



Welcome to the February edition of Train Brain

We kick off another year in earnest next week with the first two of our 16 regional workshops for 2024. I look forward to seeing you if you are attending the Blenheim workshop next Monday February 12 and in Nelson the following day. (See story for details on what we will cover and registration.)

I also hope to see some of you at our second [Komatsu New Zealand Women in Extractives lunch](#), being held in Hamilton on March 20. Registration and entry details in this Train Brain.

Avoiding the risk of exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica which can cause silicosis has long been a topic at our workshops and across our work at MinEx and will continue to be so. We regularly point to the 16-page booklet MinEx put together several years ago on [Managing worker exposure to dust in mines and quarries](#). It includes advice on how to develop a silica dust management plan.

You will be aware the impacts of silicosis on workers in Australia's manufactured stone industry, later this year we will see the Federal Government banning such manufacture. MinEx supports that ban and asks if Australia feels RCS can't safely be managed in such factories, can NZ manufactured stone operations really do so?

Of course, enclosed factories where stone is routinely cut and polished can expose workers to much greater volumes of silica dust and risk than a quarry, tunnel or mine. That doesn't mean we can relax; far from it.

In early December I wrote to the new Ministers for Workplace Relations and Safety (Hon. Brook van Velden) and Health (Hon. Shane Reti) and outlined how all workers in our extractives sector are now required to have annual medicals which include lung function tests.

I advised them that the absence of a Silicosis Register in New Zealand such as Australia's, coupled with our lack of occupational physicians competent to detect silicosis from such medicals, is greatly concerning our MinEx Board.

The Ministers have now been alerted to how a similar lack of competent assessment of lung function tests in Australia led to inaction for a number of years. Until x-rays were analysed in the USA by competent physicians, the Australian extractives industry falsely believed there was no health issue with exposure to RCS in its mines, quarries and tunnels. I've told the Ministers this could certainly be the case in New Zealand.

MinEx wants to see a Silicosis Register established, similar to the Asbestos Register operated by WorkSafe. This should include a requirement for those analysing chest x-rays for silicosis to meet the US competency standards for such assessments. Another option may well be for lung function tests from the extractives sector to require a second review by an experienced physician in Australia or the US.

Whatever the solution, the horrendous toll caused by RCS in Australia's manufactured stone industry is a canary in the mine. Our industry needs to step up its awareness, processes, monitoring and avoidance of RCS.

More broadly, MinEx Chair Joe Edwards comments in this Train Brain on the stark and woeful record we have as a nation when it comes to worker health and safety stats. If you work in Australia, you have half the chance of dying on any job there than here; UK workers have four times fewer chances of workplace death than Kiwis.

Joe says with it now being 9 years since the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 was passed the courts are starting to impose big fines amid other measures – not that this should be anyone's motivation to get pro-active on keeping their workers safe.

So, it was great to be able to attend and speak at RedBull Powders Safety Start meeting in Waikato which kicked off the working year for its North Island staff. As I say in the story, you've got to use management guru Stephen Covey's principles about starting as you mean to go on – and having the end in mind – when it comes to ensuring your workers are safe.

This Train Brain also explores what changes in the vocational education landscape are going to mean for our sector. The effort to bring all the Polytechs under one umbrella – Te Pūkenga – has, as promised, started to fold down; more importantly for me is what will happen to our Workforce Development Council Hanga-Aro-Rau which has been doing a good job. That includes supporting our industry-led review of the six qualifications available to the sector and the unit standards that support them.

We can only hope that whether Hanga-Aro-Rau survives or is replaced, we have the resources to allow us to complete the review of qualifications.

Let's keep working and staying safe.



Wayne Scott
CEO MinEx and AQA

First workshops next week

The MinEx workshops for 2024 are about to get underway.

These start in Blenheim on Monday February 12 followed by one the following day Tuesday February 13 in Nelson. The third will be on Wednesday March 27 in Greymouth.

If you live in the top of South or West Coast, we recommend you [register now for one of these workshops](#).

Wayne Scott, MinEx CEO says the key focus this year is on health and safety performance in the extractives sector during the past year.

