



June 2011

# The State of Workplace Health and Safety in New Zealand



This report is a snapshot of the state of workplace health and safety in New Zealand. For the first time, key health and safety statistics have been brought together in what will become an annual report.

Every year thousands of New Zealanders are killed or injured at work, or suffer from a work-related disease, resulting in huge personal, social and financial costs.

This report forms part of the Workplace Health and Safety Strategy for New Zealand and is one action of the National Action Agenda. It gives easier access to better quality information, supporting the establishment of clear priorities for reducing New Zealand's work toll and increasing health and safety performance.

Over time, this annual report will be used to monitor our progress towards the Workplace Health and Safety Strategy's vision of 'healthy people in safe and productive workplaces'.



# Key Messages



## Workplace Health and Safety Strategy vision:

# Healthy people in safe and productive workplaces

## The State of Workplace Health and Safety in June 2011

- › Fatality and injury rates are too high
- › Occupational disease and costs don't yet have reliable headline indicators
- › Industry and employee engagement is generally high
- › Government interventions need to be better targeted and monitored.

## 5 Monitored Outcome Areas

To reduce the toll of work-related injury and disease and to increase health and safety performance, focus needs to be on five areas:



## Data at a glance

- › New Zealand has about 470,000 workplaces and two million workers
- › The sectors with consistently high work tolls are: construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing
- › Occupational disease is estimated to lead to 700–1,000 fatalities and 17,000–20,000 new cases a year – asthma, skin diseases and asbestos-related cancer are big contributors
- › Annually, the work toll costs billions in suffering and premature death but the majority of this cost is absorbed by society
- › ACC pays out about half a billion dollars a year for work-related claims
- › Lost work days on ACC weekly compensation equate to about one day per worker per year
- › About 90% of medium and large businesses have health and safety systems but many small businesses have difficulty setting these up
- › About 9,600 workplace incidents are notified to the Department of Labour each year – about 1,200 result in compliance or enforcement action
- › Annually, there are about 750,000 visits to ACC and DoL websites and health and safety information services, and about 20,000 people make enquiries through the DoL contact centre
- › About 5,000 businesses are involved in ACC incentive programmes

## What we're doing

- › A National Action Agenda was launched in March 2011, setting national-level actions to help reduce the toll of work-related injury and disease
- › Action plans are being developed for five priority sectors (construction, agriculture, fishing, forestry and manufacturing) and for occupational health. The first plan, for the construction industry, was launched in May 2011
- › Focused harm reduction activity is targeting key causes of injury and disease, such as quad bikes, falls from height and carbon monoxide
- › The Department is supporting the Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum and their commitment to zero harm in the workplace
- › ACC is implementing experience rating, aimed at improving the safety of workplaces by providing incentives for employers to invest in health and safety

# Healthy People in Safe and Productive Workplaces

## Reduced Toll of Work-related Injury and Disease

## Improved Health and Safety Performance



needs improvement



measure developing...



measure developing...



strength



needs improvement

### Fewer Injuries and Fatalities

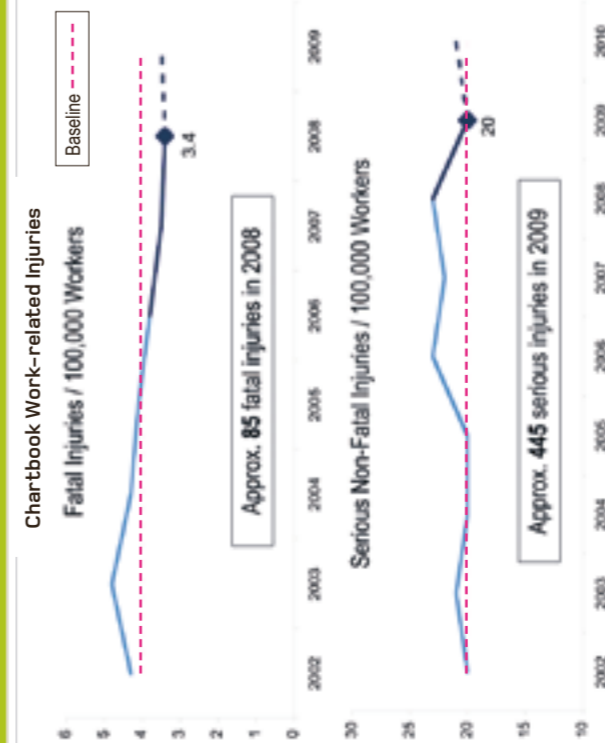
#### The situation

- Work-related fatality rates and injury claims are trending down, but serious non-fatal injury rates are static
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction and manufacturing have the highest injury and fatality rates and are priority sectors in the National Action Agenda
- NZ's rate of workplace deaths is slightly higher than other developed economies, but comparisons are unreliable

