



# Aggregate News

AGGREGATE & QUARRY ASSOCIATION OF NZ

## The walls are coming down

One of the tests of success for an industry organisation like ours is often not that easy to achieve or measure. I'm talking about getting results from a government.

For years, it's felt like we were banging our heads against a brick wall with successive administrations.

But as you read this edition of Aggregate News, you'll see three more areas where our work with ministers and officials is paying dividends.

One clear example is Vocational Education Minister Penny Simmonds's confirmation that industries like ours will lead in the work-based training we tend to favour.

We were hearing disturbing signals that Government officials were steering things to where they've always had control. Some blunt messaging to Simmonds and some of her more senior colleagues from the AQA and other organisations was that this would go down like a bucket of the proverbial. To their credit, they have listened.

Similarly, our industry's wish to play more of a role in developing Codes of Practice has been heeded in reforms of the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

We also applaud the Government's rapid-fire legislation to clarify that major projects can impact wildlife. A High Court decision put infrastructure projects at risk if wildlife were harmed, even though the Department of Conservation had approved this as a potential outcome.

No one sets out to harm fauna like kiwi – quite the opposite – but you can't have a project at risk of being halted because an unfortunate accidental animal death occurs.

Like most of you, I always enjoy profiles



of our industry pioneers, so it's a delight to read about Bob Pearson, who at 85 is likely our oldest holder of a CoC. Well done, Bob, on a lifetime in our sector.

Of course, we are just a few weeks away from our annual conference, which is a highlight for many of us in our working year. It's great to see a new initiative with MIMICO and J Swaps hosting a couple of busloads in Matamata on the opening morning. The first afternoon also includes a technical session, which I, for one, greatly value.

Our Hamilton conference also looks set to break some records, including there being a total of 125 exhibitors both inside

and outside the excellent Claudelands venue.

Space is so tight (and perhaps budget) that some Government departments missed out on getting a booth. We will offer the NZTA, and possibly others, the chance to be based at the AQA/MinEx stand.

That will give a chance to engage on issues like the new spec for M03, which comes out just before the conference. It's also a measurable signal of our improved relationship with the government and its officials, which is seeing the brick walls come down.

**Jayden Ellis, Chair, AQA**



The Real Steel crew will be ready to host their Hard Rock Happy Hour on the second night of conference.

# It's all go for QuarryNZ Conference 2025

QuarryNZ is set to be a jam-packed event in Hamilton this year, with an optional opening day visit added to the programme.

Matamata-based MIMICO and J Swap Contractors are offering to host delegates at their facilities on the morning of Wednesday, 9 July.

MIMICO's General Manager, Scott Turner, says the two companies saw an opportunity to provide a field trip to their adjoining sites.

"With the Claudelands venue being so close, just 45 minutes from Matamata, it made sense to offer something practical and relevant ahead of the main event," he says.

"We'll be showcasing our head office facilities, including parts, engineering and materials processing. We'll also have a product display set up featuring Metso, McCloskey, Superior and CASE equipment – all brands we sell and support across the quarrying industry in New Zealand."

Delegates can then enjoy morning tea in Pepper Street Kitchen, a modern, fully equipped café run by J Swap Contractors for staff and visitors. The café includes a display of quarrying equipment and looks out over the J Swap yard and workshops.

There is no charge for the visit, but

conference organiser Melissa Bahler says you need to book separately to your conference registration on the QuarryNZ website, and seats are limited. If you have any problems, give her a call on 027 664 3080.

Anyone attending the add-on Matamata visit will be back in time for the post-lunch AQA and IOQNZ AGMs, which traditionally open the conference, the first held in Hamilton since 2018.

A technical session follows these meetings. AQA Technical Adviser Mike Chilton says the M03 spec is due to be released by the conference. During the technical workshop, and throughout the conference, there will be opportunities to talk to a senior NZTA rep about that new spec and further feedback on M04.

The AQA is planning to host the NZTA rep at its booth, so look for him there.

There's then the Crushing and Mining Supplies Pre-Dinner Drinks at the Claudelands venue, followed by the Terra Cat Welcome Dinner.

Early Bird registrations closed at the end of May, and by early May, 70 percent

had already been taken. Only a single outdoor space was left for an exhibitor, with a record 125 booked either inside the Claudelands facility, or outside.

The conference's Thursday morning will include an outline of the just-released National Infrastructure Plan by Infrastructure Commission CEO Geoff Cooper. The afternoon will focus on H&S, with Business Leaders Health and Safety Forum CEO Francois Barton reviewing changes to work health and safety and WorkSafe's HHU Chief Inspector Paul Hunt giving his annual review.

