

10 September 2015

Message to members from Craig Smith, Independent Chair of HASANZ

**Celebrate success, keep focused on the goal.**

Hi

This is my first email to you following my appointment as Chair, and what a momentous time it is to write – a time to reflect on the serious challenges ahead of us and a time to celebrate.

Too many people are hurt, killed or get sick at work in New Zealand.

This is a difficult challenge but not an impossible one. Already, we are seeing reductions in the number of fatalities and injuries in some sectors. According to WorkSafe NZ data, Workplace fatalities in 2014 were under 50, serious harm notifications to WorkSafe NZ are trending down and ACC data is showing similar trends<sup>1</sup>. While this is promising, we can't know that these gains are sustainable. Let's celebrate our successes, but be realistic enough to know that there is still plenty to do.

HASANZ has a role to play in putting it right. Not on our own, but alongside workers, unions, business leaders and government agencies. Everyone has a part to play. Our part is to lift the quality of professional health and safety advice and make it more easily available to businesses, workers and industry bodies.

Achieve this and HASANZ can be a powerful influence on reducing the harm in New Zealand workplaces. The diverse range of organisations that are part of HASANZ gives us a massive reach into different sectors and workplaces and a real opportunity to improve health and safety performance. This is our reason for being.

This month HASANZ celebrates its first birthday. HASANZ was launched on 10 September 2014 with the aim of raising professional standards across the sector to provide healthier and safer workplaces for New Zealanders. Good progress has been made in its first year under the governance of Shenagh Gleisner and the Leadership Team made up of representatives from member associations. It is fantastic to see such a diverse range of organisations working together so well towards a set of common goals. Excellent work has been done on HASANZ's purpose and direction, and the focus now moves to strategy and the systems and processes needed to deliver that strategy so HASANZ can have a wider and sustainable impact on health and safety outcomes. Before Christmas we will start work on our five year strategy and I look forward to your input to that process.

Our immediate priorities are to ensure that we have sustainable funding for the future and that your association is ready for the register. Developing the technical software is the easy bit! There is also a need to prepare for the new legislation including making HASANZ submissions on draft regulations.

The Health and Safety at Work Act comes into force on 4 April 2016. Not everyone is happy with the final shape of the Act but there is a lot about this legislation that we can celebrate. Advances include due diligence duties of officers, a broader range of duties from design to delivery, the requirement for greater collaboration between those in control of workplaces, and strengthened penalties to

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<sup>1</sup> Source: WorkSafe NZ

keep people focused on how important workplace health and safety is. Unfortunately, some of the debate left an impression for some that the Act is about trivial matters. Health and safety is not a joke, and those of us who work in the field know the real cost of poor health and safety to the people around us. Never before has public awareness of the importance of shared responsibility for health and safety in the workplace been greater.

Again, let's celebrate what we have achieved but keep focused on the goal of ensuring that our colleagues, friends, family members and neighbours who go to work come home healthy and safe. There is a lot to do.

Craig Smith