#### The outlook

- Estimated projections for 2009 (fatal) and 2010 (serious non-fatal) show no significant changes to trends
- Fatalities notified to the Department of Labour in 2010, including 29 at Pike River Mine, indicate a likely rise in official rates
- The National Action Agenda will focus on the priority sectors to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries

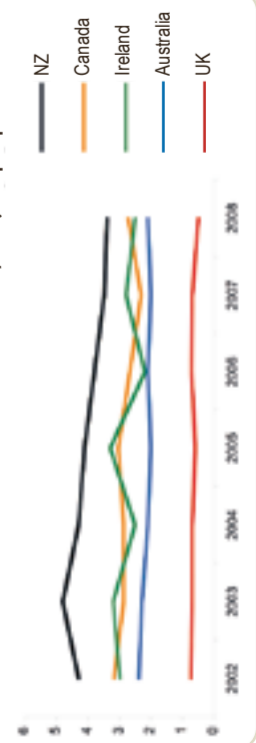
#### Headline Indicators



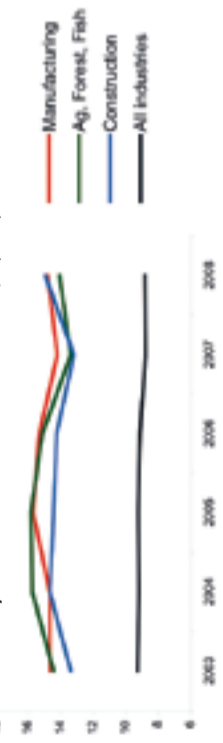
#### Contributing Indicators

ACC work-related injury claims (2008)  
 228,300 total claims 119/1,000 FTE – declined from 145 in 2002  
 33,800 entitlement claims 17.6/1,000 FTE – fluctuating, 18.5 in 2002  
 86 fatality claims 4.5/100,000 FTE – declined from 5.7 in 2002

#### International work-related fatalities / 100,000 people



#### Priority sector ACC entitlement claims / 1,000,000 hours worked



### Less Occupational Disease

#### The situation

- Asbestos related cancer, asthma, dermatitis and circulatory diseases are the most prevalent occupational diseases, with the highest toll
- Agencies do not yet have a comprehensive assessment of the impact of work-related disease
- Tracking is difficult, particularly for long-latency illnesses
- There is a strong tendency for occupational diseases to be under-reported
- Data on the impact of stress and fatigue are only beginning to be gathered

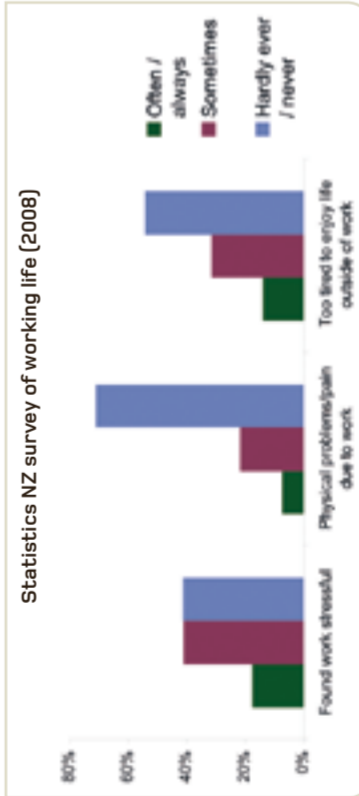
#### The outlook

- A model for surveillance of occupational cancer, respiratory diseases and dermatitis will be developed and piloted by December 2011

#### Headline Indicators

NHSHAC Burden of Occupational Disease (2004)  
 Estimated annual toll of work-related disease:  
 700-1,000 deaths  
 17,000-20,000 new cases

ACC claims for work-related disease  
 27,000 claims in 2008  
 Increased 26% from 2002



### Lower Economic Cost

#### The situation

- There is no single accepted way of estimating the full social and economic cost of work-related injury and disease, but it is estimated by the Department to be about \$16 billion
- Direct costs broadly include health and ACC costs, rehabilitation and lost productivity, indirect costs cover non-monetary impacts such as suffering and premature death
- ACC work-related claim costs have risen steadily despite fewer claims being made
- Measures of lost productivity (lost time and return to work rate) have worsened over time
- Priority sector industries make the largest contribution to the total cost burden

