

Media Release

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NEW LAW CALLS FOR BETTER HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERSHIP

The new Health & Safety at Work Act raises expectations of better health and safety leadership by businesses and the health and safety professionals who advise them, according to Independent Chair of the Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) Craig Smith.

“This is a timely opportunity for both business managers and workplace health and safety professionals to step up. The health and safety of workers need to be at the top of every board’s agenda and it’s important that advisors can communicate effectively with the executive team,” says Smith.

“As well as being technical experts, health and safety professionals will increasingly be expected to facilitate conversations with senior leaders about their organisation’s health and safety requirements, adding value to businesses at a strategic level.

“Workplace health and safety professionals have a key role in helping directors and chief executives meet their due diligence duties by ensuring their company is delivering what it needs to, and that the right health and safety systems and processes are in place and working well in practice,” he said. “Often persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) think they know what’s happening on the ground, while the reality is very different. It’s the health and safety advisor’s job to help close that gap,” says Smith

HASANZ represents more than 4,000 workplace health and safety professionals through ten [member organisations](#), ranging from occupational health nurses and doctors through to specialists on hazardous substances management. It aims to reduce workplace injury or harm, both short and long-term, by raising professional standards and giving businesses access to quality advice.

Smith says that, in most cases, businesses will be able to comply with the new law by taking some simple steps like reviewing their health and safety practices and identifying the critical risks, alongside their workers.

“The law is introducing a new way of thinking about workplace health and safety – it starts with involving staff in the conversation,” he says. “Everybody shares responsibility.”

“However, sometimes businesses will need assistance in specialist areas and it’s important that they know where to go for help. HASANZ has produced a checklist of [five quick questions](#) to help them find competent, qualified workplace health and safety professionals,” he says.

HASANZ is also developing a national register of qualified workplace health and safety professionals which is due to be launched later this year. For more information, go to hasanz.org.nz.

Ends

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HASANZ'S FIVE QUICK QUESTIONS

- 1. Which professional association do you belong to – can you confirm this?**
- 2. What qualifications and/or certification do you have?**
- 3. What relevant skills and experience do you have for this job?**
- 4. Can you give me examples of similar work you have done recently?**
- 5. Are you happy for us to contact your clients about your work for them?**