

August 2019

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Spring is almost here

Spring is almost here and with it, along with the warmer weather, are the equinoxial winds which can create dust from the best-managed extractive sites.

Dust remains one of the major hazards for workers in our industry. Look at the scale of the WorkSafe response to the exposure risks of those working in factories making manufactured stone benchtops (see next item). By the end of the year, it will have visited every New Zealand manufacturer.

We as a wider industry must recognise that dust is one of our vulnerabilities and the days when visiting a site (let alone working at one) meant getting covered in layer of it, are coming to an end. If we don't get in front of dust management as an industry, it will be imposed on us by the regulators.

That said, the regulators don't always get it right. Currently WorkSafe is promoting a halving of the Worker Exposure Standard for Respirable Crystalline Silica to $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.

MinEx will submit that this is not supported by a lot of research which shows you can't measure RCS accurately below $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ and measures at and around that



level are enormously variable. That research says exposure to $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ over a lifetime means you have very little chance of contracting silicosis, but exposure to high levels for short bursts (such as for unprotected workers in stone benchtop factories) brings high risks.

I am encouraging WorkSafe to focus on enforcement at $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ rather than chasing an unenforceable halved WES.

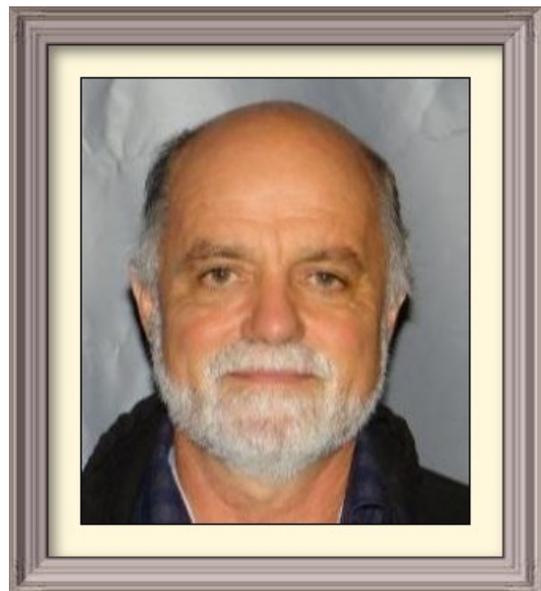
Also, in this newsletter, a thumbs up to OceanaGold Waihi for two years without a lost time injury – and how a MinEx member used one of our regular Safety Alerts to refocus on avoiding potential injuries at his site; that kind of response makes all our efforts worthwhile.

At our July Board meeting we welcomed two new members. Peter Walsh is the new chair of the Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) and Dean Torstonson is the new President of the Institute of Quarrying NZ (IOQNZ). They are both experienced industry operators who will bring welcome skills, knowledge and networks to MinEx.

Stay dust-free and safe



Wayne Scott
CEO
MinEx & AQA



New MinEx Board members Dean Torstonson and Peter Walsh

Accelerated silicosis – visits and register



WorkSafe is gearing up its response to the very real threats to worker health from the manufacturing of stone benchtops. By the end of this year it intends to visit every such workplace to ensure businesses are aware of the risks, are protecting their workers and identifying any necessary remedial actions. If you own or run such a factory, there is more information [here](#).

The visits follow the frightening statistics emerging in Queensland where when 800 workers engaged in making stone benchtops were tested and more than 1 in 10 of them had silicosis and one had already died at age 36.

WorkSafe's information will help inform us of the extent and likely exposure to accelerated silicosis in New Zealand. It is encouraging anyone with concerns about accelerated silicosis to visit its website and [record](#) their details so information can be shared.

Name (required)
<input type="text"/>
Email address: (required)
<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to WorkSafe holding my contact details for the purpose of contacting me with further updates about what I can do about accelerated silicosis.
<input type="button" value="SUBMIT"/>

I wholly support WorkSafe strongly advising anyone involved in cutting, grinding or polishing engineered stone to take all possible steps to avoid exposure to dust generated through these processes.

Lowering the WES not the answer



As concerned as I am about silicosis across the wider extractives sector, I do not support WorkSafe's efforts to lower the New Zealand worker exposure standard of respirable crystalline silica to $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ from the current $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.

While WorkSafe has considered selected research from around the world, there is as much research concluding if silica exposures are maintained at or below $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$, the risk of developing silicosis or other fibrotic lung pathologies should be negligible or non-existent.

The European Union, for instance, is sticking with $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.

Imposing $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ would add significant cost to the extractives sector and this is not warranted given the uncertainty about the improvement in health and safety that such a change would make. Currently you can't measure RCS accurately below $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$. The 'reasonably practicable' test within the HSAW Act could mean sites may not be required to complete such 'improvements'.

MinEx does not believe, given the weight of evidence, that the current exposure limit of $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ needs to change. We believe that time would be better spent focusing on localised and industry compliance with the current level instead of lowering the level for all.

Learning from others

Our weekly Safety Alerts may appear to some as a roll call of awful accidents, but the real purpose is to provide you with information that may avoid a further injury or fatality.

