LegalSAFE 2026: Agenda

8.30am **Registration and coffee**

9.00am **Welcome & opening remarks from the chair**

***Mike Cosman**, Partner, Cosman Parkes*

9.15am **Breaking down the HSW Amendment Act 2026**

Grant will outline the new Act and its implications, what the key changes are and what you need to do in the next 6 months to get ready for it.

Grant Nicholson, *Partner, Anthony Harper*

10.00am **Table talk**

10.10am **Morning break**

10.30am **Navigating the Amendment Act with a PCBU lens**

This session unpacks what the Amendment Act really means in practice — from defining critical risk and managing overlapping duties with small PCBUs, to the shifting balance of control, influence, and red tape. What questions should you be asking to understand where your responsibilities sit from 1 April 2027.

Sarah Stead, *Senior Legal Counsel, Downer*

11.10am **WorkSafe's evolving regulatory approach**

WorkSafe New Zealand is evolving its approach to regulation to better support improved health and safety outcomes while ensuring accountability where critical risks are not effectively managed. This session will provide an update on WorkSafe's regulatory approach, how engagement, enforcement and permitting functions are being delivered in practice, and how it's implementing recent legislative changes.

Tracey Conlon, *Head of Regulatory Services and General Counsel, WorkSafe New Zealand*

11.50am **Table talk**

12.00pm **Lunch**

12.50pm **Mind the gap: What the ERA changes mean for psychosocial harm**

ERA reform reshapes the personal grievance pathway for psychosocial harm, tightening remedies for contributory conduct and raising the bar for disadvantage claims. Samantha will discuss where those new boundaries sit, where the duty lies, and reflect on Australia's tougher preventative-first approach.

Samantha Turner, *Barrister, Stout Street Chambers*

1.35pm **Demystifying the role of the lawyer: What lawyers do, what we need from you, and how we can help**

Health and safety practitioners are often told to "get legal advice", but what does that actually involve? Why do lawyers so often say "it depends," and why can't they just tell me exactly what to do? Drawing on experience as both prosecutor and defence lawyer, this session unpacks what legal advisors really do, how legal risk gets assessed in dynamic and often uncertain environments, and how practitioners and lawyers can work together more effectively before issues escalate into investigations, enforcement action, or prosecution.

Sanja Marin, *Senior Associate, Duncan Cotterill*

2.15pm **Afternoon break**

2.35pm **The year in review: EUs, cases and trends**

This session will review the key developments and cases that have come before the courts in the past 12 months.

Melissa Vining, *Partner HR and H&S Consulting, Findex (Akl)*

Joe Lill, *Associate Partner HR and H&S Consulting, Findex (Wgtn/Chc)*

3.15pm **Panel discussion: Fixing one thing, breaking another: the law of unintended consequences**

4.15pm **Closing remarks from the chair and conference close**

***Mike Cosman**, Partner, Cosman Parkes*