

aqa

THE AGGREGATE & QUARRY
ASSOCIATION OF NZ

Aggregate News

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Guidance and alignment

The dictionary definition of guidance (okay, Google's) is "the act of guiding, directing, or providing advice".

As a member of the AQA's Technical Committee we see our role as providing guidance to you, our members, to improve your technical knowledge and help you achieve best practice in complying with operational, environmental and regulatory requirements.

Much of our work goes on in the background but in this issue of Aggregate News our dedicated Technical Adviser Mike Chilton reports on a raft of new AQA Guidance Documents either in place (Liquid Limit and NZTA T10) or in draft (Lab Disagreement Process, Implementation of M04, Northland spec variation). (See page 6.)

Sometimes there can be multiple drafts, having to go back and forward with the NZTA and other parties and I take the opportunity to highlight the patient work that the AQA Technical Committee and Mike do on your behalf.

Similarly, our AQA Planning Committee plugs away at getting sound policies and providing advice to members and our Board on establishing, consenting and operating our quarries so we can produce the aggregates, limestone and other materials needed by our nation.

That work now includes oversight of the evolving system of waste facilities management across New Zealand which includes many quarry fill sites.

Planning Committee Chair Don Chittock has led this work on your behalf. He reports about a general thumbs up from the Ministry for the Environment about how quarry landfills are being operated. (See page 3.) There's also some advice about how to best improve your landfill site's management and keep abreast of levy increases.

Another service the AQA performs is running the MIMICO Environment & Community Award which is open to members. If your site is doing something positive for your local community or environment, please get an entry together. (See page 5.)



There's nothing complicated needed – just a signed cover page with some photos will suffice. The MIMICO award winner will of course be announced at the QuarryNZ conference in Invercargill in July.

Given Invercargill's relative distance for many of us, it is truly encouraging to hear Early Bird registrations are filling fast and there's hot competition for trade stands. There are also three different field trips available on the opening morning of conference, Wednesday July 22, before we crack into the array of speakers. It is all lining up to be a ripper conference.

I'm also proud to see in this Aggregate News the story about the iwi engagement put in place at Stevenson's Drury Quarry. My colleague Tara Edwards-Tusa, Stevenson's Kaiarahi (navigator) and Environmental Compliance Manager, explains how quarrying is a sensitive area in the te ao (world view) of Māori, given sites are often located on maunga (mountains) and in areas with archaeological significance. (See page 4.)

She says iwi are thinking more intentionally about who they want as their strategic partners and looking for businesses that align with their thinking and values.

This is not just a plug for Stevenson and Fulton Hogan. Our AQA Board has commissioned a series of articles on how various companies engage with iwi to underscore the importance we attach to achieving good and enduring partnerships.

Kia ora to that. **AQA**

Jayden Ellis
Chair, AQA

Field trips kick off Invercargill conference

With the three field trips at the start of QuarryNZ 2026, the conference organiser, Melissa Bahler, is urging likely attendees to get in and organise registration and also air travel if not driving to Invercargill.

Melissa says each of the three field trips start at 9am on the first day of conference, Wednesday July 22. There are visits to ISA (International Specialty Aggregates) and Oreti Aggregates; the AB Lime quarry, landfill and dairy farm; and to the New Vale Ohai lignite coal mine.

“These are offered as part of your registration and no additional cost but are limited to 100 people for each visit so it's first in, first served.”

Melissa notes that there are only limited flights to Invercargill but suggests other options might work.

“You are only a couple of hours drive away if you land in either Queenstown or Dunedin, so some might like to make conference part of a wee holiday in either of those destinations.”

Early Bird registrations for the July 22-24 conference opened in February and these are filling fast. Trade stands were being keenly sought including by a large contingent of Australian-based companies. Of the 120 inside stand sites, fewer than 25 were still available in late February.

Another new feature at the 2026 conference is the Youth Pathways Programme, supported by Komatsu New Zealand which is QuarryNZ's newest Platinum sponsor.

