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Welcome to the November edition of Train Brain

We recently welcomed IOQNZ President Chris Gray to the MinEx Board.

Chris brings more than 30 years' experience in machinery and extractive sector and he's happy to share that. I particularly liked a sentence in his opinion article, here in Train Brain as well as Contractor magazine.

"For those of you who believe risk assessments and written procedures are the answer, I'd say you're a health and safety manager. But if you're someone who understands there has to be a better way, then you're a health and safety leader."

I think we have a lot of health and safety managers in the extractives sector or perhaps more accurately, people who manage health and safety. But we have a lot fewer who provide leadership.

Sometimes that's not too difficult. When I was approached recently for MinEx to join business, union and health and safety leaders to support a letter, I was quick to endorse it. The letter asks Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden not to use her review of the Health and Safety at Work Act to make major changes.

As you'll see in the article in this Train Brain, organisations as diverse as BusinessNZ and the Council of Trade Unions are unanimously saying the Act is fundamentally fit for purpose. What it needs is Government to provide a long-awaited strategy which sees WorkSafe adequately funded so it can be a leader.

In MinEx's own [submission](#) to the review (also covered in this edition), it is noted the HHU is poorly resourced with currently only seven inspectors (which includes two trainees) for almost 1,000 active NZ quarries/mines. Their roles include having to investigate incidents, manage a Certificate of Competence (CoC) system and provide guidance to industry.

I realise we are in tight fiscal times so I have suggested industry could take on some of WorkSafe's current functions such as running the CoC system with some WorkSafe oversight. We are already doing some of the work anyway with our active role with workshops, guidance materials, collection of incident statistics and communications.

There are however, roles that only Government can fulfil. I am deeply disappointed to hear from a third party that WorkSafe is refusing to pick up the responsibility of helping protect workers at risk from silicosis and other lung diseases by creating a national registry.

That's our lead story in this Train Brain and rightly so. MinEx has for many months been advocating for the establishment of such a registry. We already have extractive workers here

diagnosed with this deadly disease which is as bad as asbestosis – for which there is a registry. WorkSafe has itself estimated that around 80,000 NZ workers, mostly in construction, have probable high exposure to silica.

We cannot let this issue rest. I can only hope Minister van Velden proves herself to be a health and safety leader when she produces her response to the review of the current workplace health and safety system.

Meanwhile, enjoy this Train Brain which covers recent prosecutions and incidents, some training and awards highlights, our next Women in Extractives event and much more.

Stay safe



Wayne Scott
CEO MinEx and AQA

Hands off approach to managing fatal lung disease

MinEx's call for a Registry to record what is feared to be an expanding number of fatal silicosis cases in New Zealand appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

A National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry could collect health information and explore trends, for example, health problems in different industries, groups of workers, or in different parts of the country. If we knew what was happening, we could target interventions and be more cost-effective. Many countries overseas have registries as part of their toolbox for improving worker health.

Responding to questions from Dr Mary Obele, a specialist doctor in occupational and environmental medicine, WorkSafe stated that it is not considering establishing any national Registry for occupational respiratory diseases which would include silicosis. Instead, it will work under its new strategy, established under the Coalition Government to *'...continue to influence businesses to manage work-related health risks.'*

This failure to establish a Registry for diseases such as silicosis is extremely disappointing, but not a surprise. We are already 10 plus years behind Australia on coming to terms with silicosis. Australia has identified that around 10,000 of its workers are at risk from this awful lung disease and swung into action a decade ago.

Since around 2015, Australia has been supporting workers exposed to silica with health, domestic, social work and other helpful interventions. In July, it banned the manufacture of engineered stone. Two months earlier, it established a National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry to capture and share data on the incidence of such diseases and their causes. Their Registry will help detect new and emerging threats to worker's respiratory health and monitor efforts to reduce worker exposure. Australian doctors must notify any diagnoses of occupational respiratory disease, including silicosis, to the Registry.

WorkSafe here in New Zealand did a survey in 2021 to estimate exposure to carcinogenic agents (including respirable crystalline silica) in New Zealand workplaces.

