

## **Deep dive into ergonomics takes out top national health and safety award**

**AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Wednesday 19 June 2024**

The deliberate use of a formalised ergonomics and human factors approach in the design of a new household food waste bin has won Auckland Council the overall honours at this year's New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards. The extensively trialled design has hugely reduced the risk of musculoskeletal harm for the rubbish collectors who pick up thousands of these bins around the city every day.

The awards were presented at a gala dinner at the Viaduct Events Centre in Auckland last night, attended by more than 700 people.

The awards, which began in 2005, are organised by Thomson Reuters, publisher of Safeguard magazine, and proudly supported by WorkSafe New Zealand and ACC.

Safeguard editor Peter Bateman, convenor of the five-person judging panel, said Auckland Council's commitment to take seriously the most common type of work injury – strains and sprains – and engage ergonomics researchers at AUT with the hard-earned wisdom of rubbish collectors themselves had produced an outstanding result.

“It's really pleasing to see a major player such as Auckland Council partnering with academic exponents and taking a fully researched, trialled and human-centred approach to design out problems before they arise. Strain and sprain injuries put thousands of people off work every year and can significantly reduce people's ability to keep working.”

The winners are:

### **The WorkSafe New Zealand/ACC best overall contribution to improving workplace health and safety in New Zealand**

**Auckland Council** (winner of the Innovation category)

#### **SAFETY** (sponsored by Dentons)

##### *Traffic Safe NZ*

Trialled and refined a robotic arm to place and retrieve road cones. Able to be mounted on any flatbed truck, it engineers out the key risk of having people standing on a platform on a moving truck while leaning out near passing vehicles.

#### **HEALTH** (sponsored by Southern Cross Healthcare)

##### *AW Fraser*

The company's critical risk mitigation plan for airborne contaminants scrapped its former compliance approach in favour of capturing substances at source, preventing accumulation, stopping uptake, and closely monitoring with early intervention.

**WELLBEING** (sponsored by Vitae)*Contact Energy*

In constructing the Tauhara geothermal power station the company adopted a successful strategy to build worker engagement and subcontractor coordination by focusing first on wellbeing, including on-site nurse and clinic, budgeting advice and pastoral care.

**ENGAGEMENT** (sponsored by NZ Safety Blackwoods)*Air New Zealand*

The Safety Scrum problem solving model uses HSRs to bring different work groups together to solve overlapping risks they have in common. Scrum topics have included winter de-icing, falling objects during cargo handling, and ground cabin temperatures.

**INNOVATION** (sponsored by Anthony Harper)*Auckland Council*

Before introducing a household food scraps bin the Council worked with AUT to use anthropometric data and 3D modelling to create a bin design which minimised the risk of rubbish collectors suffering musculoskeletal harm from each lifting 200,000 bins a year.

**SAFETY-II** (Sponsored by HSE Global)*EastPack*

Learning teams, HOP principles and the '4D' questions were deployed to understand safety issues where workers in trolleys operate alongside high-speed kiwifruit conveyors. The insights were used to redesign the trolleys and refine how work is performed.

**COLLABORATION** (Sponsored by IMPAC)*Marlborough Roads*

The ideal time for road network maintenance coincides with the grape harvest and many truck movements, with overturns and spills creating hazards. Intensive collaboration with wineries and trucking firms includes a new test standard for grape truck drivers.

**GOVERNANCE** (Sponsored by Simpson Grierson)*NZ Post*

Formation of Critical Risk Action Teams, each owned by an executive member, has boosted staff involvement in co-designing solutions, exposed more key decision makers to health & safety ideas, and established an influential network of safety 'allies'.

**LEADERSHIP** (Sponsored by ACC)*CHASNZ*

Developed a standard for health & safety assurance in the supply chain. Tackled musculoskeletal injuries with the Work Should Not Hurt programme. Is promoting safety by design and is working to develop evidence-based measures of safety performance.

**PRACTITIONER** (Sponsored by NZISM)

*Kurt Maxwell, Watercare*

An influencer of new thinking – human factors, HOP, Safety-II – extending to contractors, with a strong focus on critical risks and creating a safe space to report concerns.

**EMERGING PRACTITIONER** (Sponsored by edenfx HSE Recruitment)

*Kate Poole, NZTA Waka Kotahi*

A key relationship builder with safety and operational staff over more than 100 projects. Developed a risk assessment tool for frontline staff and improved assurance reporting.

**REPRESENTATIVE** (Sponsored by Vero Liability)

*Mathew Bennie, KiwiRail*

Issued a stop work on behalf of a night shift line upgrade crew. Challenged, he escalated to senior leadership and worked to demonstrate an unacceptable risk and a way forward.

**MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION** (Sponsored by Site Safe)

*Josh Darby, FENZ*

A firefighter, he leads the Whanaungatanga programme working with researchers to identify organisational factors to promote trust, connection, value and belonging.

**LEADER** (Sponsored by Business Leaders' Health & Safety Forum)

*Gavin Hudson, C3 Limited*

A transformative leader who has built a high trust model to collaborate with and inspire others to help develop new technologies and work methods to eliminate risks.

**JUDGES' COMMENDATION AWARD** (Sponsored by ecoPortal)

*Hato Hone St John*

Recognised that having multiple staff testifying in the Coronial Enquiry into the Christchurch mosque attacks was a potential source of psychological harm, so developed tailored support plans and other measures to help people get through the hearing and feel valued and able to return to work when ready.

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS** (Sponsored by Woolworths New Zealand)

*John Skudder*

For pioneering and championing new approaches, including e-learning, Safety-II, learning teams and wraparound wellbeing during his career at Norske Skog, ACC, Contact Energy, and Meridian Energy.

*Mike Massaar*

During his long career at the Department of Conservation, for being an early advocate of a detailed, formalised approach to critical risk and critical controls, for widely championing this approach, and for advocating for some difficult decisions flowing from it.



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