College pupils from Southland schools with an interest in quarrying as a possible career are being hosted for a couple of hours on the first day of conference.

Melissa says companies with apprenticeship programmes or youth recruitment schemes are being invited to meet the students and talk to them about career options. This will take place inside the ILT Stadium Southland in the exhibition area, so the pupils will also be able to view quarry machinery and technology on display.

The conference also again features a two-hour technical session on the first day prior to the AGMs of the AQA and IOQNZ; the first day concludes with pre-dinner drinks and the Terra Cat opening night dinner.

Thursday kicks off with welcomes from the AQA Chair and IOQNZ President. There's an update on the state of the economy and where it's going from Shamubeel Equab from the NZ Institute of Economic Research and lawyer Mary-Jane Thomas will run us through the twists and turns of employment law.

After lunch there's a health and safety focus including a



Charlene Donald at the 2019 Invercargill conference.

presentation from Charlene Donald from SLR Consulting. Charlene was formerly with WorkSafe and Winstone Aggregates and she'll outline how poor literacy and numeracy in our sector can impact on health and safety outcomes.

The day concludes with the Real Steel Hard Rock Happy Hour and usual free evening to catch up with mates.

Friday's programme begins with machinery and technical presentations before others with an environmental focus. One sure to attract keen interest is from Stevenson Aggregates on how it won its approval (with commendation) for its Sutton Block expansion at Drury quarry from a fast-track panel.

The conference concludes with the TDX /Volvo Awards Dinner. **AQA**



Wellington's Kiwi Point quarry is one of the country's controlled fill sites, mostly reprocessing asphalt and concrete for reuse.

Quarry fill sites mostly compliant with waste levies

Visits by Ministry for the Environment (MfE) compliance teams to waste facilities across New Zealand, including quarry fill sites, show most sites are generally doing well with waste levy requirements.

The visits also highlighted some practical opportunities to tidy up site systems and day-to-day operating practices.

Don Chittock, Quarries Environment and Sustainability Manager for Fulton Hogan, has been our industry's key lead in engaging with MfE over emerging changes to the Waste Levy system.

He says MfE's recent visits have mainly focused on education and support. Where changes have been needed, they've tended to be about aligning site systems and operating practices, rather than major non-compliances or wilful breaching of the rules.

Over the last five years the government has been expanding the Waste Levy and reporting requirements to not only apply to municipal landfills but include construction and demolition waste. The levy raises revenue for initiatives to reduce waste and encourage resource recovery, recognising that disposal imposes costs on our environment, society and economy.

MfE now has 759 registered waste facilities across NZ. Some 135 are Class 3/4 sites which are managed or controlled fill disposal facilities that can accept inert waste material from construction and demolition activities, earthworks or site remediation. There are also 178 Class 5 cleanfill facilities which can only accept virgin excavated natural material such as clay, soil or rock for disposal.

One of MfE's main messages is about how sites are registered and how materials are managed on site:

- Sites that accept both Class 3/4 and Class 5 material are expected to be registered as Class 3/4 sites.

- Sites should be very clear about the location of their recovery or recycling area, so there is no confusion between disposal and recovery activities.

Consistent with MfE's classification criteria, material accepted for Class 3 and 4 disposal is intended to be from construction and demolition activities. "That means it comes from dig out works, trenching or foundation works and inert hardfill from old foundations or inert material surplus from construction," says Don.

Class 5 material is not subject to any waste levy.

Class 3/4 material saw a waste levy fee increase from \$10 to \$15 per tonne from July 2025 but faces no increase this year. However, the Class 3/4 sites levy increases to \$20 per tonne from July 2027 and operators are encouraged to plan ahead and build this into pricing.

Don says it's best to make sure you are aware what levy payments apply at your gate and then factor these into your pricing and quoting for customers.

"Getting this right up front helps avoid compliance issues and supports a level playing field across the sector."

MfE's overall feedback is that quarry fill sites are generally on the right track.