So, we were pleased to receive the email below following a June Safety Alert. This detailed a Southland engineering company and a builder both fined substantially after failing to consult on health and safety for a milking shed project, which saw two workers seriously injured when a beam collapsed.



Rupert Bunny from Prenters quarry and concrete plant in Dannevirke said the Safety Alert had caught his company's attention and became one of their regular weekly toolbox talks and a monthly Health and Safety Meeting topic.

"Suspended loads are common in our industry due to loaded conveyors and general engineering jobs.

These talks were well received by our staff and the topic of damage to the personnel involved and the company's finances were roundly discussed. We wish the two victims a speedy recovery and hope that the two companies have reviewed their communication and Risk Assessment practices. This alert and the discussion around it prompted us to do an extra thorough Job Safety & Environment Assessment around some work at height we conducted over the recent weeks, using an outside contractor. I think the contractor appreciated the level of assistance with the H+S aspect of the job and it probably made all staff onsite more conscious of the safety aspects often overlooked such as public ingress and staff / site interaction. I'm sure it produced a safer workspace on the day. The job went well and we now have a much safer work platform to operate on, when performing a rare but previously riskier 'work at height' maintenance job.

Thanks to all those who send in the reports as they are a good learning tool."

Team effort at Waihi recognised

OceanaGold's Waihi site passed a big milestone in June; two years without a lost time injury. Big ups to OceanaGold at Waihi – not just for its determination to achieve the LTI result but for the way it marks such outcomes.

The company sees a safe environment allowing it to attract and retain a quality workforce and enhance their reputation in the wider community. Regular employee surveys reveal a large majority are satisfied with health and safety conditions in the workplace, health and safety training, and the ability to influence health and safety practices. Staff can observe good behaviour and acknowledge it.



The site's weekly Goings On newsletter includes regular observations and encouragement on the health and safety front.

Moreover, when the two-year LTI achievement was reached, every member of the Waihi staff – and permanent contractors – were recognised by being made eligible to receive a gift, an engraved watch, Leatherman or silver

bangle - Nice.

Need a certificate from QuarryNZ for your CPD

If you need proof of your CPD hours from a past QuarryNZ Conference, MinEX can help you out.

We can send you an attendance certificate from QuarryNZ Conference 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

If you would like a copy of your certificate emailed to you, contact us at office@minex.org.nz



MinEx 2019 workshops

Next up - back to Invercargill - for two workshops on August 20 and 21.

These workshops are run in two half day sessions (on the same day) - so you can gain two lots of 4 hours of CPD in one day.

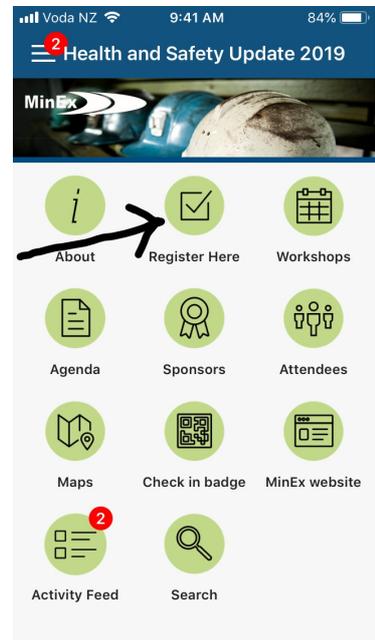
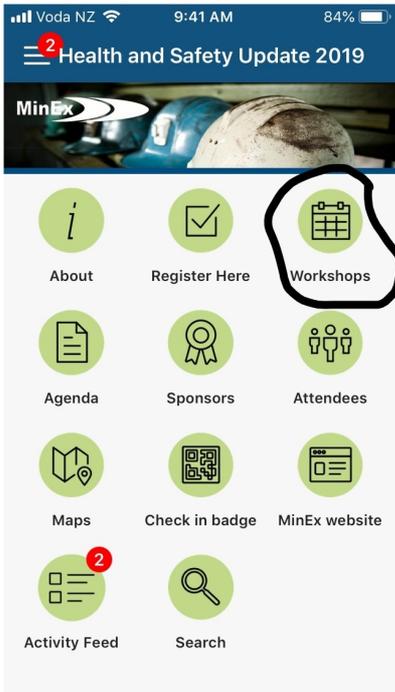
The focus is on Operating and Safety systems, Emergency Management, Leadership and Legislation - and we would like to acknowledge WorkSafe and Brofil for their support.

The cost to attend is a modest \$100 + GST and you MUST register beforehand. Register through the app (details below, or contact us at MinEx).

Invercargill - August 20 & 21
Greymouth - Sept 19
North Canterbury - Sept 25

Ngaruawahia - Oct 16
Taumarunui - Oct 17
Whakatane - Nov 7

To register download the MinEx app on your Apple or Android phone (see links below) and click *Register Here*.



To find a date for a workshop (without registering), download the app and click on *Workshops*

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With a huge thanks to our 2019 workshop sponsors

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