

SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

We invited five recipients of HASANZ's first study grant scholarships to tell us what they are studying and why.

LESLEY COUBROUGH, WELLINGTON HEALTH & SAFETY UNIT MANAGER, CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

I manage a team of inspectors monitoring aviation organisations' management of risk as required by the HSW Act. We also assess and investigate a variety of complaints, for example chemical spray drift from aircraft, as well as conduct and/or participate in accident investigations which can lead to prosecution under the act.



I'm a member of the CAA's Regulatory Safety Management System Panel, which identifies and assesses aviation risk in New Zealand, managing and coordinating initiatives to eliminate or mitigate safety risks across the aviation industry.

I started my aviation career as a commercial pilot and flight instructor. My time in flight instruction started my aviation health and safety career. Over time I moved into management, working in diverse, unusual and often challenging environments around the world. That broad exposure helped me develop my skills and a passion which has led me to work hard at building and maintaining my capability, proficiency and expertise in health and safety.

I find HSEQ an enormously rewarding profession. I am fortunate to be able to combine my decades-long interest in the engaging and dynamic environment that is aviation while also working to ensure people are cared for at work.

I'm studying towards the **Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice (OHS) through Otago Polytechnic**. I've completed a range of formal training over the 20 years of my career, but the desired levels of professional qualification in this ever-evolving field exceeds my current formal certifications. Experience can only take one so far without continuing professional development. I feel this course provides a relevant framework for me to study towards a recognised, professional qualification.

Studying while working full time is quite challenging. It requires commitment, discipline and a very understanding and supportive partner (who has sacrificed weekends and brought me copious cups of tea and meals while I largely ignore him!). It's a one-year commitment and a small but demanding sacrifice to make for a result I believe to be well worth the effort.

This graduate diploma will improve my professional credentials beyond my practical experience alone. It will enable me to meet the academic eligibility requirements for HASANZ registration and be regarded as a health and safety professional in New Zealand. For me, the best part about being in HSEQ management is having the ability to directly effect changes and practices that make a positive contribution to the quality of peoples' everyday working lives.



FIONA JONES, AUCKLAND HSE MANAGER, TOPCOAT SPECIALIST COATINGS

I joined Topcoat in January 2019, after working for Impac Services for about three years.

A few years ago, when my children were all old enough for school, I re-examined my career aspirations and made the conscious decision to pursue a professional career within health and safety. It's been an integral part of my process engineering background and is something I am deeply passionate about.

I'm studying for a **Master of Health in Workplace Health and Safety with Victoria University**. It's a three-year programme and I'm in the second half of my first year. I chose this course because it has been developed in alignment with the INSHPO Competency Framework, has input from WorkSafe and is the most up to date and applicable to working in New Zealand.

I'm fortunate to have a wonderful family, particularly my husband who has been amazing and at times almost a solo parent. Topcoat has also been supportive, allowing me study time to attend the Wellington based-block courses and complete my assignments.

As my study has progressed, I have been exposed to research and ideas that have challenged and expanded my understanding. Learning to think about safety culture and risk at a strategic level is already adding value to my organisation.

When I did my Bachelor's degree in engineering, there tended to be a right answer and a wrong answer. At Master's level it's a much deeper understanding of less tangible concepts.

My children are not that far away from the workforce. As a young engineer the situations I found myself in were sometimes terrifying. It's more luck than skill that I am still here. My daughter has already said she wants to be an electrical engineer.

When I'm not studying or working, I'm training for my black belt in taekwondo. This is a sport my whole family enjoys and training is a great opportunity to spend time together.

By gaining a qualification to complement my growing depth of experience in health and safety, I hope to be able to be an agent of meaningful change at a strategic level.



**SAM MCGEE, CHRISTCHURCH
OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENIST WITH CHEMSAFETY**

I do exposure monitoring and provide advice for a range of substances including noise, dusts (eg crystalline silica), solvents (eg methanol) and gases (eg carbon monoxide), conduct asbestos surveys and do independent clearance inspections after asbestos removal to ensure the work has been done correctly.

I enjoy having a role that is never the same one day to the next. With days spent in a freezing works, prison, airports and ships, you learn about industries you barely knew existed. Another benefit is knowing that, by helping identify and reduce workers' exposure to harmful substances that affect their health and quality of life, you're genuinely helping people in your everyday life.

I'm currently studying towards the **International Certificate in Occupational Hygiene (ICertOH), a qualification overseen by the British Occupational Hygiene Society**. The course involves taking at least 6 of the 7 possible modules offered by various providers around the world before completing a learning portfolio and oral assessment. The modules are on topics such as noise exposure, thermal environments and health effects of hazardous substances. The courses I have attended so far have been week-long blocks run by the New Zealand Occupational Hygiene Society. They have also been a good chance to get to know my fellow occupational hygienists and build professional relationships with others in the industry.

