



## **Electricity supply contractor wins big at annual health and safety awards**

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, 2 June 2011

Electrix has won the Supreme Award at this year's New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards.

The company won two category awards – wellness and design – and impressed the judges by its willingness to experiment to see what worked, to overcome multiple issues, and then implement the best solution. The judges felt the gym challenge programme (wellness category) and the solution to equipotential zones in live line work (design category) both demonstrated an admirable degree of commitment to protecting the health and safety of people.

Awards were presented in 11 categories at a gala dinner at SKYCITY Convention Centre in Auckland last night, where an audience of over 400 celebrated achievements and best practice in the New Zealand health and safety industry.

The awards, now in their seventh year, are organised by Safeguard magazine and supported by the Department of Labour. The awards are judged by an independent panel representing the Department of Labour, ACC, NZ Council of Trade Unions, Safeguard, and an industry health and safety practitioner.

Peter Bateman, managing editor of Safeguard magazine and a member of this year's judging panel, said the more than 120 entries reflected the significant, diverse, creative but usually unsung efforts put in by organisations and individuals around the country to help ensure people at work remain safe and healthy.

The winners were:

### **The Supreme Award - The Department of Labour/ACC best overall contribution to improving workplace health and safety in New Zealand**

Electrix, Auckland

### **Kensington Swan best initiative to address a safety hazard**

Progressive Enterprises, Auckland

The risks associated with bandsaws in meat processing were addressed by eliminating 114 bandsaws from stores and completely redesigning others in a package which included training, operator licensing, and control over the work area.

### **Department of Labour best initiative to address a health hazard**

Royal New Zealand Air Force

A successful pilot project to test hazardous substances management led to the replacement of the previous uncoordinated, ad-hoc approach with a strategic initiative to fully manage hazardous substances across the entire organisation. This comprehensive approach included occupational hygiene surveys and personal health

monitoring, and made good use of the multiple disciplines and skills available internally.

### **Vitae best initiative to improve employee wellness**

Electrix, Auckland

Linemen's continuing musculoskeletal injuries prompted considerable research and the development of a 12-week gym challenge programme for existing staff and for new recruits. A parallel programme has been developed for office staff. Applicants are tested for physical capacity before being accepted into an unusually arduous job. Injuries have declined and the company's culture has benefited.

### **NZ Safety best initiative to encourage engagement in health & safety**

Victoria Park Alliance, Auckland

Used staff workshops and a psychologist to formulate the best way to engage project staff. Developed powerful on-site graphics featuring staff who had been injured, and the consequences for them and their family. Also used safety observations to generate positive conversations and recognition around site safety.

### **SICK best design or technology initiative**

Electrix, Auckland

Designed an efficient and effective means of creating an equipotential zone while working on live overhead power lines, significantly reducing the risk of shock. Multiple design issues were overcome involving di-electric boots, pole shrouds and bonding leads.

### **Transfield Services best health and safety initiative by a small business**

EIS, Invercargill

Recognised that staff awareness of the hazard presented by electrical flashover arc was insufficient, so researched international best practice and developed new policies and procedures. Staff were issued with appropriate protective equipment, signage and rescue kit, and a training presentation was developed.

### **Impac best significant health and safety initiative by a large organisation**

Fonterra, Temuka

Reduced the incidence of milk tanker rollovers by developing a new tanker driver training programme. Used multiple video cameras placed around a tanker on a trip, including some cameras mounted within the tanker's barrel, to demonstrate the instability of milk loads. The resulting training DVD and associated discussions have achieved the desired behaviour change.

### **ACC best leadership of an industry sector**

Taranaki Safety Construction Group, New Plymouth

Has regularly brought together over 100 regional stakeholders to brainstorm the key health and safety issues to be tackled. Runs monthly sessions on topics defined by the group, and organises an annual apprentice safety challenge to focus attention on the need to take particular care of young people entering the workforce.

### **Safeguard health and safety practitioner of the year**

Jay Lauten, Fletcher Construction, Auckland

On the Manukau Harbour Crossing project he built strong relationships with staff and contractors at all levels, resulting in respect for his leadership and a willingness to try to achieve the standard he articulated, resulting in no lost-time injuries for the last 18 months of the project. He also mentored others into health and safety roles, building capacity for the future.

### **Ross Wilson – NZCTU most influential employee**

Greg Chaffey, Fonterra, Maitua

A tanker driver and health & safety representative, he is actively involved in audits, first aid and permits to work. He regularly challenges management and has ensured health and safety reps are involved in all incident investigations. He has persuaded colleagues to do safety training in the off-season, and has championed design changes to the plant to make it safer.

### **A Lifetime Achievement award was made to: Douglas Hay**

The founder of New Zealand's first academic course in workplace safety management set up Massey University's programme in 1979. He retired from the university in 2005, having taught and influenced hundreds of people who have gone on to practice health and safety at many workplaces around the country and around the world. He has also worked for the International Labour Organisation in China, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Bangladesh, setting up health and safety training programmes and reviewing legislation.

### **A special commendation was made to: Skylight, Wellington**

This charitable agency responded to the February earthquake in Canterbury by pulling together in the space of only a week an employer handbook titled *When Trauma and Grief Come to Work*, then distributed 10,000 copies to Canterbury employers and others. This initiative delivered material that was directly relevant to the needs of thousands and did it in double-quick time.

ENDS

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