#### The outlook

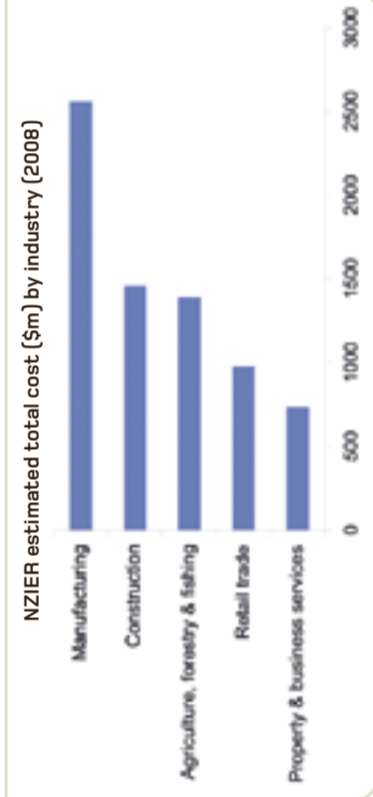
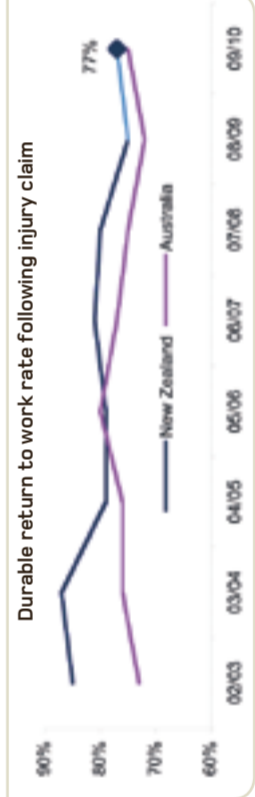
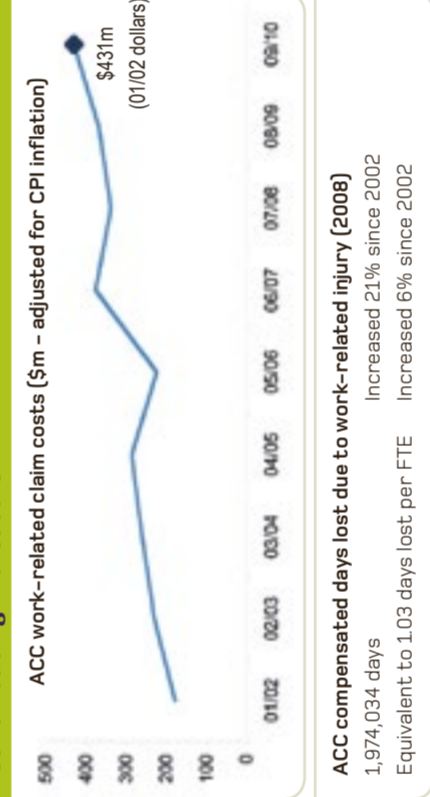
- By December 2011, agencies will work towards a single, more widely accepted estimate of total costs

#### Headline Indicators

Leading Estimates of the Annual Cost of the Work Toll

\$20.9b	\$15.6-16.6b	\$1.35b
NHSHAC (2006)	NZIER (2008)	NZIPS (2010)
\$4.9b – direct costs	\$1.2b – direct costs	\$990m – direct costs
\$16.9b – indirect costs	\$12.4b – indirect costs	\$358m – indirect costs
25% disease	\$2-3b – disease	No disease costs

#### Contributing Indicators



### Increased Response to Government Activity

#### The situation

- Response to the Department's enforcement and proactive engagement activities has decreased slightly in 2009/10
- Participation in ACC schemes designed to improve health and safety in the workplace is increasing
- High numbers of people continue to access health and safety information through online services

#### The outlook

- The Department will be better targeting its enforcement and proactive activity towards poorer performing workplaces and priority sectors
- Focused harm-reduction activity in key areas, such as quad bikes, is starting to produce positive results
- ACC will continue to target its priority sectors and will be introducing experience rating to provide further incentives for improving workplace safety

#### Headline Indicators

Response to DoL Activity  
 92% of workplaces address compliance/enforcement requirements within six months in 2009/10  
 Decreased from 94% in 2008/09

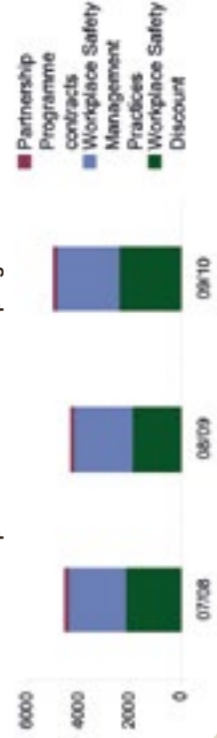
71% of health & safety service users made changes as a result of contact with DoL in 2008/09

#### Contributing Indicators

DoL Enforcement & Engagement Activity

2009/10	2008/09
109,78%	prosecutions – charges, % convicted 97, 84%
1,249	workplaces receiving compliance/enforcement requirement
5,504	investigations
9,685	incidents & complaints received
11,353	workplace assessments
8,259	forums & information visits
	6,540
	11,269
	10,937
	7,906

