



# New Zealand Safety Council

## Message from the CEO

On Monday the 30th of March 2026, I presented to the Select Committee on behalf of the New Zealand Safety Council regarding the proposed HSWA Amendment Bill.

Below is a summary of our oral submission:

"I represent the NZ Safety Council. We are a nonprofit organisation comprising Health and Safety generalists.

Our professional members practice in both NZ and Australia.

We are a member of HASANZ and INSHPO (International Network of Safety & Health Professional Organisations).

As a charitable organisation staffed by volunteers, we do not have the resource to have paid professionals to lobby loudly. When we do express a public view, it is because we believe it matters.

Our view, through the lens of an experienced, qualified and registered safety professionals, is that the HSWA Amendment, in its current form, has such issues it ought not progress without amendment itself, and budgeted resourcing of national safety system key enablers, such as WorkSafe, HASANZ, and technical safety organisations.

In our written submission we identified these issues centred in 5 main areas:

- In its current form, the HSWA Amendment Act, removes existing worker protections. It creates of a 2-tier safety system, based on a

business's number of staff. Ironically, small business such as family farms or trades people will be more likely to harm family members, and/or staff members critical to business continuity if this is applied.

- It focuses on defined 'Critical Risks', which implies we know all principal hazards and can list them and their controls; this can prove complex, prevents continual improvement and accepts life altering harm deemed below the critical risk line.
- It also focuses on ACOPs. In a well-resourced safety system these would have already been developed by WorkSafe, as an operational matter. Of course, to be effective, they must be current – meet or exceed international best practice and be maintained or continuously improved - as technology and knowledge improves. As you have heard already, there are not many of them in place now, and those that have been developed relied on the good will and gifting of time and expertise by industry groups.
- The Amendment has significant system level implications. First it moves the goal posts without extra resources - targeted improvements to national safety guidance, capability, and support would provide better regulatory stability to industry. Second, the courts, the national health system and ACC will be the state agencies left to pick up the bill on behalf of taxpayers. Ironically, the second order effect on business is assessed as increasing the uncertainty of what good looks like, reducing business continuity capability and increasing ACC fees and taxes.

Madam Chair, I have listened to previous submissions, and these seem to be commonly held themes, arrived at independently by both technical experts and industry groups. Indeed, the ladies from Safer Farms said explicitly they “expect harm to increase on farm”.

The Minister has outlined that the aims of the HSWA amendment Act are:

- The legislation shifts attention towards managing & "critical risks" rather than all risks – we would argue the existing act and WorkSafe prosecution guidelines do this already.
- Businesses with fewer than 20 workers will have their overall regulatory burden eased – we would argue the existing Act only requires all businesses to identify hazards, and manage them so far as reasonably practicable, using a hierarchy of controls – this is not a burden of doing business, rather a critical part of any business.
- Better defining director and officer duties, to reduce "over-compliance" in governance roles – simply provides a get of jail free card for directors and boards who are paid to provide governance. When boards hold managers to account for financial performance, but not safety performance an imbalance of priorities will occur; as we saw at Pike River.

- Clarification that land occupiers (e.g., farmers) generally do not owe safety duties to people using their land for recreation, unless linked to business activity, is something that has been clarified already in Case Law, as the owners of Whaakari White Island found.
- Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) offer a "safe harbour" yet they themselves may not be effective. Additionally, as with any administrative control, they must be supervised.
- That WorkSafe is directed to prioritise education, guidance, and critical risks over purely punitive enforcement, surely is an operational and resource matter. A law change itself does not increase a limited operational budget.

The NZSC has always been and remains available to provide technical and real-world advice as to how to improve the national safety system. We would also advocate for a national Health and Safety Advisory Board as an independent statutory body to provide advice to the Minister for policies, resourcing, international best practice, emerging trends and ideas to improve national capability.