I've been lucky to be able to study while in my paid work. I have an employer who encourages professional development and who gives me the time to complete my study. Along with the week-long module nature of the work (allowing me to dedicate a full week to the course alone), this has made meeting the challenge of both study and work relatively seamless.

The qualification will help me progress in my career by rounding out my technical knowledge and providing a step on the way to be a professional (Chartered) hygienist via the BOHS.



**SIMON STRAESSLE, AUCKLAND
HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR WITH GOUGH GROUP**

I fell into my first H&S role when I moved from Auckland to work in Western Australia back in 2012. Before that I'd spent ten years as a sales rep in the roading and construction sectors. I've found an interesting similarity between working in H&S and sales. The challenge of selling good health and safety (ie: communicating a concept to others and getting them onboard) is like winning a cold call or securing a deal. It's about understanding the customer (or in this case our own people), their business or roles, their tasks and their working environments. And creating relationships through knowledge of product, integrity and trust to be able to influence people and leaders to make good decisions.

I find fascinating the psychology of people and the influence it has on their individual H&S identification and decision making. I live with an old workplace injury, so I understand the effect it has on a person and their family.

I'm completing the **Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice (Occupational Health and Safety) via correspondence through Otago Polytechnic**. Having a young family and being a bit out of practice when it comes to study, I found prioritising my time between work, home and study a little challenging. However, through my learning I've put an action plan in place to keep me on track with project work. The Gough Group supports personal development and further education, which enables me to put into practice what I am learning as I progress through my course.

Undertaking a formal tertiary qualification and having HASANZ mentor support is giving me the confidence I need to understand my current role, my abilities and strengths, and the areas in which I need to grow as a health and safety generalist. It's helping to strengthen my leadership, to influence employees and managers, to support improvements across industry and to network with other professionals through conferences and H&S associations.

Completing this scholarship is providing me with the motivation I needed to focus my career and take the next step to continue further education to gain industry exposure.

INCOME AND CAREER

SARAH VOULLAIRE, TARANAKI OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSE WITH WORKING FOR HEALTH LTD

I am completing the **Post Graduate Certificate in Health Science endorsed in Occupational Health at Otago University**, and plan to complete the Post Graduate Diploma in 2021.

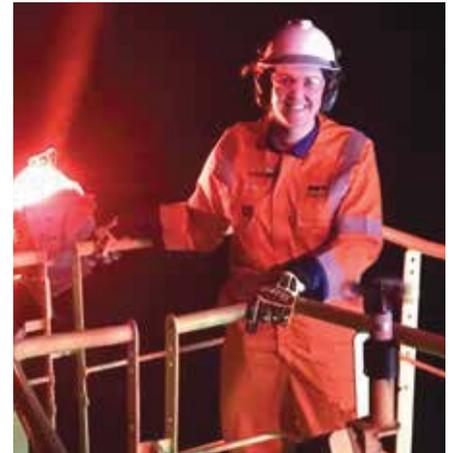
I've been a Registered Nurse working in H&S for 10 years and I'm on the HASANZ Register. No two days are ever the same. One day I might be doing a health risk assessment at a chicken farm, the next I might be offering vaccines against contagious diseases to sewerage workers. Regardless of the job, the principle is always the same: to improve and protect worker health. I get to help people understand their own health and educate them on how to preserve it through safe work practices, and it's always interesting to learn about other people's jobs.

It's important to me to maintain a healthy balance in my life, which at times is a real juggle! I have two gorgeous children Izzy

(6) and Max (4) who demand (and deserve) a lot of my time and commitment. I am the Taranaki president for NZOHNA and I work part-time. I didn't want to stretch myself too thin and compromise any of my existing commitments, so I chose to complete the papers part-time, which is working well so far, thanks to the constant support from my husband, Paul.

I have already learned so much from the first paper. I get a real boost out of learning something new and discovering a new resource or new contact that can help me be better at finding solutions for those I work with and for. I recently explored occupational stress. Learning about the complexities of stress models has helped me to understand that both individual and organisations can contribute its prevention and incidence. I didn't realise how many components played a part in the bigger picture of psychosocial risks; learning this information proves the power that engagement in the workplace can have.

I am happy being an OHN and I am



excited about NZ's direction in this industry. I hope to see more nurses join occupational health to help enable workers to go home well at the end of each day.

The picture is of me on a crane boom on an offshore installation collecting information for noise dosimetry and to assess worker exposure to volatile organic compounds.



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