



Aggregate News

AGGREGATE & QUARRY ASSOCIATION OF NZ

A standout in Southland

Wow. Take a bow Southland, conference organisers and our industry – for having nearly 800 tickets sold to QuarryNZ in Invercargill.

That almost matches last year's record tally in Hamilton. It proves that circulating our conference around those northern and southern centres with the capacity to host our growing numbers is a strategy that is paying off.

From our well-attended Aggregate and Quarry Association Annual General Meeting through to the Friday night awards dinner, the conference at ILT Stadium Southland was a standout success.

A later-than-usual conference means detailed reports await our next edition of Aggregate News, but some highlights included lots of really useful technical sessions. AQA Tech Adviser Mike Chilton's presentation led on the new M04 and M03 specs. In reviewing 20 quarries to test compliance in producing M04 Class 1, only three made the grade, with more to come in the pipeline. Clearly, we as an industry still have work to do; so do the councils which keep over-specifying materials for work that doesn't require it.

There was a big turnout for the Women in Quarrying session and later the Institute of Quarrying Australia's inspirational video on its "That's Solid" promotional campaign in Australia, which featured two women and two men. Messages in that for us all.

There was another good message on our opening night. Invercargill's Mayor Tom Campbell backed our industry and its importance.

Perhaps the most confronting presentation came from SLR Consulting's Charlene Donald. She outlined how half of working New Zealand adults have low literacy or numeracy or both. Given most office workers probably couldn't do their jobs without such basic skills, it's likely our industry may have even higher numbers. Clearly, we face a lot of challenges, not least in health and safety, which we need to address.

Land Information Minister Mike Butterick told us the Government is looking at a uniform permitted activity status for quarry resource consents and that the AQA's National Environment Standard for Quarrying was being evaluated by



Retiring AQA CEO Wayne Scott was astonished to be announced as an AQA Life Member from Chair Jayden Ellis.

Right: Wayne with the award.



officials. Later, Resources Minister Shane Jones, in another tub-thumping address, said quarrying would have such a document emerging from the RMA reforms.

These results for our sector are in a large part due to the advocacy of Wayne Scott. This was his last QuarryNZ as our Chief Executive. While he still has some months to go in that role while we try to find a suitable replacement, I used our AGM to thank him for his professionalism, dedication and unflappable manner as our CEO.

We awarded Wayne an AQA Life Membership and also similarly recognised the contribution of two of our former AQA Board members, Tony Hunter and Peter Walsh, who both retired last year.

As usual there were a host of other awards given out at the conference's concluding night to many worthy recipients. Our AQA-managed MIMICO Environment and Community Award winner went to KB Quarries for creating an enclosure at their Yaldhurst site for themselves and other Canterbury quarries to rehouse lizards.

We will have fuller coverage of QuarryNZ 2026 in the next Aggregate News but in the interim, thanks to our sponsors, trade exhibitors, delegates and partners on a great conference. Organisers of next year's conference in Wellington have a lot to match – or better.

Jayden Ellis
Chair, AQA. AQA

Fears for poorer health and safety from law changes

A late reprieve to the implementation date is the only upside to health and safety legislation changes. The extractive sector and many others submitted on the changes, saying they will not lift health and safety performance.

That's the view of Wayne Scott who, in his MinEx Chief Executive role, made a submission on the Government's changes to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) which has now become law.

He says the only real change to the draft bill is that as a result of last minute political manoeuvring, it will now come into effect in April next year rather than this November.

"We can only hope that whoever is in power after this year's election will see sense and listen to the submissions from us and many other organisations, including those representing employers, who said more harm will result if the legislation wasn't changed."

MinEx's submission says improvements in New Zealand's health and safety performance should be treated not as a compliance cost, but as an investment in workers, families, communities and businesses.

It also voiced concerns about the Bill's definition of "critical risk" as a hazard "likely" to result in death, a notifiable injury or incident or an occupational disease. It says the word 'likely' will cause substantial confusion, argument, and litigation.

"It will also give businesses the opportunity to consider that they do not have responsibilities under the HSWA because they don't consider that they have any critical risks."

Among the hazards that may not be considered critical are: cuts and bruises, musculoskeletal injuries, acute and gradual process injuries, psychosocial harm, driving (especially light fleet), and machinery hazards. "These collectively are responsible for most of the harm in workplaces."

