

Time to rebrand health and safety as ‘care for people’?

Fiona Ewing



Fiona Ewing with the Volcanic Plateau Logging crew

Change needed

The work that the Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC) has done to reduce deaths and injuries to forestry workers over the last four years has made me wonder if it's time for us to consider rebranding health and safety as 'care for people'.

Currently, health and safety doesn't have a very appealing brand. It's viewed as being about compliance, paperwork and ticking boxes. It's something you have to get out of the way before the real work can begin.

When we replace the words health and safety with 'care for people' it changes the way we think about this work. It becomes much more relevant and authentic. Doing things that show you care about your workers is actually a great way to prove to them that you are serious about protecting their health and safety. If they believe you really care, they are more likely to take health and safety seriously too.

For example, one of the facilitators of Safetree's *Growing our Safety Culture* programme recently came across sites where one man wasn't reading the information he was given, and another took his food away at lunchtime and ate on his own. The facilitator eventually found out that one of the men couldn't see well enough to read and the other was embarrassed to eat in front of others as he didn't have a full set of teeth.

These aren't the sorts of things you'd pick up through traditional health and safety risk management. But people not being able to see well, or not being able to eat properly and potentially becoming hungry and fatigued, can have a real impact on safety. In this instance, the facilitator spoke to the crew owners and a cataract operation was organised for one man and a visit to the dentist for the other. Looking after the wellbeing of these men helped them, and helped create a safer site.

That focus on care and wellbeing, as a way to further health and safety, will be reflected in FISC's work in 2020, particularly in three of our activities discussed below.

KYND health and wellbeing app

We have been running a pilot programme to see if the KYND mobile phone app could help individual workers improve their health, and help the industry identify key health risks that need to be managed.

The app was created by the KYND Wellness Group, set up by Dr Tom Mulholland, a medical doctor and former New Zealand Forest Service worker. It enables people to use their mobile phones to store and track their physical, mental and social health information. The app also provides advice on how to improve their health.

During Phase 1 of the pilot in 2018, nearly 800 people downloaded the app and entered their health information. As a result of the pilot, 226 workers were alerted that they had high or elevated blood pressure. Another 38 were alerted that they had pre-diabetes or diabetes, and 80 that they were at risk of depression. Follow-up emails were sent to 106 high-risk forestry workers to help them come up with a plan to improve their health and lower their risks.

KYND also provided anonymised data about common health risks in forestry. Top of the list were smoking, high blood pressure, fatigue, diabetes, high cholesterol, weight and depression. These are all health problems commonly seen in the general population. However, this was the first research that showed the extent to which they affect forestry workers. For the first time forestry companies had some evidence on which to base their wellbeing initiatives.

Phase II of the pilot began in 2019. It is being run in partnership with Rayonier Matariki Forests and has been supported by a grant from the Forest Growers Levy Trust. It involves 100 workers with 11 crews working for Rayonier Matariki in the Bay of Plenty. The Phase

II pilot will test the KYND apps' 'stickability' – whether workers keep using it and find it helpful. The app is also being modified to make it more forestry-specific, including adding new health measures relevant to forestry like hearing and vision testing.

This year we will publish the results of Phase II of the pilot and will also roll out the forestry-specific version of the app.

Toroawhi worker engagement champions

Worker involvement in decision-making is essential to promoting wellbeing and safety, but getting workers to speak up isn't always easy. 'Off-the-shelf' models for worker engagement can struggle to gain traction in industries like forestry that use lots of contractors, have remote worksites, and where frontline leaders don't always get much leadership and communication training. In addition, interactions on-site are limited to day-to-day contact between the contractor and company decision-makers, namely, the crew foreman or contractor and the company supervisor.

With that in mind, FISC and WorkSafe have partnered in a pilot, where FISC is engaging two champions (called Toroawhi) to do this work. Toroawhi means 'collectively we create the momentum for change' – a phrase that describes the role these champions will play. The role of the Toroawhi is to help increase activity around worker engagement, participation and representation (WEPR) in health and safety in forestry. They will advocate for greater worker involvement in health and safety decision-making, increase worker capability so they can play a more active role, and help embed worker involvement in everyday work practices.

Toroawhi won't be WorkSafe inspectors or union reps, so they won't have any regulatory powers or be on a membership drive. What they will do is build the skills of workers, so they have the confidence to speak up about, and influence, health and safety practices. They will support crew members to become advocates for worker involvement in health and safety. They will also influence businesses' practices around worker involvement in health and safety.

The pilot will run throughout this year, with ongoing evaluation to see if this approach has been successful and should be continued.

Expanding the focus of certification

Our worker and contractor certification schemes have been very successful. As at September 2019, we had 311 certified workers and 161 certified contractors. These certification schemes were recommendations of the 2014 Independent Forestry Safety Review, and they are seen as core foundations for creating a more professional industry.

Feedback from the industry is that certification has become a point of pride for both workers and crews. There has also been strong support for the schemes from forest owner/managers, with some giving priority to engaging certified crews and even providing financial support to help crews get certified.



Dr Tom Mulholland with Rayonier crew in 2018

With both schemes now a couple of years old we are reviewing them to look at how they can be improved, including how we can bring that concept of 'care for people' to the fore.

In partnership with FICA, we are also looking at adding new modules covering health, the environment and business capability. We've had requests from forest management companies to become certified. So, we are also looking at adapting the certification process to enable that, and to include a special module for forest management companies on contractor management.

Some of these new topics, like the environment and business capability, are not directly related to health and safety. But we know from experience that businesses that are well run have better health and safety outcomes. So, we want to support contractors and forest managers to boost their capabilities and thus their ability to care for their people.