This estimated that about 2.4% of New Zealand workers (equivalent to about 80,000 workers, mostly in construction) have probable high exposure to silica. The survey also gathered information on the activities causing probable exposure to silica, and whether appropriate controls are used. However, to date, there has not been a national study measuring the amounts of silica in different areas and industries, nor looking at the health of workers exposed to occupational respiratory hazards.

WorkSafe's focus has been to visit all engineered stone businesses, provide information to businesses and workers about managing risks and take enforcement action *'where appropriate.'*

If Australia believes it can't manage the risks of RCS in producing and installing engineered

stone, then neither can New Zealand. MinEx has called for New Zealand to match Australia's ban on the production of engineered stone, a Registry, and proper training of health workers to read lung function tests.

While engineered stone has far higher levels of respirable silica exposure than any other workplace, the risks of silicosis exist in many other sectors including quarrying, construction and concrete cutting. Last year WorkSafe identified two men who had developed silicosis working in a lower South Island quarry.

We won't know how many others are at risk because WorkSafe won't establish a Registry. WorkSafe ruling out establishing a silicosis and wider lung disease Registry means the scale of illnesses like silicosis can't be measured. Given Australia's assessment of silicosis risk, we are likely to have hundreds of workers also at risk from this deadly disease, but the response so far has been to sit on our hands.

WorkSafe's new strategy commits it to focus on making a measurable difference to the most serious harm in New Zealand workplaces, to influence businesses to carry out their responsibilities – and to hold them to account if they don't.

There's no more serious harm than contracting an incurable lung disease which will result in your death. With silicosis, WorkSafe is failing to prevent the detection of harm in the first place. MinEx would like to see a greater emphasis on improvement of work practices, research and prevention, rather than ignoring a preventable tragedy.

Conveying the awful risks

Extractives operators need to be much more aware of the risks posed by conveyor belts and proactive in preventing potential hazards.

Wayne says there were two incidents in one week in the sector in recent months, one of which saw a worker lose an arm.

"Such awful 'belts and braces' approaches to protecting workers are just not acceptable but they keep happening in our industry and elsewhere in New Zealand workplaces."

In September, fertiliser company Ballance Agri-Nutrients was convicted after a worker died in July last year after being crushed in a conveyor belt accident at its Mt Maunganui factory. The maximum penalty is a \$1.5 million fine.



A WorkSafe summary said conveyor belts running at 1.7 metres per second carried fertiliser product. A 2022 safety risk assessment had found "non-compliant guarding", "rotating elements" hazards and a risk of "entanglement" from working around the belts.

On the day of the accident, the victim and five other workers were cleaning under the conveyor belts and removing the debris via a running belt.

The summary said the victim lost his footing trying to step over the running belt and fell. He rolled several times and was dragged underneath the metal frame of a crossing conveyor belt. He died of his injuries.

WorkSafe's summary said Ballance's standard operating procedures and policies for cleaning the conveyor belts had not warned or instructed against stepping over an energised conveyor belt. Other workers reported climbing over running conveyor belts was normal.

Ballance pleaded guilty to a charge of failing to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers, exposing them to the risk of death or serious injury from moving conveyor belts.

It has been convicted and remanded for a restorative justice meeting report and sentencing on December 17.

MinEx among those calling for Health and Safety improvements

MinEx is among a range of businesses, unions and health and safety organisations calling on the Government to invest in WorkSafe, improve the health and safety system and save lives.

The group [issued an open letter](#) on Labour Day to Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden in response to her review of the health and safety regime.

The letter identifies three key areas to improve New Zealand's health and safety record rather than making radical change:

- Better system leadership and coordination
- Improving and investing in WorkSafe NZ
- Better regulations and guidance

These are all things MinEx has been calling for and have repeated in our [submission](#) to Minister van Velden's review. The open letter also urges the Minister to refrain from substantial overhaul of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – again something MinEx has been saying.