The famous Real Steel Hard Rock Happy Hour concludes the day, with the evening free.

Friday 11 July sees an environmental and technology focus before lunch and a panel discussion by sector experts in the afternoon on the resource management reforms and what they will mean for the quarrying sector.

The Pirtek Pre-Dinner Drinks and TDX Ltd/Volvo AQA and IOQ Awards Dinner conclude the conference.

See you there! **AQA**

# Bob is still on the job

Bob Pearson is probably the oldest person working with an A-Grade Certificate of Competence. He's now contemplating full retirement – at 85!



Bob Pearson

Based in Winton, Southland, he's by no means working full-time but still has responsibilities for ensuring the health and safety at a few local operations. One is a rock quarry, the other alluvial river sites, with Bob doing random site visits as often as once a week.

Quarrying is in his veins. He grew up near the Port Tarakohe operation of Golden Bay Cement, where his father was a manager. “We used to swim off the Tarakohe wharf.”

After leaving Nelson College in the early 1960s, he completed science and pharmacy units at Canterbury and then Victoria University in Wellington.

"Then the job for Chief Chemist at Southland Cement was advertised. I thought, 'That sounds interesting.'

He got the job and was based at Orawia in Western Southland for some years.

"When it closed they transferred me to Westport."

After time working at the Cape Foulwind cement plant, it was bought by Milburn Cement. Bob returned south to manage the company's plant at Burnside in Dunedin. He also studied for his A-Grade CoC, which he's now held for around 30 years.

Around 2000, when already nudging retirement age, Bob was appointed manager of the Fernhill Limeworks near Winton.

"We diversified a bit," he recalls, which included him and his wife Lyn establishing Southland Serpentine.

They reached out to Duncan and Lachy McGregor of McGregor

Concrete, who became – and remain – fellow partners and directors.

After the Pike River disaster, it became mandatory to have A or B-grade CoCs supervise for health and safety.

"When the McGregors found they needed people with qualifications for their gravel operations, I came on board."

For the next five or six years, Bob found himself responsible for overseeing 10 to 12 sites, mostly river gravel pits, albeit on a part-time basis. "I used to call on all the sites that were operating."

A bout with cancer then took out chunks of his kidneys and he needed to step back from the role with McGregor Concrete. These days, he limits himself to the rock quarry and single river pits.

Bob says he has no regrets about his life in quarrying and cement, although he recalls a few accidents and the odd fatality on sites during his career.

"They weren't very nice."

He believes health and safety have improved hugely in recent years.

“WorkSafe do a pretty good job, really. It keeps everybody on their toes.”

Bob's now contemplating retirement. "I won't be going too much longer, I reckon."

A return to Golden Bay or the wider Nelson region is on the cards. **AQA**

**The Aggregate & Quarry Association appreciates the support of our members**





# Two advances for the quarry sector

Two recent ministerial announcements give more say to the quarry sector, says AQA CEO Wayne Scott.



Brooke van Velden



Penny Simmonds

**W**orkplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden announced that Codes of Practice developed by sectors such as extractives will play a greater role in her review of the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

Vocational Education Minister Penny Simmonds then announced industries will get the lead on work-based training.

In his dual role as MinEx CEO, Wayne Scott has developed three Codes of Practice covering worker health, alluvial gold mining, and safe drilling and blasting, although WorkSafe approves none.

Minister van Velden says industry groups will now be given the power to initiate work on approved Codes of Practice "to speed things up and ensure they reflect what will work in practice and what makes sense for those who deal with these risks every day." WorkSafe will no longer lead that work exclusively.

Wayne says that, like other industries, quarrying knows its sector inside out and is fully aware of the health and safety issues confronting workers and

businesses.

"We've already developed practical advice and solutions to managing risks in our sector that work and are achievable for any business size."

WorkSafe's inability to produce up-to-date advice was part of the reason MinEx developed its Codes of Practice, as well as a range of booklets and fact sheets.

He wants WorkSafe to rapidly produce guidelines on the development and approval process for Codes of Practice.

"Then we can talk to our members and work out which codes are most needed and would give the most benefits."

Enabling legislation will be introduced to Parliament before the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Wayne welcomed Minister Simmonds' announcement that industries will get more control over how they train apprentices and trainees.

"We were concerned departmental officials wanted the new Industry Skills Boards to coordinate industry training and polytechnics to deliver much of it.

"We asked it to be work-based, led and owned by industries like ours, which are really connected to their trainees and the skills they need to develop."

Wayne says the new Industry Skills Boards which set training standards, endorse programmes, and moderate assessments, will work as long as industry representatives dominate board positions.

