



Top award for E tū Health and Safety Representative

Congratulations to E tū member and AA road safety officer, Brett Swanson!

Brett has won the Safeguard award for HSE Recruitment Health and Safety Representative of the Year at this year's New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards, held in Auckland in June.

The award recognises Brett's outstanding work at AA, including as a member of its national road service health and safety forum and on the regional Health and Safety Committee. Brett has also been a key player in a major project to re-assess all tasks for their hazards and risks, which resulted in many suggestions for improvement.

Brett says he is extremely honoured to win this award and his acceptance speech included a vital message for all workers, that "we must remember that health and safety is not about one person." He paid tribute to his co-workers and management, saying he and his managers don't always agree, but they take the time to listen and sort things out.



HSE award winner, Brett Swanson

He enjoys representing his colleagues but said they have to do their part as well and use the processes and procedures that have been developed so everyone on site is safe.

Training dates for E tū Health and Safety Representatives



Health and Safety Representatives meet for training at E tū in Wellington

E tū registered Health and Safety Representatives are eligible for E tū's health and safety organising course and provided your employer agrees, you will get paid time off to attend.

This is a great opportunity to get together with other reps and talk about your workplace; to learn more about organising for health and safety as well as health and safety laws and how they apply in your workplace.

This one day course is a good refresher for those with unit standard 29315 and a solid introduction for new Health and Safety Representatives.

If you're keen, phone Union Support for a registration form: ph. 0800 186 466. See below for upcoming courses.

13 July Auckland; 31 August Auckland; 12 September Palmerston North; 14 September Napier; 21 September Hamilton; 26 September Whangarei

2017 workplace deaths alarming

Despite the new workplace safety legislation introduced in the wake of Pike River, this year has seen an alarming number of workplace deaths.

To 7 June, 23 people have died with 4 additional fatalities since then.

In addition, up to 900 workers a year die from occupational diseases.

As E tū member and HSR award-winner, Brett Swanson says everyone has a role to play in staying safe at work. But as the following story makes clear, employers are not always playing their part.



Wellington Workers Memorial plaque: "Organise the Living. Honour the Dead".

Warning after worker's death

The death of a worker at Christchurch company, Sullivan Packaging has prompted a stern message from Worksafe that firms must identify and control risks that could kill or maim their workers.

Sullivan Packaging has been fined \$52,000 and ordered to pay reparations of \$20,000 after a worker doing maintenance work was trapped, unconscious in a machine after an unlocked metal plate collapsed on him.

The worker died the next day.

Worksafe's investigation found the company had a limited understanding of risk identification and management, and without an established safe work system, it relied on workers knowing what to do when operating or maintaining their equipment.

Worksafe also discovered two other faulty machines, one of which was involved in a serious incident in 2007.

Worksafe says this is unacceptable and we agree. It's worth quoting Worksafe on this tragic incident:

"...workers' health and safety must always come first. The key to keeping people safe at work is having a system in place to identify and manage a business's workplace risks. Once risks are identified, clearly identifying the relevant controls, such as defining standard operating procedures, and implementing them is critical."



Workers memorial, Christchurch: hardhats memorialise the 29 Pike River miners who died in this disaster.

Looking closer



In each issue of this newsletter we will focus on a key aspect of our health and safety legislation, which governs workplace safety.

This issue we take a close look at The Health and Safety at Work (Worker Engagement, Participation, and Representation) Regulations 2016.

These regulations govern the election of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), who is eligible to stand and to elect an HSR as well as the training requirements for issuing a PIN (provisional improvement notice).

Important fact: Just because you don't work for a worm farmer or have less than 20 workers on site, this doesn't mean you can't have a Health and Safety Representative at work.

E tū organises for HSRs to be elected regardless of numbers because this is vital for health and safety at work. This means as an E tū member you can stand for election as your workplace HSR provided your employer agrees. Your union works to make that happen.

The regulations state that if you work in food manufacturing; water supply, sewerage, and drainage services; with waste or in construction, you can ask your boss to organise an election regardless of the number of workers.

Where the boss doesn't agree, members can still act as HSRs, by knowing and enforcing safety standards, and showing the boss the value and support the HSRs have.

SafeRebuild Canterbury to close doors

After five successful years, the award-winning workplace safety organisation, SafeRebuild Canterbury will close its doors effective 31 August.

Established to improve safety for Canterbury rebuild workers, this project has been a unique partnership involving the Government, the Council of Trade Unions, E tū as the union for construction workers, and the Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce.

Jo Duffy, Team Leader of SafeRebuild Canterbury says Rebuild Canterbury made a real difference in helping change the culture of the residential building sector around health and safety practices.

"This collaborative process delivered great results which have not been replicated elsewhere," she says.

Highlights include:

- Winner of the 2014 Safeguard NZ Safety Best Initiative to encourage engagement in health and safety
- Finalist in the 2017 Safeguard Best Collaboration with PCBUs (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking), for its exciting and hugely successful Women in Construction events
- Over 1500 companies and 5000 individuals attended its Health and Safety Champions course
- Offered targeted courses and liaison with students, the Filipino/migrant community, and Maori and Pasifika workers and firms in the construction industry

At E tū, we are sad to see this project end, but we are proud to have been a part of this highly successful venture. As Jo says, everyone involved feels a real sense of accomplishment about what's been achieved.



Roofer, TJ Kereru-Daly addresses the Women in Construction forum, organised by SafeRebuild Canterbury.

Safety star rating initiative

A new toolkit called the Safety Star Rating is being developed to help prevent workplace injuries.

This is a joint initiative of WorkSafe, ACC and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), and should be available soon.

The aim is to provide a credible, nationally recognised definition of what good health and safety looks like – over and above compliance – and will provide businesses with advice and guidance on making workplaces safer.

The high cost of bullying

Australian researchers have identified the human cost of workplace bullying.

The research found workers suffering severe and frequent workplace bullying are at high risk of conditions including depression, anxiety, sleep problems, hypertension and migraines. It also causes high absentee rates.

Workers experiencing less severe and infrequent workplace bullying are also less engaged and more inclined to take days off work than their non-bullied counterparts.

CTU Injury Advocacy Service



Sometimes E tū members have accidents at work and then have difficulties with their ACC claims.

If you've had problems or don't understand the system, the CTU's Workplace Injury Advocacy Service may be able to help you.

This phone-based services works with your union organiser or delegate to solve problems with ACC.

If you need advice, talk to your organiser or call the WIAS free phone **0800 486 466**.

Red tape saves lives

Pressure from the EU has seen the UN adopt the Minamata Convention on Mercury – a global treaty to reduce exposure to mercury.

Employers complain about red tape, including in the EU, but rules make sense when the health of people and the environment is at stake.

The EU has one of the most ambitious policies for protection against mercury. However, 40 to 80 per cent of mercury deposited in Europe comes from mercury emissions in other parts of the world. So, globally everyone has a role to play in reducing these emissions.