We remain confident that this cross-party Committee has the best interests of New Zealand at heart and urge that the dominant views expressed during this consultation process are incorporated into improving our rates of harm, reducing the true cost of harm and prioritising workplace health and safety – which ought to see significant changes to this bill, should it progress.

My final point is that the inevitable conclusion to ACC being overburdened with workplace injuries leads to a privatised worker's comp system (like that of Australia). The effect of private insurance on small business would mean that premium cost and policy stipulations would increase cost and compliance complexity in the long-term (as we see now with construction fire insurance policies) ironically this result is the antithesis of Minister Van Velden's stated intent with this amendment.

Thank you, Madam Chair"

**Karyn Beattie**

Chief Executive Officer

New Zealand Safety Council

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# Announcement from HASANZ

Executive Director Bronwyn Presland will be moving to a new role, and a new Interim Executive Director will begin on 1 April 2025.

We wish Bronwyn every success in her new role and thank her for her significant contributions over the past four years. We appreciate her continued support and dedication as HASANZ enters its next phase.

After careful consideration, HASANZ will appoint a part-time interim Executive Director instead of a full-time replacement. This is intended as a transitional six-month appointment, while the Governance Group and HASANZ team set the organisation up for success. We will also allocate resources to develop commercial opportunities and maintain project management capabilities.

**These changes will help HASANZ focus on three core priorities in the coming year.**

1. Increase support for and promotion of our 12 member associations, which represent 11 health and safety disciplines, and highlight their expertise in the market
2. Continue to develop our work to support our professions – maintain and build the HASANZ Register, the HASANZ scholarships programme, the HASANZ Miller Foundation, the HS Education Forum and the GM Safety Forum
3. Improve HASANZ's commercial sustainability of HASANZ

Following our recruitment process, **we are pleased to announce that Joe Bain will serve as interim Executive Director.** Due to the part-time nature of the role, we sought an internal candidate who understands HASANZ's values and opportunities and can make a positive impact quickly.



Joe Bain is the Operations Director at Motovated Design and Analysis in Christchurch. He is a Chartered Professional Engineer whose practice focuses on mechanical engineering safety for plant and machinery, as well as seismic design of mechanical equipment. His work includes design and certification of mechanical systems, risk management, and health and safety by design consultation. Joe also regularly serves as an expert witness for regulators and lawyers.

**Joe Bain -**

**Executive Director**

As of 1 April 2026

Joe holds a PhD and honours degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Canterbury and is a Fellow of Engineering New Zealand. He was the founding Chair and is now Vice-Chair of the New Zealand Society for Engineering Safety. Joe also currently serves as the Engineering New Zealand representative on the HASANZ Governance Group, however, he will step aside from this role for the duration

of the interim appointment, to appropriately manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. HASANZ will arrange a suitable alternate representative during this time.

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## **Webinar Recording: Tax & Legislative Changes for Consultants**

We had the pleasure of hosting a **Lunch & Learn webinar** designed especially for **contractors and consultants** working in health and safety, delivered by Jackie Edwards.

**Topic:** *Tax and Legislative Changes for Consultants – Avoid the GST Pitfalls*

This session covered:

- **Key tax updates affecting consultants and contractors**
- **Common GST mistakes** and how to avoid them
- Practical guidance to ensure **compliance and financial clarity**

We would like to thank Jackie for her time, [please watch the recording here](#) if you missed it!

If you'd like a copy of the notes from the session and/or an example home office expenses spreadsheet, please send us an email.



# How to speak with the New Zealand Safety Council

The New Zealand Safety Council Trust (AK1225133) is a Registered Charitable Trust and was established in 2002 to promote Best Practice in Health & Safety Management and Environmental Protection in all aspects of New Zealand life.

To contact NZSC, please contact:

**Phone:** [021 142 9372](tel:0211429372)

**Email:** [media@nzsc.nz](mailto:media@nzsc.nz)

**Website:**

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The New Zealand Safety Council · Capriole Crescent · 32/1 [Kingseat Road](#), Papakura · Papakura, Auckland 2580 · New Zealand

