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## Health and safety legislation boosts growth of profession

The capability of the health and safety profession has grown significantly in the last two years, says the NZ Institute of Safety Management (NZISM), shown by a 45 per cent leap in accreditation among its membership of health and safety professionals.

Highlighted in the week prior to World Safety Day, on Saturday 28th April, Greg Dearsly, National Manager of the NZISM, says the new health and safety legislation has put a spotlight on health and safety as a career option; and, on the second anniversary of the law, figures show growing enthusiasm for career development.

“There’s been a marked change in the way people consider health and safety, whether they are already in the profession or looking at it as a possibility,” he says. “We are getting increasing numbers of people in full time roles at larger companies, as well as operating as consultants. Levels of competency and capability have been raised and this is good news for the profession’s credibility and reputation.”

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 came into effect as a result of the Independent Taskforce Review of the New Zealand Health and Safety System following the Pike River tragedy in 2010. The law places greater focus on the protection of people wherever they work, and in whatever jobs, from manual to those more office based.

The growing importance placed on health and safety by organisations has been matched by the NZISM through the development of a more stringent accreditation programme to ensure increased capability is achieved and organisations receive the right advice.

“We have over 1,600 members across the country and our role is to consistently grow knowledge and skills, which is good for New Zealand 3.1 million strong working population,” Greg Dearsly says.

“It is important for organisations to be confident that their health and safety performance outcomes match or exceed those set by the Act, and they can access capable people to support them in doing this.

“Our programme focuses on raising the bar and developing a higher level of education. Organisations who employ members with this accreditation can have the confidence they have the correct knowledge to ensure the highest standards in looking after their staff.”

Mr Dearsly says the NZISM offers an internationally recognised accreditation programme that grades people at various levels dependent on their roles and the different stages of their career.

Individuals must achieve an NZQA Level 4 qualification including 60% Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) content as a minimum entry level to the programme. They must also have significant experience in delivering H&S programmes and processes to organisations. It also requires ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

The NZ Institute of Safety Management was created as an incorporated society in 1972 and represents the interests of Health and Safety Practitioners and Professionals who work in private or public sector organisations in a multitude of industries throughout New Zealand.

It also assists in determining standards for health and safety in New Zealand and consulting with the likes of the New Zealand Government via its association with the Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ).

NZISM has 12 branches across the country and its membership has grown by around 10 per cent in the last two years.

The annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April promotes the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on the magnitude of the problem and on how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help reduce the number of work-related deaths and injuries.

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For further information about the NZISM please visit: [www.nzism.org](http://www.nzism.org)

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