The Act is based on similar legislation to Australia and the United Kingdom, where workplace fatalities and injuries are much lower.

The letter reflects an unprecedented degree of consensus between representatives of workers, large and small businesses, organisations and experts across the health and safety landscape.

We are united in saying that the right, targeted investments in health and safety will pay dividends to businesses, workers, communities, and the country. Workers need to return home healthy and well, and businesses need to have access to guidance and support to improve health and safety in their workplaces.

As well as MinEx, the letter is supported by organisations including BusinessNZ, Employers and Manufacturers Association, Council of Trade Unions, Business Leaders' Health & Safety Forum, the Forestry Industry Safety Council, the Institute of Safety Management and Health and Safety Association of New Zealand.

Submissions into Minister van Velden's review of health and safety have now closed and decisions awaited.

Industry can help fix health and safety issues

An effective workplace health and safety system needs effective regulators and more of them are needed to deliver this in the extractive sector, says MinEx. It also suggests the industry could take over some WorkSafe functions.

MinEx's views are in its [submission](#) on the review of the Work Health and Safety Regulatory System launched and being led by Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden.

As a high-risk industry, the extractives sector has benefitted from specific regulations and guidance material that provide greater clarity on what is expected of businesses in this sector.

That includes the establishment of the High Hazards Unit

(HHU) within WorkSafe with which MinEx has an excellent relationship.



Workplace Relations and Safety Minister
Brooke van Velden

However, the HHU is poorly resourced with currently only seven inspectors (which includes two trainees) for almost 1,000 active quarries/mines spread across the entire country.

HHU inspectors also have to investigate incidents, manage a Certificate of Competence system and provide guidance to industry.

WorkSafe's level of funding and how that is sourced will determine its resources and priorities.

Wayne Scott suggests industry could take on some of WorkSafe's current functions with some oversight and is in effect, doing some of this already.

MinEx currently collects safety data including incident statistics, issues weekly safety alerts and develops industry resources and guidance, including codes of practice for the sector.



WorkSafe also oversees the Board of Examiners which establishes Certificate of Competences (CoC) that each extractive site manager is required to maintain.

Once again resourcing means it does not always operate efficiently. This system could be provided by industry, with HHU oversight and audit, removing the financial burden from WorkSafe and allowing industry to appropriately fund the efficient operation of the system.

Regular engagement between the regulator, business owners, managers and workers is critical to ensure the health and safety of workers and others involved in a business.

Allowing the extractive sector to pick up some duties currently carried out by WorkSafe would release resources for core activities such as conducting inspections, providing support and investigating incidents.

Elsewhere in the submission, MinEx says it agrees that extractive sector businesses are best placed to understand and manage their risks on each site by:

- carrying out over-arching risk assessments to identify hazards in the workplace
- having discussions with workers about what could hurt them or impact on their health, and implementing effective controls; and
- continually reviewing/checking to ensure they comply with the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations (MOQO).

There needs to be clarity within health and safety legislation and guidance material on such definitions as 'reasonably practicable' and 'acceptable level of risk'.

The sector covers mining, quarrying and tunnelling with many small and remote where staff had varying levels of education and literacy. It is critical that health and safety regulations are flexible, scalable, and simple to understand.

To be effective, these had to require consistent consequences for poor behaviour. Regulatory action since the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act in 2015 has been inconsistent and, in some cases, ineffective.

Prosecutions have also been scarce and generally ineffective as a deterrent to poor behaviour.

Two boys have a blast of a time

Stevenson Poplar Lane Quarry has given a couple of local high school students a taste of working in the extractives sector.



Te Puke High School students Mahuta Harrison-Walker and Cezanne Nathan went on site as part of the Gateway scheme. During their two-day experience, they had hands-on experience on the crushing plant, and spent time with an operator on the machinery. It included being able to monitor – from the appropriate distance – the explosives team doing a blast.

The school's Gateway co-ordinator Isabelle Vosse says they both loved the visit. "Hands-on and real experience are some of the best ways to learn first hand what working life can look and feel like."