“We will be picking up the learning from reported incidents in our sector in 2023 and looking to apply that to the sites of those attending. We can all learn from what others have experienced and avoid their mistakes.”

“That can help quarry and mine operators having to deal with worker injuries and even deaths. If nothing else causes owners, directors and managers to want to avoid these, they should look at how WorkSafe and the courts are starting to ramp up action and fines for health and safety breaches.” (See further comment on this from MinEx Chair Joe Edwards in following story.)

The 2023 MinEx workshops will also cover:

- High reliability organisations and what makes them different
- Safe drilling & blasting
- WorkSafe update
- Decluttering/simplifying H&S systems

The workshops start at 8am and wrap up before 4pm and include lunch. The next group of the 16 regional workshops being held in 2024 will be updated shortly on the [MinEx website](#).



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

Employers - your chance to celebrate diversity



Straterra CEO Josie Vidal and Bridget Johnson from Okane Consultants at the Komatsu Women in Extractives awards.

An opportunity for employers to celebrate women and diversity in their workforce has its second outing next month.

The Komatsu Women in Extractives awards and lunch is being held at Hamilton Airport on Wednesday March 20. The event is hosted by Straterra, AQA and MinEx.

Straterra chief executive Josie Vidal says nominating people for any of the three awards and supporting attendance is a good way for employers to recognise 'some of their best and brightest.'

She says while women are highlighted by the event, it is also designed to capture the broader intention of an approach to diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

"It's a celebration of diversity and inclusion in the extractives sector. If you don't look like the cookie cutter, how is the workplace experience for you?"

"In an industry that potentially has to ramp up a bit and get more workers, there needs to be a feeling that all people are welcome."

This includes people who have disabilities or might be gender or neuro diverse.

Josie says younger people are looking for jobs that offer work/life balance and an industry which continues to expect long shifts could easily put them off.

"They also expect to be supported and made to feel welcome."

The Komatsu Women in Extractives event gives employers a chance to show staff how committed they were to accepting diversity and promoting inclusion.

The 90 people attending last year's inaugural event in Christchurch felt they were being acknowledged and appreciated, she says. Komatsu, Hanga-Aro-Rau and MITO are back again as sponsors.

Josie is encouraging all extractives sector employers to nominate staff for one or more of the three awards.

The Kristy Christensen Memorial Award seeks to recognise those – like the award's namesake – who make a valued contribution to diversity and inclusion in the industry. Kristy was a former MinEx board member and miner who advocated and worked for women to be better accepted in the sector.

There is also an Emerging Star Award and Leader of the Year Award. Nominations close on Wednesday February 21.

Josie says leadership is especially important in the health and safety space.

The keynote speaker at the Hamilton event is Lindy Nelson, who is chair of the Safer Farms organisation.

Josie says Hamilton Airport has been chosen as it makes it easier for those flying in to

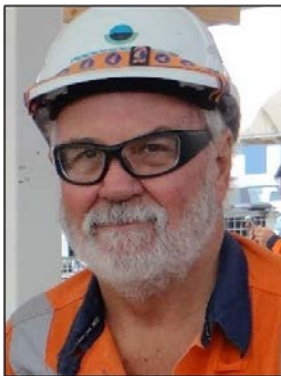
attend, though she advises booking flights as soon as possible.

Award entry forms and tickets for the event can be booked [here](#).



If you know of anyone who would like to receive the Train Brain email office@minex.org.nz and we'll help keep their training on track

Help stop our shameful toll on workers



Joe Edwards, MinEx Chair.

MinEx Chair Joe Edwards says a Kiwi worker continues to die on average every 5 days on the job and if lax employers aren't motivated by anything else, they need to take notice of what's emerging in the courts.

Joe, a tunnelling professional, says our workplace fatality rate is twice that of Australia and about four times that of Britain.

"Apart from the death toll, we generate nearly 200,000 ACC claims for workplace injury annually; all up the death and injury cost is \$4.4 billion a year."

These figures do not include non-injury conditions affecting worker health.