Connect for success

We will be talking more about this work at our upcoming Safetree Conference in Wellington on 26 and 27 March 2020, which has the theme of *Connect for Success*. Our guest speakers include former New Zealander of the Year, Dr Lance O'Sullivan, who will talk about how smarter healthcare can help create a safer work environment in the bush. There will also be workshops on lifting capability, so attendees will come away with some new tools and skills to use.

Forestry is an important industry for New Zealand, contributing to our economy and the livelihood of many New Zealanders. The opportunity FISC will be chasing this year is to support the industry to demonstrate in practical ways that it also cares about the wellbeing of its people.

About FISC

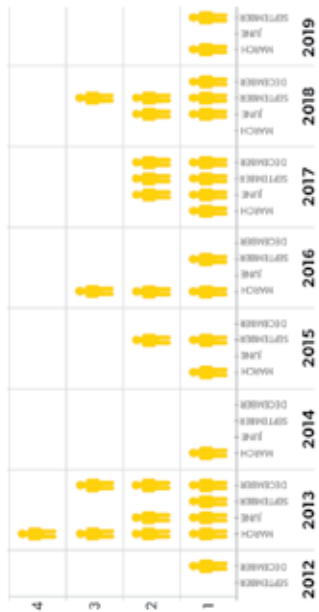
The Forest Industry Safety Council is made up of people representing forest owners, forest managers, contractors, farm foresters, ACC, WorkSafe New Zealand, the NZCTU, Māori and forestry workers. It has been given the responsibility of leading and coordinating harm reduction activities in forestry and also operates the safetree.nz website.

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HOW ARE WE TRACKING?

RESULTS TO END OF SEPTEMBER 2019

FATALITIES



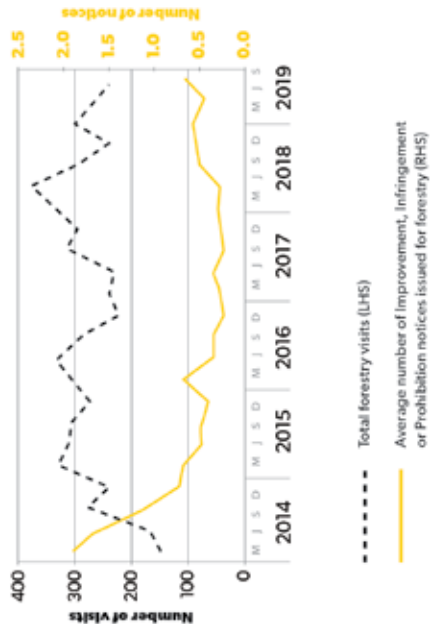
+ **2** fatalities in 2019

FISC ACTIVITY

- ↑ **161** certified contractors
- ↑ **2140** Safetree Facebook followers
- ↓ **3870** registered to get info from www.safetree.nz
- ↑ **377** worker competency certificates awarded
- ↑ **931** people involved in the **Growing our Safety Culture project**

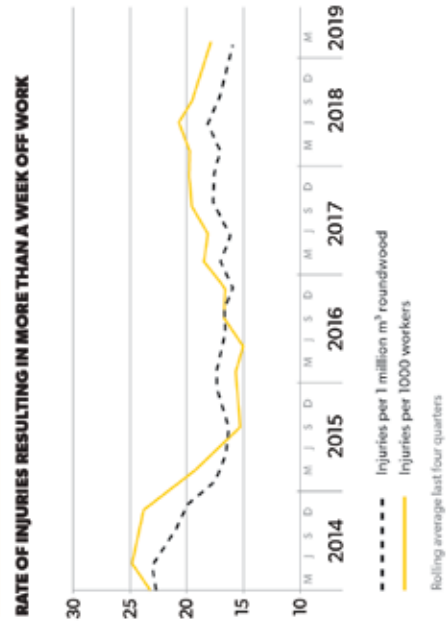
↑ Trend since previous quarter

WORKSAFE VISITS AND NOTICES



RESULTS TO END OF MARCH 2019

INJURIES TO WORKERS



TRENDS & ACTUAL INJURIES

33 injured in March 2019 quarter

145 injured in year to March 2019

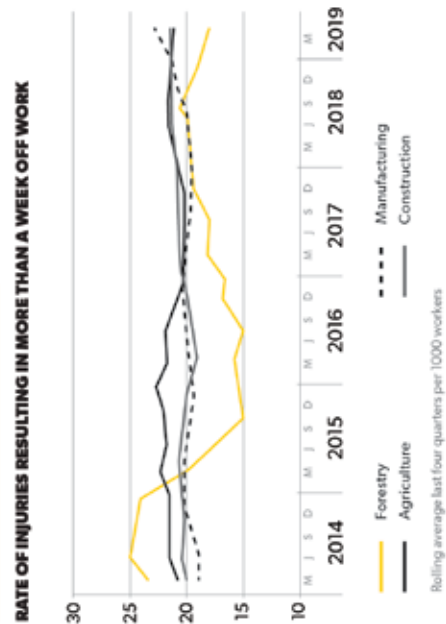
4.3% fall in injuries per 1000 FTE workers

2.0% fall per 1 million m³ roundwood production

9.4% fall in injuries per 1000 FTE workers

6.7% fall per 1 million m³ roundwood production

HOW DO WE COMPARE



Source: WorkSafe/MP/FISC. Injury data in this dashboard is based on ACC claims where someone receives a period of weekly compensation within a quarter. This data lags by 6 months due to claim processing time.