Te Puke High School thanked Stevenson for giving students the chance to see a significant industry in its own backyard.



Remember to keep all evidence of CPD activities to provide when you apply/renew your CoC

Proposed changes around CoCs

Public consultation is now open on a proposed safe work instrument for the extractives sector.

WorkSafe says this would modify some of the prescribed requirements for mining and quarrying Certificates of Competence. These are currently set out in the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations – Prescribed Competency Requirements for Certificates of Competence) Amendment Safe Work Instrument 2023.

The proposed amendments to the safe work instrument would add new unit standards to existing CoCs and remove a unit standard currently required for certain certificates of competence.

For example, it's proposed a B Grade Quarry Manager would have unit standards added around demonstrating knowledge of teams and team leadership in an organisation, as well as demonstrating knowledge of assessing, monitoring, and controlling risks to worker health in the extractive industries. The current unit standard on undertaking a job safety analysis would be removed under the proposed changes.

MinEx was able to preview the document and provide some feedback [but will also make a submission](#), along with all interested parties.

This closes Friday 15 November 2024 at 5pm.

Georgia takes it for the girls

Georgia Lyford has won the Canterbury Westland excavator of the year competition.

It was held at Road Metals Rolleston quarry and the company's Mike Alley took out a new novice category in the Civil Contractors CablePrice event.

Georgia, who works for Schick Civil Construction's Christchurch branch, had competed twice before.

"I won it for the girls," she said.

The skills displayed included slam dunking a basketball to pouring a cup of tea using an excavator's bucket.

Georgia will go onto the Civil Contractors New Zealand national finals in Fielding.



It is a good idea to record your CPD restricted and unrestricted hours every time CPD is done. It only takes a few minutes!

Putting the health and safety cards on the table

With 35 years experience in the extractive sector here and in the UK, Chris Gray says there's a need to shift the focus on protecting workers from paperwork, to making them truly aware of the hazards they face...

Our approach to health and safety has become like a complicated card game with far too many rules.

We've overcomplicated it, focusing heavily on risk assessments and written procedures, but are these really preventing harm? After nearly 30 years of filling out risk assessments and producing what seems like an endless conveyor belt of documentation, I challenge you to ask yourself: **Is this truly the best way to protect your workforce?**

It's not managers getting injured – it's the workers. Yet, we've taken an administrative approach to health and safety that works well in an office but often fails to deliver where it matters; on the ground. It's like a failed

marketing campaign targeting the wrong demographic. We've designed our health and safety systems for the office environment, but the people who actually face the risks – the workers – are unintentionally being overlooked. We're missing the mark, especially considering the literacy level of many workers in our industry.



Chris Gray is the Institute of Quarrying NZ President

Here's the real issue: **the focus needs to shift to hazard awareness training.** Written documents might help some, but nothing beats practical, hands-on training in recognising and managing hazards. I'd argue risk assessments and procedures may contribute about 20% to preventing accidents, but hazard awareness training has the potential to make a much bigger impact. It equips workers to identify and deal with risks as they arise, in real time.

In a workplace where literacy levels can vary significantly, complex written procedures and risk assessments often fail to engage the very people they're meant to protect. Instead, these documents end up being skimmed over or ignored altogether. We need a system that works for everyone, regardless of their ability to digest long written instructions. That means focusing on actions and training that happens on-site, where workers can see, hear, and practice hazard management – not just read about it.

Despite efforts to engage employees, we're still stuck focusing on paperwork instead of real, practical actions that make a difference. **Hazard awareness training** should be at the core of our safety practices, along with emergency scenario exercises, prestart meetings, and take 5 processes. These are activities that take place in the workplace, not behind a desk.

To those in management reading this, think about your own experience. If I dropped you into a construction site tomorrow, would you feel safe because you've read the risk assessments? No – you'd feel safe because you are *risk aware*. You've developed the ability to spot hazards and manage them effectively, not because of a document but through practical experience.