"The message to quarry fill operators is to keep up the good work, continue to refine site systems and stay familiar with levy requirements and any upcoming changes."

For specific guidance tailored to your operation, or if you're unsure how the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 applies to your site, contact LevyAdmin@mfe.govt.nz or go to the MfE website. **AQA**

Moving at the speed of trust

“Iwi move at the speed of trust”.

It’s an expression Tara Edwards-Tusa has top-of-mind daily as Stevenson’s Kaiarahi (navigator) and Environmental Compliance Manager.

Yet, while building trust takes commitment and constancy, Tara says it need not take years.

“It’s surprising what you can achieve in a three-hour korero (conversation) working together around a whiteboard,” she says.

“People are engaged, involved, responding and creating together – all positive signs of a growing relationship.”

Tara’s high-touch whiteboard approach is useful in forging memoranda of understanding, or MOUs.

Traditionally, MOUs involved going backwards and forwards with documents and long email trails, with the risk of misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

With a whiteboard and coloured pens, Stevenson / iwi MOUs could well stand for ‘Meetings of Unity’.

Tara says this sort of relationship-based approach is second nature to Maori and is imbedded in the word ‘wananga’. Wananga translates as a forum for discussion involving open and deep deliberation, sharing experiences and creating new knowledge.

Or, in Tara’s shorthand: “Workshopping it”.

Tara understands the value in this approach from three perspectives: as a representative of Stevenson, as a Maori working with Maori and, thirdly, her own iwi, Opotiki-based Te Whakatohea having helped complete its Waitangi Tribunal settlement process in 2023.

“MOU were once mainly for single projects. They’re becoming more strategic and more long-term, often built on a cultural impact assessment of the impact on the whenua (land).”

Tara says this is a positive development for all parties.

“It reflects that iwi are thinking more intentionally about who they want as their strategic partners and I know they see Fulton Hogan and Stevenson as businesses that align with their thinking

and values.”

Tara says quarrying is a sensitive area in te ao (world view) of Maori – quarries often being on maunga (mountains) and in areas with archaeological significance.

Stevenson’s Drury Quarry is a case in point, with an historic pa site between the current quarry and the new Sutton Block that is of significance to mana whenua and protected.

Tara says the fact that many of the people in Stevenson and Fulton Hogan quarries are Maori aids understanding.

“For Maori there’s often a strong sense of legacy to our quarries which helps us all speak a similar language.”

In late 2025 Stevenson was granted consent for the Sutton Block, a 108ha quarry alongside Stevenson’s existing 63ha Drury Quarry. The Fast-track panel, which oversaw the consent, praised the quality of the submission including its iwi engagement. The new site will make available, on current projections, 50 years of aggregate or around 240 million tonnes.

Stevenson has also received consent for an 8.2MW solar farm at Drury Quarry to meet the electric crusher and conveyor system’s energy needs. Rock from the new Sutton Block will be conveyed to the existing front-of-house processing facilities at Drury, by electric conveyor.

Environmental steps behind the quarrying consent included 62ha of revegetation planting across the 515ha Drury site, and 108ha of pest and weed control. Riparian planting and wetland restoration is also proposed at Tūkau Quarry and at the Drury Islands in the Manukau Harbour. **AQA**



Tara Edwards-Tusa. Iwi are thinking more intentionally about who they want as their strategic partners.

The Aggregate & Quarry Association appreciates the support of our members



Time to get your **MIMICO** entry in

Entries for the 2026 MIMICO Environment & Community Award are now open and close late May.

The award celebrates how AQA members engage with their communities and help protect local environments.

It's a simple entry form – a single page with a few photos is sufficient, so long as it's signed by a quarry manager or CEO.

