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**Media release**

**SCHOLARSHIPS CREATED TO BOOST HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKFORCE**

An annual Scholarship Programme has been established by the Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) to build the capability and capacity of New Zealand's professional health and safety workforce.

The HASANZ Scholarship Programme was launched today by the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, the Hon. Iain Lees Galloway, at the opening of HASANZ's second conference at Te Papa in Wellington.

Demand for qualified health and safety advisers outstrips supply in many areas, and New Zealand's health and safety workforce is ageing – a HASANZ Survey in 2017\* indicated that more than 50% of workplace health and safety professionals are over 50 years old.

“The HASANZ Scholarship Programme will contribute to a pipeline of professionals coming through so that businesses have access to good health and safety advice to reduce workplace harm.”

The HASANZ Scholarship Programme is part of a raft of initiatives to develop New Zealand's health and safety workforce, led by HASANZ in collaboration with business and sector leaders, tertiary institutions, and government agencies.

“The launch of the HASANZ Register in July this year has highlighted capability gaps among our health and safety professions – something the Report of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety identified back in 2013,” said HASANZ Executive Director, Philip Aldridge. “For instance, there are just six qualified occupational hygienists currently practising in New Zealand – they assess and advise on workplace noise and air quality, among other things.

“In addition to closing the capability gap, we need to plan now for the changing nature of work and to create career pathways that encourage interest in health and safety as a rewarding career option,” said Aldridge. “Our immediate priority is to help current health and safety practitioners take their skills to the next level and to encourage post graduate study.”

Starting this year, HASANZ Scholarships will be awarded annually to people already working in health and safety who want to expand their skills by undertaking a higher-level qualification, and to graduates who want to pursue a career in health and safety.

Scholarships comprise a financial contribution towards full or part-time tertiary study – up to \$5000 per year for up to two years, as well as practical experience and mentoring.

The HASANZ Scholarship Programme is funded by a number of organisations that are committed to improving workplace health and safety. Inaugural sponsors include: Air New Zealand, Z Energy, Fonterra, KiwiRail, SafetyApp.Pro, Safe 365, Treescape and PwC New Zealand.

Applications for scholarships for study in early 2019 are open now and close on 26 October.

For application forms and more information, go to [www.hasanz.org.nz/page/scholarships](http://www.hasanz.org.nz/page/scholarships)

\* HASANZ Health and Safety Professionals Survey (2017), a joint venture with PwC New Zealand.

**Ends**

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