Years ago, while completing yet another risk assessment – my 226th in fact – I realised something; I wasn't creating anything new. I had two Excel sheets open: one was a blank risk assessment form, and the other was a list of about 30 hazards with controls that I would copy and paste into each assessment. In truth, every risk assessment was just a reshuffling of a limited set of hazards. Wouldn't it be more effective to simply train the workforce to recognise and manage those 30 hazards, rather than burying them in paperwork about each potential combination?

Let's put it this way; imagine I'm teaching you a new card game. There are 30 cards, and I want you to learn how to use them. Sounds challenging but manageable, right? But what if I told you I needed to teach you every possible combination of hands you could be dealt, and for each one, we'd need a written procedure? You'd think the game was absurd and completely impractical. This is what we're doing with health and safety!

I often get frustrated when I suggest changing our approach, only to be told, "We have to do risk assessments – it's a requirement." And sure, we do need them, but we've put too much emphasis on this one tool, and it's not delivering the results we need.

For those of you who believe risk assessments and written procedures are the answer, I'd say you're a Health and Safety Manager. But if you're someone who understands there has to be a better way, then you're a Health and Safety Leader.

I'm not saying risk assessments and written procedures don't have their place – they do. But our over-reliance on them isn't providing the effective or efficient health and safety outcomes we need. When you sit your team down for inductions or go over standard operating procedures (SOPs), are you truly connecting with them? If you asked someone to summarise what you just

covered, you're just as likely to hear, "I was thinking about whether I could take down two bad guys with this pencil if they burst into the room," than a clear, detailed understanding of what you presented.

It's time to change the game. Let's focus on actions that make a real difference – **hazard awareness training** being the priority – engaging our workers in a way that resonates, rather than attempting to drown them in paperwork and complexity.

Chris Gray is the Institute of Quarrying NZ President, Managing Director of Whakatane-based concrete and contracting company Tracks and a member of the MinEx Board

Tai Poutini Courses



Go to the [Tai Poutini website](#) to view the available courses. Students may be eligible for free fees, see more information [here](#).

MITO Inspiring Futures and Manaaki Fund

There's been a lot of change in vocational education but the extractive sector continues to work with MITO as our industry training organisation.

It is still offering scholarships and support to students from the range of industries it supports, including extractives. There are no fewer than eight scholarships available to extractive and other students.

MITO's 2025 scholarship programme was developed in partnership with Inspiring Futures Foundation – which has its own scholarships, applications for which closed October 31.

However, [MITO's scholarship applications](#) are open until December 15.

They contribute funding towards apprenticeships, graduate business diplomas, advanced technical programmes and management courses.

Applicants will be advised in early 2025.

MITO also operates the Manaaki Fund to provide one-off payments to students facing unexpected hardship that is impacting their MITO studies. The money can be used to help with day-to-day living costs, family illnesses, childcare, travel and similar costs.

Details and an application form [here](#).

IOQNZ Webinars/Courses



To view and register for IOQ courses and webinars visit: [IOQ Courses and Webinars | IOQ NZ](#)

Women in Extractives 2025

The third annual Women in Extractives luncheon has been confirmed for Thursday March 20 next year in Christchurch.

Straterra, AQA and MinEx will once again be running three awards: Emerging Star, Leader of the Year and the Kristy Christensen Memorial Award which honours the late Kristy's work in advocating for women in extractive roles.

The lunch will include some changes following feedback to make it even more valuable and allowing for CPD hours to be claimed.

More details will be released before the end of the year but please regard this as a placeholder.



Courts impose \$4m costs and fines health and safety contractors

Two recent landmark cases really signal that our courts are starting to use their capacity to impose major fines for breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

While the fear of huge costs should not be a motivator for any employer to protect their workers, it should certainly underscore how critical it is to get things right.

Jamey Bowring, 24, had been killed in 2015 when a tank exploded at Salters Cartage, a hazardous substance company in South Auckland.

The Auckland High Court has ordered the company and its owner, Ronald Salter, to forfeit \$4 million. The decision came after police made an application for civil forfeiture under the Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Act. The court agreed with police that Salter and his business financially benefited from failing to comply with requirements for handling dangerous substances and ensuring workers' safety.