Here are some of the entries from last year and what they had achieved:

- As part of its commitment to its social licence within local communities, Hirock installed wheel washes at two Manawatu quarries.
- At Linton Quarry, a self-designed wheel wash uses on-site water, with the provision for recycling water if needed.
- At Te Matai Quarry, a commercial wheel wash uses recycled water treated through a filter system.
- In the small community of Otamarakau in Bay of Plenty, Cameron Quarry supports the local school with maintenance activities such as lawn mowing and the erection of shade sails over open areas. Cameron Quarry also constructed a BMX track for locals and contributes to the community through tree planting around the Waitahanui Stream wetland area. It is also the major sponsor of a large local fishing competition as part of their commitment to supporting the community they operate in.
- Fulton Hogan designed and installed a large roundabout at the entrance to their Roydon Quarry, removing a high crash intersection for Selwyn District Council. The roundabout limits the effect of trucks accelerating and merging into the flow of traffic. The roundabout includes pedestrian access to a walking track around the site and viewing platform of the site. Since the opening of the roundabout in late 2022 through to last year's entry, there were no serious accidents at the intersection which previously averaged 2-8 crashes per annum.
- One Winstone Aggregates entry recognises that the wellbeing of their employees extends beyond physical health. By prioritising mental health, it aims to create a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and understood. Winstone Transport's "Mack, the Hopeful Black Dog" truck (license plate HOPEFL) has been operating up and down New Zealand since 2019 with its bold message of hope displayed along the length of the truck and trailer.



Hirock is washing its wheels for its community.

Winstone Aggregates entry (about its Community Sponsorship Fund, supporting local projects that bring a community together or enhance their environment), was last year's MIMICO winner as has been previously reported.

Entries to the MIMICO award may be large or small, a one-off, an ongoing formal project or someone's idea that has been put into practice.

Judging criteria includes the degree of positive environmental and/or community impact, any contribution to reduced energy usage and/or carbon emissions, originality and innovation and the level of difficulty involved.

The 2026 winner will receive a \$3000 prize and will be announced at the QuarryNZ conference in Invercargill on Friday July 24.

All entries and supporting information must be received by Sunday 24th May 2026, emailed to office@aqa.org.nz. **AQA**



Mack the Hopeful Black Dog.

AQA Technical update

AQA Guidance Documents

- The AQA Guidance on Liquid Limit and NZTA T10 (aggregate performance method versus PSV testing) have been published on our website.
- The Lab Disagreement Process guide is in draft, finalised at the March Technical Committee meeting with a wish to get it published in the first quarter of 2026.
- The Technical Committee is also considering producing a short flyer on the RLT test given testing has become much more common and several quarries have struggled with their aggregate not testing as well as they had hoped. Expected Q2.
- The facts and figures for the AQA website will be updated with 2024 production data imminently. The data was officially released in December – without any kind of media announcement.
- CCNZ’s BPG05 (Aggregate Testing) document needs updating. We are working on this with Arne Corrie-Johnston, Technical Strategy & Engagement Manager at CCNZ.

M04 Basecourse

- Adding to RLT issues, there have been other issues with producers trying to comply with the M04:2024 specification, like wet/dry ratios and cone penetration limit.

- Guidance on implementation of M04 is necessary. We are producing the guidance document and suggested edits to M04 for NZTA.
- The preparation of a Northland spec variation is still ongoing. We have had some good back and forth with NZTA in Northland and the variation is in second draft form.

Other Council Aggregate Specs

- Tauranga City Council is addressing the misprints in their aggregate specifications after lobbying from local producers, labs and AQA.
- The amalgamation of Auckland Transport back into Auckland Council is likely to cause issues with some specs not aligned. Auckland-based Technical Committee members are helping keep an eye on implications for aggregate producers.

Inspiring Futures Foundation (IFF)

- The quarry products and testing training manual is complete and the related short videos are still under production.
- MITO has become a private training enterprise and IFF Trust Chair Sturrock Saunders resigned to rejoin MITO. Louise Sixton has replaced Sturrock as Trust Convenor. **AQA**

Mike Chilton,
AQA Technical Adviser

AQA works for the quarry industry – join us today
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AGGREGATE & QUARRY ASSOCIATION OF NZ
Supporting New Zealand from the ground up

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