

## **Stadium project takes out national health and safety award**

**AUCKLAND, New Zealand, Wednesday 24 June 2026**

The successful completion of Christchurch's One New Zealand stadium, early and on budget and with no lost-time injuries, has seen BESIX Watpac take the supreme prize at this year's New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards.

Achieving zero injuries on a highly complex project involving almost 4000 workers was underpinned by innovation, including reducing work-at-height exposure by 90% by committing to assemble roof structures at ground level, and installing custom-designed trafficable safety nets to protect workers at a height of 63m.

Safeguard editor Peter Bateman, convenor of the five-person judging panel, said BESIX Watpac's willingness to seek innovative solutions to long-standing construction risks is an example of how companies implementing major projects have an opportunity to lead their sector to new levels of health & safety performance.

The awards were presented at a gala dinner at the Viaduct Events Centre in Auckland last night.

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

The winners are:

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

**BESIX Watpac** (winner of the Leadership category)

**SAFETY** (sponsored by Dentons)

*Lyttelton Port Company*

Drone technology was deployed across eight safety use cases, removing personnel from critical risks including working at height and near water. Three risks, including coal dozer rollovers, have been fully eliminated, with the programme continuing to expand.

**HEALTH** (sponsored by HSI Donesafe)

*Fonterra Project Awhero*

Clandeboye's coal-to-wood-pellet boiler conversion created serious airborne dust risks for workers and drivers. Risk was engineered out through an enclosed annex, remote truck tipping, and high-velocity dust capture, resulting in exposure far below regulatory limits.

**WELLBEING** (sponsored by Vitae)

*Manaaki Tāngata Victim Support*

Staff faced trauma, role confusion and excessive workloads, prompting high turnover. By refocusing on short-term victim support, redesigning roles and embedding psychological safety, turnover fell to under 16%, with most staff now accessing wellbeing support.

**ENGAGEMENT** (sponsored by HSE Global)*HEB Construction*

Replaced Stop Work Authority with Start Work Authority to verify critical controls before work begins. A pre-start app supported 4000 checks, catching 200 control failures early, resulting in 66% fewer mobile plant incidents and a 70% reduction in lifting incidents.

**INNOVATION** (sponsored by Anthony Harper)*Leading Safety*

Workers are rarely consulted on psychosocial risks. The Better Work by Design Card Sort Workshop Kit — a visual, multilingual, ISO 45003-aligned activity — results in stronger engagement, richer conversations, and employee-driven wellbeing improvements.

**SAFETY-II** (Sponsored by Learning Teams Inc)*HEB Construction*

Replaced H&S and HR investigations with a system combining Critical Control Management, ICAM investigations and a Responding Fairly framework using HOP principles — shifting focus from individual behaviour to control effectiveness.

**COLLABORATION** (Sponsored by Impac)*Fonterra Te Awamutu + KiwiRail*

A rail line through Fonterra's site was being used as a pedestrian shortcut, with 12 incursions in three months. Fonterra and KiwiRail responded with physical barriers and rail safety education at the local college, achieving zero incursions across all access points.

**GOVERNANCE** (Sponsored by Site Safe)*City Rail Link Ltd*

The Safety Stage Gate framework requires delivery teams to present safety evidence directly to officers at defined lifecycle points before progression is permitted, ensuring governance is an active control, with progression withheld where evidence is incomplete.

**LEADERSHIP** (Sponsored by ACC)*BESIX Watpac*

A stadium project spanned 2.39m work hours by 4000 workers facing risks from heights, falling objects, language barriers, and mental health pressure. Innovative assembly methods, safety nets and wellbeing programmes enabled on-budget delivery and no LTIs.

**PRACTITIONER** (Sponsored by NZISM)*Jessie Bourke, Nāti Growth*

Rolled out a single unified system for risk management across the \$270m iwi enterprise and secured NZQA level 3+4 H&S training for women across Tairāwhiti's forestry sector.

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

*Annalise Mulgrew, Downer*

Created a Lunch and Learn programme for critical risks now being adopted by H&S advisors across Downer. Selected for Downer's Thrive Women's Leadership Programme.

**REPRESENTATIVE** (Sponsored by Safeguard)

*Annette Tata, Enviro NZ*

Annette's curiosity mindset and approachability mean operators speak openly about pressures, workarounds and real-time decisions, inspiring broader engagement.

**MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION** (Sponsored by Thomson Reuters)

*Trina Cornelius, FMG*

Has helped build a shared language around mental health and a culture where talking about mental health is normalised, and has built wider wellbeing capability.

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

*Lindy Nelson, Safer Farms*

Key to securing ACC investment into a strategy to change farm safety culture. An influencer who is helping build a "by farmers, for farmers" culture.

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

*Chris Polaczuk*

As Programme Lead for CHASNZ's *Work Should Not Hurt* programme, Chris has engaged with thousands of construction workers to learn about their challenges and helped to establish and deliver a unique body of evidence-based work to prevent musculoskeletal injuries and allow construction workers to remain in the job they love.

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

*Mike O'Brien*

An activator and connector, as independent chair of HASANZ Mike seeks to lift health & safety capability and connect business to expertise. He promotes system leadership – GM Safety Forum, ShopCare, Safer Farms – and invests in NZ's safety technology sector, and through his FutureSafe work has mapped a viable future ecosystem for harm prevention.

ENDS

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