A lengthy trial was set to begin, however parties involved instead entered into settlement discussions.

Ron Salter was fined \$400,000 and sentenced to four-and-a-half months' home detention over the death. Police say they are aware of businesses' concerns about the application of civil forfeiture for workplace health and safety offences. They had no intent to use this routinely for offences but will consider matters on a case-by-case basis.

They said the Salter case was largely brought on the basis of breaches of hazardous substances regulations with unique features and aggravating circumstances, including the tragic death.

So, the message is clear; police will look at civil forfeiture proceedings against a business that blatantly ignores health and safety proceedings.

The second case of interest was the first sentencing of a health and safety consultancy under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 which will put safety advisors on notice.

Safe Business Solutions (SBS) consultants gave paid health and safety advice to the employer of Grant Bowling, who was knocked unconscious by an agricultural vehicle in August 2020. He suffered two brain bleeds, permanent loss of taste and smell, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

SBS had identified a "desperate need" for a traffic management plan and had undertaken to provide one but hadn't done so by the time of the collision six months later. A WorkSafe investigation found no steps were taken to manage the risks of uncontrolled traffic, aside from a small sign about speed at the entrance.

It says SBS had offered active and ongoing management of health and safety risks, but did not deliver work promised and Mr Bowling still lives with the very serious consequences.

WorkSafe says its role is to influence businesses and organisations to manage their health and safety risks in order to keep workers safe. If they do not manage these risks, we hold them responsible. Businesses paying for specialist health and safety advice need to know both they and their consultants have responsibilities under the law.

SBS was sentenced at the New Plymouth District Court of failing to comply with its duty to ensure the health and safety of others. It was fined \$70,000 and reparations of \$28,403 was agreed. The maximum penalty is \$1.5m

Christchurch death confirms tyres can be deadly

The death of a Christchurch contractor who was fitting a crane tyre in October is a grim reminder of the explosive risks posed when doing tyre repairs.

While the precise circumstances of the Christchurch death are unclear, anyone working with big tyres or supervising them need to take account of the risks.

Brian Whiteman was killed whilst fitting a tyre at Smith Crane and Construction. A work colleague reported that he'd spent more than a decade in his role at BAW Tyres and Auto and was considered an expert in the field. Four staff witnessed the accident and had all been offered counselling.

A WorkSafe investigation into the death was launched and police were making inquiries on behalf of the Coroner.

The Christchurch death had been preceded by a tyre explosion at a New South Wales quarry in February. Two workers were injured while inflating and inspecting a semi-trailer truck tyre for an air leak. They had removed the tyre and wheel assembly and were visually inspecting the tyre for damage and leaks in the workshop when the tyre exploded.

In another NSW extractive industry incident, a worker had a narrow escape when a wheel rim weighing 2.5 tonnes was ejected 1.5 metres above the tyre. See photo below with the worker, circled, just a few metres away. The pressure in the tyre was reported to be just above 10 psi at the time.



A year ago, a Queensland worker sustained head and chest injuries when an inflated truck tyre exploded. It appeared the inside of the tyre wasn't inspected prior to inflating and inflation didn't occur inside a tyre cage.

It appears the two Australian incidents have happened outside of tyre cages, which are designed to prevent injuries should an explosion happen during inflation.

Tyres can explode with enormous force, shedding steel and rubber over a wide area. Work sites which do their own tyre repairs – or have contractors come on site – need to have cages to protect people when tyres are being inflated.”

ACT Safety Courses



View the [upcoming courses](#) from November to December .

To view all Extractive Unit dates or book a course visit the [Extractive Units Training | ACT Safety](#)

Killer driver on prescribed drugs shows worksite risks

The deaths of ten people at the hands of an Australian bus driver addicted to opioid painkillers is a reminder of the dangers of prescription drugs in the workplace, says MinEx CEO Wayne Scott.