He says that in the past, some private organisations were precluded from providing training, which had particular impacts on smaller and more remote employers who wanted to upskill their staff on-site or nearby.

Simmonds says industry representatives made it clear the current work-based learning model is not delivering because it has become overly centralised through Te Pukenga, the new national polytech.

"As a result, the training of apprentices and other workers is often disconnected from the realities of the jobs they are working towards."

Next year, the Government will introduce a new, independent, industry-led model for work-based learning.

"This means vocational education and training providers will be able to manage all aspects of an apprenticeship or traineeship at an industry level, rather than taking direction from a centralised behemoth," says Ms Simmonds. **AQA**

## 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



# AQA backs 'sensible' changes to **Wildlife Act**

The AQA has welcomed changes to the Wildlife Act, which clarify a point of law that could have held up infrastructure projects.

A bill introduced into Parliament in early May clarifies Section 53 of the Wildlife Act to enable DOC to authorise the (accidental) harm to wildlife that is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, provided reasonable steps were taken to avoid or minimise the effects.

The legislation follows DOC permitting the Transport Agency to harm protected wildlife – including kiwi and long-tailed bats – during the construction process at the Mt Messenger project site in Taranaki.

Environmental Law Initiative brought a case in the High Court, saying it was not trying to stop all development – it just wanted the law applied properly.

The High Court found that granting a Section 53 authority under the Wildlife Act was at odds with its purpose. In the past year, DOC has granted 85 similar permits to project applicants. In total, 315 applications are under way for a Section 53 permit or authority.

AQA CEO Wayne Scott says if the High Court ruling had been allowed to stand, many projects could have been in jeopardy. The verdict suggested DOC did not have the power to enable the killing of some native species, even if there were much wider benefits.

"We are not talking about the sanctioning of indiscriminate slaughter of some of our most loved species like kiwi. DOC would hardly be a party to that any more than our wider infrastructure sector."

But he says the law had to be clear where a project might potentially impact a handful of wildlife but will save much travel time, expense, carbon emissions, and even human lives.

The Government had earlier clearly signalled it would make changes to the Wildlife Act after warning clients who had permits to harm wildlife that they may be acting unlawfully.

Minister for Regional Development Shane Jones said the Wildlife Act needed a monstrous set of changes or it would "hobble infrastructure development".

"The outcome of the Mt Messenger legal decision has been bubbling along for a long period."



DOC had also told permit holders to continue business as usual despite the High Court ruling, so long as they took all reasonable steps to ensure wildlife was not harmed.

The Environmental Law Initiative, which took the case against NZTA on the Mt Messenger Bypass, said that meant attempting to catch protected wildlife alive and move it out of the development path where possible.

However, Sally McKechnie from law firm Simpson Grierson said that it was "unworkable and rather naive".

"No project of any significance would risk prosecution, on the chance that they could defend themselves, no matter how scrupulously they had, in fact, behaved," she said.

Wayne Scott says that while any developer would do their best to mitigate any harm, the risk of that being left up to the courts to determine was too high a bar, and the law change was sensible. **AQA**





# AQA Technical update

## Quarry Database

- The AQA Quarry Database (latest version) is getting traction with councils and contractors and is receiving lots of views.
- Please let me know if you have any corrections. Email: [tech@aqa.org.nz](mailto:tech@aqa.org.nz)

## M04 2024 Review

- The M04 spec, released last year, has been in circulation for nine months, and the AQA is receiving feedback from users and specifiers.
- One of the most discussed issues is the Wet/Dry strength variation criterion. I'd like to hear from members struggling to meet this requirement.
- AQA would like to address feedback with NZTA before the technical

workshop at QuarryNZ so please email us your comments, particularly any challenges your quarry has with meeting criteria.

- A Northland regional aggregate producers discussion was held, looking at options for M04 spec in Northland with its geological constraints and regional approach to producing quality state highway basecourse. NZTA is open to collaboration on regional specifications where Class 1 and 2 material is not readily available. AQA is progressing these discussions.

## Quarry Products Training

- AQA has engaged some external help with the quarry products training material coordination and preparation.
- We are still working in conjunction with

the Institute of Quarrying Australia to produce a similar course but with distinct NZ content.

## Inspiring Futures Foundation

- The IFF is looking for new board member nominations.
- This is a great charitable organisation, offering grants to improve education and engagement in industries including quarrying. AQA is represented on its Industry Council.
- Check out [www.inspiringfutures.nz](http://www.inspiringfutures.nz) for more information and to apply for a funding grant.

Hope to see you in Hamilton.

**Mike Chilton, AQA Technical Adviser**

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