#### Participation in ACC incentive programmes



#### Accessing government information

	2009/10	2008/09
H&S enquiries made to DoL contact centre	19,905	37,712
H&S FAQs viewed on DoL website	123,471	83,123
Visits to DoL's H&S website	509,586	496,607
Page views to ACC's Preventing Injuries website	246,438	442,179
73% of DoL contact centre users satisfied with service received (2008/09)		

#### Government leading by example (2009)

42% (17) of central government agencies participated in ACC employer discount programmes  
 Increased from 29% in 2007

## ■ Abbreviations

ACC	Accident Compensation Corporation
DoL	Department of Labour
FTE	Full-time equivalent employee
H&S	Health and safety
IPRU	Injury Prevention Research Unit, University of Otago
NOHSAC	National Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee
NZIER	New Zealand Institute of Economic Research
NZIPS	New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
Statistics NZ	Statistics New Zealand

## ■ Supporting notes

Notes to support this report can be found at:  
[www.dol.govt.nz/whss/state-of-workplace/supporting-notes.asp](http://www.dol.govt.nz/whss/state-of-workplace/supporting-notes.asp)

## ■ Sources

Outcome	Indicator	Source
<b>Fewer Injuries and Fatalities</b>	Chartbook work-related fatal and serious non-fatal injury rates	<i>A Chartbook of the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy Serious Injury Outcome Indicators: 1994–2009</i> , Gulliver P, Cryer C, Davie G. OR089, Injury Prevention Research Unit (University of Otago) Wellington: NZIPS Secretariat, ACC
	Estimated projections of fatal and serious non-fatal injury (dotted lines on the graphs)	Data updates obtained from the IPRU, to estimate if there is any likely change in frequency/rate for the most recent year
	ACC work-related injury claims	<i>Injury Statistics – Work-related Claims</i> : Statistics NZ (various years)
	International work-related fatalities	Composite table of Chartbook fatal injury rate and <i>ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics</i> : International Labour Organisation
	Priority sector ACC entitlement claims	<i>Injury Statistics – Work-related Claims</i> , entitlement claims by industry: Statistics NZ (various years) <i>Household Labour Force Survey</i> , hours worked data supplied to the Department of Labour: Statistics NZ (various years)
<b>Less Occupational Disease</b>	NOHSAC burden of occupational disease	<i>The Burden of Occupational Disease and Injury in New Zealand</i> : Driscoll T, et al. (2004). NOHSAC Technical Report
	ACC claims for work-related disease	<i>Injury Statistics – Work-related Claims</i> : Statistics NZ (various years)
	Statistics NZ survey of working life	<i>Survey of Working Life</i> : Statistics NZ (2008)
<b>Lower economic cost</b>	Leading estimates of the annual cost of the work toll	<i>The Economic and Social Costs of Occupational Disease and Injury in New Zealand</i> : Access Economics (2006). NOHSAC Technical Report <i>Volume 1: Risk Landscape Workplace Health and Safety</i> : NZIER (2008). Report to the Department of Labour <i>New Zealand estimates of the total social and economic cost of "all injuries"</i> : O'Dea, D. and Wren, J. (2010). Technical report prepared for NZIPS evaluation
	ACC work-related claim costs	<i>Accident Compensation Corporation: Annual Report</i> (various years)
	ACC compensated days lost due to work-related injury	<i>ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics</i> : International Labour Organisation
	Durable return to work rate following injury claim	<i>Australia and New Zealand return to work monitor 2009/10</i> : Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (2010)
	NZIER estimated total cost by industry	<i>Volume 1: Risk Landscape Workplace Health and Safety</i> : NZIER (2008). Report to the Department of Labour
<b>Improved industry and employee engagement</b>	Statistics NZ surveys of health and safety management	<i>Business Operations Survey – Employment Practices module</i> : Statistics New Zealand (2009 & 2005) <i>Survey of Working Life</i> : Statistics NZ (2008)
	NZIPS safety culture survey	<i>The General Public's Attitudes and Beliefs towards Injury in New Zealand</i> : Research New Zealand (2009). NZIPS monitoring report
	Industry leadership	Department of Labour administrative data (various years)
	Health and safety representative training	Accident Compensation Corporation administrative data (various years)
	Statistics NZ business operations survey	<i>Business Operations Survey – Employment Practices module</i> : Statistics NZ (2006)
	Research NZ survey of health and safety in SMEs	<i>Small Business in New Zealand: Myths and realities</i> : Research New Zealand (2008)
<b>Increased response to government activity</b>	Response to DoL activity	Department of Labour administrative data (various years)
	DoL enforcement and engagement activity	Department of Labour administrative data (various years)
	Participation in ACC incentive programmes	Accident Compensation Corporation administrative data (various years)
	Accessing information	Department of Labour and Accident Compensation Corporation administrative data (various years)
	Government leading by example	Accident Compensation Corporation administrative data (various years)