"There is also a danger that the current wording of the Bill



Retiring Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden introduced the changes to the Health & Safety at Work Act that are causing so much concern.

encourages businesses to focus solely on identifying critical risks rather than controlling them effectively. Knowing your critical risks is not enough."

MinEx says the carve-out for businesses with 20 or fewer employees will be unworkable in complex workplaces – such as mines and quarries – where multiple small and large businesses and contractors work together.

Wayne says one welcome change was a clause added to clarify what happens when a "small PCBU [Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking]" (under 20 workers) collaborates with a larger organisation. Small businesses must now manage all risks when contracted by a larger enterprise.

"We support the greater use of Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs); however, resourcing will be critical to the delivery of ACOPs in a timely manner. MinEx, as the extractive sector's health and safety council, issues weekly safety alerts and develops industry resources and guidance.

"We have also developed codes of practice for the sector. While our sector is resourced for this, others may not be and WorkSafe is unlikely to be able to deliver ACOPs in a timely manner due to lack of resources."

The Bill was also silent on worker health. "MinEx has long been advocating for a silicosis registry, similar to the asbestos registry, so that we can determine the extent of silica exposure and develop strategies to reduce such exposures. This legislation does nothing to provide support."

MinEx's submission can be found here: <https://minex.org.nz/news/submissions-briefings/submissions/HSWA-Amendment-Bill.pdf>. **AQA**



Key messages for our industry

Some key new messages for the AQA have been approved by its Board.

Chair Jayden Ellis says it's important for the organisation and the quarrying industry to reflect up-to-date data and developments.

The first of the new key messages is: *New Zealand's aggregate and quarrying sector is now a \$1-billion-plus annual revenue earner.*

Official data show that total aggregate production for 2024 was 35.8 million tonnes. Total revenue generated increased healthily to a reported \$849 million.

"Given only 431 of the 1,000 commercial quarries reported, it's a fair extrapolation to say we are a \$1-billion-plus revenue earner."

This flows into a second key message which reflects the multiplier effect of our \$1 billion contribution to infrastructure: *That the foundational material quarries produce for roads, buildings and other uses is integral to a wider economic contribution to New Zealand of nearly \$3 billion per annum.*

When the previous Government was developing its National Policy Statement to protect highly productive lands, the AQA did some assessment of what quarrying contributed. That forms the basis of our third key new message: *Our sector's productivity as measured by output per worker and per hectare far exceeds that of agriculture, forestry and fishing by a wide margin and takes only a fraction of the land.*

The fourth key message reinforces the AQA's consistent statements about wanting no reduction in environmental requirements from any Government policy changes. Thus: *Quarrying is unequivocally one of the most heavily regulated sectors in New Zealand's primary industries and we do not seek any change to our environmental performance requirements.*

The final new key messages reflect some New Zealand and industry realities:

- *By international measures, we have high per-capita demand for aggregate because our small population requires roads to every corner amid challenging topography.*
- *Trucking aggregate any distance adds huge cost, and Kiwis*

need locally-sourced aggregate to be able to afford to build their roads and homes.

- *Our members will deliver aggregate very cost-effectively to their communities if sensible planning provides for local quarries.*

Jayden Ellis says quarries should use the new key messages in their communications with local councils, residents and political candidates.

The new key messages are picked up in the triennial briefing document again being provided to Members of Parliament and candidates in the upcoming General Election.

Candidates are encouraged to visit a quarry to better understand what they contribute. The briefing document also includes five recommendations for incoming MPs to pursue as part of any new Government.

These are:

- In consultation with the quarrying sector, implement a National Environment Standard for Quarrying to streamline resource consenting.
- Ensure resource management reforms, including the Fast-track Approvals Act, retain their emphasis on promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- Define a valuable wetland which deserves protection as one with more than 50 percent indigenous species, natural hydrology and covering more than 500 square metres.
- Establish a tripartite group of New Zealand Transport Agency, roading contractors and quarry sector representatives, to develop a matrix of fit-for-purpose road design matching requirements for road loading with locally available aggregates.
- Explicitly recognise quarry operations and aggregate supply within the Fuel Response Plan to ensure continuity of supply to infrastructure and roading projects. **AQA**

We need marine sand (as do the Brits)

The Aggregate and Quarry Association says it's important all potential sources of rock, sand and gravel remain available for extraction – including from the seabed – under strict environmental requirements.

In a submission to the Fast-track Expert Panel considering McCallum Bros Bream Bay sand extraction application, the AQA says marine-dredged sand and gravel resources have significant potential.

