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Published on *Inside Resources* (<http://www.insideresources.co.nz>)

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Call to close non-complying quarries on health and safety

Bernie Napp - Wed, 17 Jan 2018



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The Aggregate and Quarry Association, and MinEx want rogue, small quarries that are continuing to flout workplace health and safety regulations to “shape up or be shut”.

Driving the joint campaign is ongoing concern over fatalities and serious harm injuries in the quarry sector, and unfair competition by rogue operators against complying companies.

AQA chair Brian Roche told *Inside Resources* today there are many companies spending time and money “getting their sites up to compliance and above, and that must be borne by the products that they sell”.

“To be competing against others who aren’t doing so creates an unfair playing field. We have pointed this out to WorkSafe, and they have agreed, and they are working on getting them out of the picture.”

Non-complying operations were more likely to put their workers at risk, he said. “As an industry we all suffer when these accidents happen.”

“We are fully supportive of WorkSafe taking the stick to them.”

As of 31 December 2016, every quarry and mine manager was required to have a CoC with relevant training to meet the statutory requirements for safe supervision of their operation.

WorkSafe provided a grace period of 12 months during which it would work constructively with quarry and mine managers to meet the CoC requirements. That has now expired.

MinEx offer to assist with health and safety compliance

The extractives industry health and safety council’s CEO, Wayne Scott, said he had been visiting small quarry sites since taking on the role six months ago, and while some welcome his advice, others are trying to stay below the radar.

“Many small quarries are still refusing to implement new requirements for Certificates of Competence, and these present the highest level of risks to operator and worker safety.”

“WorkSafe has clearly stated that enforcement action will be taken for those who fail to comply with legislation, so my message to non-complying quarries is to contact me and let me help get sites up to speed, as the alternative may be getting shut down,” Scott said.

He thinks there may be 200 or fewer sites with quarry managers who do not have their CoCs yet, noting many of them will have started their training.

“What’s even worse, is that the longer small quarries operate without health and safety requirements in place, the more risk they create of serious injuries or fatalities.”

Three of four fatalities at quarries in 2015 occurred in small quarries without appropriate health and safety management in place, Scott said.

In October last year a truck driver died at a [Tauranga quarry](#) [2] while tipping a load of rock. A WorkSafe investigation is underway.

The [MinEx](#) [3] briefing late last year to Parliamentarians and officials called for reforms in the training required for CoCs, and for the recruitment of specialist inspectors for quarries and mines.

Wayne Scott is available at 021 944 336 wayne@minex.org.nz [4]

AQA members moving to full compliance

Roche said the AQA has 53 members producing 85 per cent of the rock and stone material used for New Zealand roads and buildings, as well as limestone for fertiliser.

“Most of our members have got up to speed with the new and tougher requirements that came into force in the wake of the Pike River disaster, which exposed light regulation across the whole extractive sector.”

“However, our membership only covers a few hundred quarry sites around the country. We know there are around 1,100 quarry sites around the country, many of them on remote rural properties.”

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