



**Greg Dearsly** is the NZISM representative on the OHSIG conference committee, [ohsig.co.nz](http://ohsig.co.nz)

# A wider perspective

**GREG DEARSLY** on the need for national and international perspectives to implement the recommendations of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety.

Since the release last year of Working Safer, the Government's response to the report of the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety, there has been much discussion and opinion on how we move forward to improve New Zealand's poor health and safety performance.

Although there is no single critical factor that can account for New Zealand's high rate of serious injuries and fatalities, Taskforce chair Rob Jager called for "urgent, broad-based change", having identified a number of significant weaknesses across the full range of components in New Zealand's health and safety system.

So much information is available globally as to how to best implement a world class health and safety environment that it can be difficult to know where to start to build a framework within your workplace and to engage with your employers/employees. The 2014 Occupational Health and Safety Industry Group conference and exhibition World class Workplace – Achieving Excellence Together will be a multi-disciplinary, collaborative health and safety conference with a wealth of international and national experts.

NZISM supports this conference – running from 10 to 12 September – which will address the Taskforce recommendations across various disciplines and provide practical advice, knowledge and hands-on experience in order to move forward towards a safer workplace for all. We continue to believe that New Zealand needs strong leadership, with businesses, workers, unions, industry organisations and the Government all having vital and shared roles to play in achieving this vision.

The presenters featuring on the OHSIG 2014 programme will provide just that. Keynote

**We need to ensure that practitioners have worldwide credibility and industry standards, as would be expected of those working in other professions.**

speakers include Dr Robert Long, executive director of Human Dimensions in Australia; Dr Graham Lowe, president of the Graham Lowe Group in Canada; Dr Nick Kendal, a health services consultant based in Christchurch; Professor Stephen Bevan, director of the Centre for Workforce Effectiveness at The Work Foundation at Sussex University; Cristian Sylvestre, managing director of SafeStart; and Fiona Johnston, an expert in fatigue and shiftwork.

The conference will be opened by Worksafe CEO Gordon MacDonald, who will discuss how it is planned we make that broad-based change called for by the Taskforce. This will be followed by an overview given by Grant Nicholson and Greg Cain of Kensington Swan of the key events that led to the development of the proposed Health and Safety at Work Act, and the new duties faced by business, how to comply and the new enforcement regime.

Delegates will also hear from George Adams and Helen Kelly. George is chair of WorkSafe's Occupational Health Advisory Group and chair of the Forestry Safety Review panel, with many years of experience in various business leadership roles, most recently holding the role of CEO of Coca-Cola Amatil. Helen Kelly is president of the CTU and their spokesperson on economic development, employment law, climate change, social partnership and ACC.

These keynote addresses will be supported by over 30 peer-reviewed paper presentations, eight practical workshops, and more than 20 health and safety product/service providers.

This is an opportunity for those in the profession to come together, be inspired by national and international perspectives, and network with others interested in health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace and beyond.

The national and international input that the OHSIG conference is bringing together is important for the wider health and safety profession in New Zealand to maintain best practice across all aspects of our industry. NZISM will continue to help in leading the way forward in this, including promoting its internationally aligned professional membership accreditation pathway as an important part of the jigsaw. We need to ensure that practitioners have worldwide credibility and industry standards, as would be expected of those working in other professions. Looking both outside and within New Zealand will enable us to grow as a group, so it is important to take the opportunities that a conference like this provides in connecting with global experts passionate in seeking excellence while having the chance to network and build on our own strengths.

To implement the Taskforce's recommendations to the highest standards we need to use a combination of international and national perspectives, draw on the tried and tested, use our skills to adapt where necessary, be innovative as required, and ensure that our practices are world class. Bringing all these together will enable us rise to the challenge – businesses, workers, unions, industry organisations and the Government should expect no less of us!