZ and HFESNZ conferences. We hope to see some of those abstracts become full articles in 2017.

Other HASANZ constituent organisations are welcome to discuss publication of annual or significant conference abstracts.

What next?

By 20 November the Open Journal System (https://openjournalsystems.com/) platform that the Journal is published on will have been updated to version 3.5. Our colleagues in the Victoria University of Wellington Library who do the backroom work have told us it comes with new capabilities that will make it easier for authors, editors and reviewers to navigate the submission and publication process.

In 2027 we aim to be listed by the Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/), hoping to join the more than 14,500 open access journals already listed. This will help make authors' work more likely to be found by major publishing databases.

The April 2027 edition of the Journal will again mark International Workers' Memorial Day. We will invite some authors to write about serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace and the consequences for coworkers and whanau. However, short items from all health and safety representatives, workers, health and safety practitioners, managers and officers will be welcomed. In short, everyone in the health and safety ecosystem – including whoever is the new Minister for Workplace Health and Safety. For those unfamiliar with writing for academic journals try Google or an read open access article by Peace (2024).

The July 2027 edition will be a special edition on risk assessment techniques (eg, those in IEC/ISO31010 (2019) *Risk assessment techniques* and IEC62740 (2015) *Root cause analysis*. The emphasis will be on those techniques that are reliable and deliver valid results.

For all our readers

Please check your subscription details are up to date and change you work email address to your personal email address (we hate to lose readers if they change jobs). If you're a senior member of your profession, please also update your record to say you can be a reviewer and what your speciality is. Being a reviewer counts as continuing professional development.

If your professional body has adopted the revised International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organizations (INSHPO, 2026) framework, you are required to know about aspects of applied research. The Journal aims to publish articles that will help you meet those requirements. We have already started exploring critical risks (Bates, 2026) and critical controls .

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