

# New MinEx head eyes health and safety

Karen Phelps

He's been living in Australia for most of his life but don't hold that against him. Kiwi born Wayne Scott is the new CEO for MinEx and he has some big ideas about how to improve the industry's health and safety record.

One of the big draw cards for Wayne Scott to take on his new role was simply a desire to return to the country of his birth. He and his wife had been visiting New Zealand regularly for the past decade with an eye to returning one day. So when the MinEx job became available it was a no brainer for him to apply. And he hasn't let the grass grow under his feet since taking on his new role on 3 July spending most of his time to date on the road talking to quarry owners around the country.

So what has he found out? Smaller operators are struggling to meet new health and safety regulations.

"There are a number of issues – lack of time, not being aware of the regulations and what they have to do and probably, in some cases, thinking it doesn't matter or they can avoid it.

"But the bottom line is the whole industry has an issue with non-compliant sites that we have to address," he says.

He points to one small site he visited recently down south that had not had a visit from WorkSafe for 30 years.

Not that he's pointing the finger but it does indicate a lack of communication in the industry with smaller owners, he says. He points to the fact that three of the four sites where fatalities occurred in 2015 were not on any industry data base.

"When a farmer, for example, who wants to dig up gravel on his farm, applies to council no one probably tells him about health and safety or industry bodies they can join. That's why I've been getting out there on the road – to find out why these people are struggling."

Already Wayne has instigated a mentoring scheme to help deal with the industry's poor pass rate for Certificate of Compliance (CoC) B Grade oral examinations. It's an informal process where those who are worried about their oral examination are paired up with someone in their area who has already passed and is keen to help someone else.

"We know that the pass rate is very high for



Wayne Scott speaks at this year's QuarryNZ conference: "The whole industry has an issue with non-compliant sites that we have to address".

those that re-sit this exam. This is because they know what to expect and indicates it's not a lack of knowledge so much that has resulted in them failing the first time," says Wayne.

Another focus is the current MITO review of some extractive unit standards alongside WorkSafe's current review of requirements for Extractives' CoCs.

The unit standards under review cover a range of health and safety, technical, and management skills and knowledge across the extractives sector. The unit standard changes were prompted by

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feedback from the NZ Mining Board of Examiners as part of WorkSafe's CoC review.

MITO convened a group of subject matter experts from across the extractives industries to prepare consultation drafts of the unit standards. Wayne says he would favour role specific qualifications rather than the broad sweeping requirements at present.

Other initiatives Wayne has already rolled out include a health and safety template, which was released at the recent QuarryNZ conference to provide a resource for small operators to manage their health and safety. Wayne also has a number of examples other templates up his sleeve from his time in Australia he is keen to make available in New Zealand. MinEx will also take a greater role in publicising and distributing a worker health guidance document being developed by WorkSafe.

The other major focus is on generally improving the industry's image after the spate of fatalities in 2015 and, of course, Pike River.

Wayne says the industry in Australia and New

Zealand is very similar, although acknowledges that Australia is probably further ahead in terms of health and safety largely as it experienced large scale mining disasters earlier than New Zealand did.

He says health and safety legislation is generally written with the larger players in mind which can cause problems for smaller operators who struggle to comply.

"After Pike River the government acted quickly and brought out new regulations but the time frame for smaller operators, who don't have the resources to comply, is short. It's about working in small increments [for smaller operators].

"We have to show we are a good industry to work in and can get our health and safety to a level society expects – firstly by lifting our compliance and secondly with increased community engagement. I'd like to see a greater industry driven level of compliance. The industry needs to stand up and ensure people who aren't compliant are helped to get there. There has to be improvement."

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## Wayne's World....

Wayne Scott's qualifications include being a chartered accountant and certified practicing quarry manager together with a number of industry-based qualifications extending to an advanced diploma in extractive industries, advanced risk management from the University of Queensland.

Wayne has clocked up experience of 20 years in various management roles for Holcim Australia (previously Readymix), including managing quarry transport operations in Sydney, and quarrying and concrete operations in NSW's Mid-North Coast and in North Queensland.

Before becoming the new CEO for MinEx Wayne's previous role was Inspector of Mines (Small Mines Strategy) for Queensland's Department of Natural Resources and Mines for the past 8½ years.

In this role, he was responsible for assisting small mine operators to meet their safety and health obligations under state mining legislation. He thinks this experience will give him a good understanding of how governments work particularly in terms of health and safety. He has also served on the IOQ Australia board for 9 years and was president in 2012 / 2013.

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