The submission says such materials are growing in importance as part of a portfolio of construction aggregate supply.

It notes that two long-term marine dredging operations extract a significant portion of Auckland's construction sand from the Taporapora sandbank in central Kaipara Harbour.

The city uses an estimated one million tonnes of sand a year, most of it going into concrete. Supplies also come via manufactured sand from a major Auckland quarry as well as river-based operations in Northland and Waikato.

The submission says suitable marine aggregate resources are not found everywhere. "Like land-based quarrying, marine aggregate and sand extraction must take place in the right places and under strict environmental regulation."

It says the National Infrastructure Plan, now adopted by the Government and the Opposition, means there will be increased demand for aggregate.

"It is therefore more vital than ever that local aggregate resources throughout the country are identified, protected and effectively managed to build resilient new infrastructure and homes."

Meanwhile, a recent article from the UK's Mineral Products Association says more than one billion tonnes of marine sand and gravel have been extracted from licensed areas in British waters since the 1950s.

Last year, 18.5 million tonnes of marine sand and gravel were extracted across seven licensed geographic regions around the coasts of England and Wales. Half of this was landed in London and the South-East. Wharves there received more than 17,000 tonnes a day in 2025, to help meet the capital's construction material demand. That is the equivalent of 24 dredger cargoes being delivered every single week of the year.

A single 5,000-tonne capacity dredger can carry the equivalent of 250 individual truck loads, allowing essential sand and gravel resources to be cost-effectively transported over long distances to supplement land-based resources. With many wharves also being either rail linked or having barge-loading facilities, processed marine sand and gravel can be distributed widely, reducing road miles, emissions and carbon.

Britain has historically exported about 20–30 percent of its marine aggregate production to northern France, Belgium, and



One of the many marine aggregate cargoes landed in London each year.

the Netherlands.

As in Britain, the ability to land large volumes of marine sand and gravel in coastal urban areas is crucial to meeting construction demand. The ongoing need for these materials, particularly in Belgium and the Netherlands, also reflects the fact that their own coastal waters do not include the coarse sands and gravels required to make concrete and concrete products.

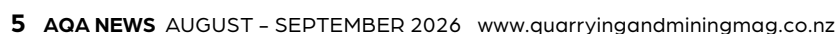
*Abridged material first published in the May issue of the UK's Quarry Management magazine. **AQA***

A photograph of three men in white hard hats and orange safety vests standing at a construction site. They are looking towards the right, where a large industrial structure, possibly a power plant or refinery, is visible in the background. The man in the center is gesturing with his hand while speaking. The man on the left has his hands on his hips. The man on the right is wearing glasses and a tie. The background shows a large industrial facility with various pipes and structures, set against a backdrop of mountains and trees.

AQA CEO Wayne Scott says the Government and Opposition responses to the Infrastructure Commission's National Infrastructure Plan are encouraging steps forward.

It reported that while New Zealand was one of the highest infrastructure spenders among developed nations, we rank towards the bottom for efficiency and for asset management. **AQA**

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AQA technical update

Technical Seminar – Napier

- The National Pavements Technical Group (NPTG) ran a technical seminar on 15 July in Napier on the introduction and outcomes of changes to the M03/M04 specs through 2024/25.
- This workshop was designed to be helpful and informative for quarries, road design engineers and council/NZTA clients.
- Feedback and learning outcomes were shared at the QuarryNZ Conference technical session.

M04 Producers

- Please email me your test results so I can publish your quarry class on the online quarry database: tech@aqa.org.nz. This is particularly important for owners of Class 1 quarries.
- We are getting lots of enquiries for quarry capabilities from pavement designers working on next season's renewals/replacements.
- M04 Northland specs are still in negotiation.
- There remains some appetite for a dense-graded basecourse for NZ. The NPTG is heading a working group to look at this. If you would like to be part of the study, please contact me.



The NPTG technical seminar in Napier.

Document Refresh

- BPG05 review is halfway through its AQA/Civil Contractors New Zealand industry review. It was expected to be ready to send out for comments in August.
- AQA will have its Lab Disagreement Protocol advisory sheet published shortly on the Technical section of the AQA website.

Inspiring Futures – Quarry Products and Testing

- Keep an eye on the AQA YouTube channel for the quarry products and testing videos, to be released shortly.
- A Quarry Products and Testing training day (pilot) will be held later this year in Hamilton, date to be confirmed. **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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<https://aqa.org.nz/our-members/>

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