"This has been starkly demonstrated in Australia with multiple workers developing silicosis from the now banned manufacture of engineered stone surfaces. MinEx supports that ban. We've written to the new Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety Brooke van Velden, asking to discuss our concerns for New Zealand workers at risk from accelerated silicosis."

Joe says the loss of 29 men at Pike River had much earlier caused the extractives sector to up its game on health and safety. "Not that we can rest on any laurels; there's a need for constant and chronic unease on every New Zealand worksite, every day, looking for potential risks to workers."

He says nine years after the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 the regulators and the courts are no longer allowing time to bed in new training and safety regimes.

WorkSafe sometimes allows businesses who've breached the law to opt for enforceable undertakings, which Joe says is a good tool as these can provide ways for others to learn how to avoid similar mistakes.

"However, in the year to October last year, WorkSafe took 28 prosecutions against people conducting a business or undertaking which it considered had failed to ensure the health and safety of workers."

Over half those charged faced initial fines of \$400,000 and more, and as high as \$750,000 for work accidents involving serious injury or death. These fines do not include reparation imposed by the courts or previously paid.

Courts often discount fines for guilty pleas and other mitigations but the costs imposed can still reach \$500,000. Fines up to \$3M are also provided for the legislation for reckless disregard as well as the capacity to jail individuals, business owners, managers or directors who deliberately ignored health and safety requirements which resulted in deaths and injuries.

"Avoiding a worker's death or serious injury should be motivation enough to do the right thing, but fines and potential jail time reinforce the need for us all to take these responsibilities deadly seriously."

"Unfortunately, some employers continue to regard health and safety as an imposition on their business. Too often we hear the lament after accidents that the worker should have done something different to avoid whatever caused his or her injuries, or that sh*t just happens."

“Yes, workers do have their own responsibilities – and sometimes do daft things – but this doesn’t negate the requirement on businesses to do all they can to fully train people, have proper risk mitigation procedures firmly in place and take all practicable steps to prevent injury to workers.”

WorkSafe and the courts will rightly not accept that an employer can simply rely on procedures telling workers to take care, says Joe.

“A safe workplace culture is led from the top. Leaders need to be onsite regularly, wearing chronic unease on top of any PPE and pro-actively ensuring that sh*t does not happen. Good leaders also ensure workers are engaged throughout the health and safety processes on site.”

- *MinEx starts its annual series of regional health and safety workshops shortly. See separate story in this Train Brain or head to the [MinEx website](#) for details.*

RedBull leads the charge



As its employees returned to work after the holiday break, RedBull Powder Company put safety at the forefront of its priorities by hosting its annual Safety Start meetings.

RedBull’s Health and Safety, Environment & Quality Manager André Nair, says the meetings – held at both the Waikato and Macraes Otago branches, aim to reinforce a culture of safety and well-being among staff.



The Auckland meeting began with a welcome from André Nair.

Tristen Bradley (RedBull Operations Manager) told the Auckland meeting that safety was not just a priority at RedBull. “It’s a core RedBull value and part of our DNA. Our annual Safety Start Meeting sets the tone for the year ahead, ensuring that everyone understands the importance of maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.”

The Auckland meeting featured interactive sessions, including team activities and presentations from safety experts within the industry. This year MinEx CEO Wayne Scott was among those presenting. He used some of the materials he will use in this year’s MinEx workshop. (See separate story.)

Wayne says it is great to see a company starting the year with a total focus on the health and safety of its staff. “I’m a real believer in the principles that you start as you mean to go on, and begin with the end in mind.”

There were also presentations on from Senior Constable Allan Trow from the Police Commercial Vehicle Safety Team and Stuart Heslop, an Inspector with WorkSafe’s High Hazards Unit for Extractives.

RedBull employees had the opportunity to ask questions and participate in hands-on activities to reinforce key safety practices.

André Nair says ongoing education and training is critical for RedBull.

“Our goal is not only to comply with regulations but to go above and beyond in fostering a culture of safety. By providing continuous engagement, training, and resources, we empower our employees to take an active role in maintaining a safe workplace.”