Brett Button was sentenced to 32 years in prison after overturning the bus in June 2023 in the Hunter Valley. As well as the 10 wedding party guests killed, another 25 were hospitalised.



Button admitting taking more than the prescribed amount of Tramadol before the crash and said he had been using it for nearly 30 years to relieve pain.

Wayne Scott says research by Waikato University for NZTA suggests the extent of drugged driving in New Zealand is widespread – and much of that will be by workers who have legally obtained the drugs.

The Waikato study said more than half of those surveyed who took prescribed drugs such as opioids, anti-depressants or stimulants reported driving while under the influence once a week or more in the previous year.

The study's findings should be reinforced by the Hunter Valley bus crash. That tragedy should be a real wake-up for a sector where many staff operate big machinery. Employers need to ask, know and understand what their employees are taking.

We know it's not easy to monitor, but the consequences of a worker impaired on prescription drugs can be catastrophic as the Hunter Valley bus crash so tragically illustrated. People can be more affected by drugs prescribed to them than by having multiple drinks. We all know that's totally unsafe and not to be tolerated but few are as aware of the risks of medication.

The MinEx Board was advised recently that a New Zealand extractive worker with a broken bone had been cleared to return to work driving machinery with a prescription for Tramadol, Panadol and a slow-release painkiller patch.

When the employers took this up with the doctor, they were referred to a pain specialist who argued the worker was ok to return to duties with this prescription. This illustrates the scale of the problem. Not only is it hard enough for employers to monitor if workers are ok to be back on deck with medication that's been prescribed, we have some doctors who maintain people can work with powerful drugs like Tramadol in their system.

Clearly, the Hunter Valley crash shows the risks of such an approach and we urge a precautionary approach by extractive employers. That's especially so when someone is operating machinery or is working nearby.



Not on our database? [Sign up here](#) to receive our safety alerts and newsletters

MITO courses



The New Zealand Certificate in Mining and Quarrying (Level 2) is perfect for those entering the industry for the first time.

MITO will provide distance learning and assessment resources to support learners through the programme, and arrange off job training courses for health and safety, first aid, and fire safety unit standards.

For more details and enrollment information, [click here](#).

MITO Extractive micro-credentials

MITO micro-credentials are designed for extractive industry employees, particularly those wishing to be appointed to a safety-critical role under the and Quarrying Operations) Regulations. Choose one of three, or all three!

Safe Working Practices Micro-credential (Level 3)

This provides an understanding of the general safety practices for workers and how to undertake a job safety analysis in the extractives industry. Courses take two days in an off-job session run by a provider.

Site Construction and Maintenance Micro-credential (Level 4)

This provides the skills and knowledge to identify the attributes and health and safety considerations of conveyors, crushers, and screening plant; how to follow, maintain and recommend modifications for stockpiling and tip head management plans; and explains associated hazards and controls, in the extractives industry. Again, a two-day course will be required.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Micro-credential (Level 5)

This programme will provide the skills and knowledge to identify the key components of an extractive site operations activity, write an SOP and test and review them in the extractives industry. This course can be done online at any time from any device – mobile phone, tablet or PC.

Read more on our website at mito.nz/extractivemicros

Contact MITO on 0800 88 21 21 to enrol.

Apply for a 2025 scholarship and fuel progress

The MITO and Inspiring Futures Foundation scholarships are now open for applications. The 2025 scholarship programme was developed in partnership with Inspiring Futures Foundation to assist aspiring and successful graduate learners to progress their skills and knowledge. The MITO scholarship programme contributes funding towards apprenticeships, graduate business diplomas, advanced technical programmes, and management courses.

Multiple scholarships are available across 20 different categories, including five new categories.

For more information, and to apply, visit mito.nz/scholarships



The banner features a man in a grey and black polo shirt with a 'MOTUL' logo, standing in front of industrial machinery. The text 'Fuel progress' is overlaid on the left. The right side has a blue background with white text and logos.

Fuel progress

INSPIRING FUTURES FOUNDATION

mito

2025 Scholarship applications open now.

Apply at mito.nz/scholarships

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