The Safety Reset meeting for the South Island featured the same topics to those in the Safe Start meeting. The topics covered by MinEx and WorkSafe were conveyed by RedBull's HSEQ team lead by André Nair.



Wayne Scott addressing the Auckland RedBull Safety Start meeting.



RedBull's South Island team at their Safety Reset meeting.

State of play on review of extractives qualifications



Penny Simmonds, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills, Te Pūkenga.

With the change of Government and axing of Te Pūkenga, you might wonder what this all means for the long-awaited review of qualifications for the extractives sector.

In December, Tertiary Education and Skills Minister Penny Simmonds asked Te Pūkenga (the national Polytech established by the Labour government) to cease any activities inconsistent with the disestablishment National had pledged.

Te Pūkenga managers were told to focus on ensuring students, employers and staff were well supported through the next phase, with students able to continue their courses as normal as the disestablishment is implemented.

National has also pledged to end the Workforce Development Councils which include Hanga-Aro-Rau which represents the extractives sector, although these are funded until the end of this financial year on June 30.

MinEx CEO Wayne Scott says extractives industry representatives have been working with Hanga-Aro-Rau to review the six qualifications available to the sector. These are

qualifications in mining and quarrying covering Levels 2-5.

“They are not the Certificates of Competence (CoC) prescribed under H&S legislation, however the unit standards required for the CoCs come from these qualifications.”

The group has completed a full review of performance outcomes and the grouping of unit standards into smaller micro-credentials, these can be built upon by learners to obtain a CoC and/or ultimately the full qualification. These micro-credentials are currently with NZQA for approval and should be available for delivery later this year.

Wayne says the group is now embarking on a review of the content of all unit standards in each qualification. Similar unit standards have been grouped together for review and industry content experts will be sought to provide industry input into what should be covered in each unit standard. It is hoped this work will be largely completed by the time funding for Hanga-Aro-Rau ends in June.

“We want training providers to be able to respond with updated training material as soon as practicable after that.”

Wayne says the entire process has been industry driven with significant help from Hanga-Aro-Rau and MITO/Te Pūkenga. Representatives on the industry group have come from quarrying companies, IOQNZ, Mining Companies, Mines Rescue and various industry training organisations.

“We hope that whatever replaces our Workforce Development Council, if in fact that does happen, this industry-led work continues,” says Wayne.



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

ACT Safety Courses



View the list of extractive courses you can do through Act Safety [February 2024](#).

To view all Extractive Unit training dates visit the [ACT Safety website](#).

IOQNZ Webinars/Courses



The following is scheduled for IOQ NZ over the next few months:

Webinar Series: Safety Management Systems (Parts 1-4)

Dates: 19 March, 26 March, 4 April and 11 April 2024

Times: 8am – 10am per webinar

CPD Offered: 8 hours

Cost: \$100 Member; \$200 Non-Member

*****Must attend all four webinars to complete overall CPD requirements.**

Face to Face Course: Emergency Management – various locations

Invercargill – 15 April 2024

Ashburton – 17 April 2024

Palmerston North – 22 April 2024

Times: 8am – 4pm

CPD Offered: 8 hours

Cost: \$200 Member; \$400 Non-Member

Face to Face Course: Safety Management Systems – various locations

Invercargill – 16 April 2024

Ashburton – 18 April 2024

Palmerston North – 23 April 2024

Times: 8am – 4pm

CPD Offered: 8 hours

Cost: \$200 Member; \$400 Non-Member

For more information and to register – click here: [IOQ Courses and Webinars | IOQ NZ](#)

NZ Mines Rescue Services



The 2024 training schedules for Mines Rescue are ready for enrolments:

[2024 Specialist CoC Training Schedule](#)

[2024 B Grade CoC Training Schedule](#)

[2024 A Grade CoC Training Schedule](#)

For more information contact Colin McDonnell on 03 762 7828

MITO Courses



Visit the [MITO Te Pūkenga website](#) for details on qualifications and courses you can do.

Contact MITO Te Pūkenga on 0800 88 21 21 to enrol.

Tai Poutini Courses



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

Contact Nicole Scalmer on 03 769 9645 or nicoles@tpp.ac.nz

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