

# News Brief

## Christmas Edition No. 105 December 2019



As 2019 draws to a close and we celebrate Christmas, many New Zealanders will be experiencing the anguish of the aftermath of several extraordinary events which resulted in lives lost, families bereft and traumatised emergency responders, beginning with the Christchurch mosque shooting at Easter claiming 51 lives and reverberating around the world.

This month saw the loss of at least 16 tourists and their guides in a volcanic eruption at popular tourist destination White Island, which put 27 in Australian and New Zealand hospitals with serious burns. Two tragic events in our small, remote country, proud of our reputation as a relatively safe and welcoming place for tourists to enjoy the many adventures and attractions on offer, has left many of us shell shocked.

The devastating measles outbreak in our South Pacific neighbour Samoa has now claimed 76 lives, mainly young children and 125 are in hospital among 5,400 confirmed cases throughout the 198,000 population. Sadly, anti-vaccination advocates are successfully persuading frightened parents to avoid the multi-national vaccination teams touring villages and continue to rely on faith healers.

Fiji is reporting 23 mild cases throughout the country, which has vaccinated one-third of its population.

### **Hazardous Substances Legislation**

RCNZ comments on the draft EPA Discussion Paper on the revision of the Firefighting Chemical Group Standard and on our website.

The MBIE Discussion Paper proposes 39 minor amendments to the Hazardous Substances Regulations. An outstanding issue is the confusing 'Protected Place' definition. Differing interpretations being applied by Compliance Certifiers are causing considerable anxiety for landlords and tenants alike, about possible closures of otherwise compliant operations, including delaying investment in improving site facilities.

Some Certifiers are declining work involving a Protected Place, due to the uncertainty.

A related EPA Discussion Paper proposing changes to our Globally Harmonised System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) in New Zealand poses major implications for industry.

There is a case for maintaining the existing Environmental hazard classes to protect our unique flora and fauna. The EPA proposal to retain existing Terrestrial Class 9 categories, specifically agrichemicals, together with incorporating minor periodic updates, is both sensible and desirable.

The Paper also seeks a return to the GHS classification regime - a departure from our present, well-known and efficient HSNO letter/number system, which applies throughout the pan-lifecycle of a substance. The proposed change will have widespread ramifications throughout our hazardous substances management regime, impacting on Classification, Labelling, Safety Data Sheets, training, wall charts, Signage, aggregation methodology, Hazardous Substances and Major Hazard Facility Regulations, Hazardous Substance Calculator functionality and WorkSafe NZ Regulations.

The concern is these two projects will further delay the HSNO Phase II project, already a year late.

Your association believes the EPA business case falls well short of a comprehensive and robust justification for what we believe would be a major and expensive change to our present, well-understood and effective system. Our recommendation to the EPA is to convene a small panel of stakeholder experts to thoroughly examine the proposal and recommend a way forwards.

Should you not agree with this course of action, we want to hear from you to confirm or challenge our view the massive disruption is not yet justified.

**Submissions for both proposals close at 5pm on 15 January 2020.**



### **National Emergency Management Agency**

A new legal entity, the NEMA, replaced the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management on 01 December 2019. The new agency seeks to engage central government with local government, the emergency services, communities, iwi, essential utilities and businesses to provide a more robust and integrated response to emergencies.

The interim NEMA Chief Executive is Transition Programme Director Carolyn Schwalger, former Ambassador to New Zealand's Permanent Mission to the UN. The present Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management, Sarah Stuart-Black, becomes the NEMA Deputy Chief Executive.



### **FENZ Local Advisory Committee Nominations**

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 mandates the establishment of Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ) Local Advisory Committees (LACs) on the West Coast, in Northland, Tairāwhiti, Hawkes Bay, Marlborough, Otago and in the Chatham Islands.

LACs comprising six to eight members will provide the local knowledge, skills and networking capability required to help ensure FENZ is kept aware of key community concerns.

FENZ seeks respected, influential individuals, not representatives of interest groups or companies, who can fairly represent all local stakeholders' views and help resolve concerns. Details are available at <https://fireandemergency.nz/LACs> and from the project team at [lac@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:lac@fireandemergency.nz)

If you desire to apply for a role in your local LAC, please also advise RCNZ accordingly so we can maintain our Hazardous Substances Technical Liaison Committee records.

### **Industry News**

RCNZ has renewed our longstanding, formal agreement with the US CHEMTREC Transport Emergency Centre, to collaborate in dealing with transport emergencies.



**STANDARDS**  
Australia  
AS 1940:2017 (updated August 2017)

### **Safe Storage**

Many Class 3 Hazardous Substance storage cabinets do not comply with AS 1940 as required by the HSWA Regulations. The lack of lower shelving and the use of the secondary containment area for additional storage further reduce the effectiveness of the cabinets. If a cabinet is not marked as compliant with AS 1940 for Class 3 flammable liquids, it is probably not compliant.

### **ISO Portable Tanks (20 Tonne Tank in Container Frame)**

When mounted on a chassis with wheels, tanks are considered to be 'Tank Wagons' and subject to HSWA Regulations. Unless the vehicle and tank combination is a Certified Compliant Tank Wagon, the portable tank(s) cannot be filled or emptied whilst on the vehicle. Tank Wagon tractor units have additional built-in safety measures for driver protection, which a standard prime mover does not have.

This is why decanting a flammable liquid from a portable tank on a truck or trailer chassis attached to a standard prime mover, is not permitted.



### Superior Safety Glasses

Operators at Water Treatment sites that have implemented a UV radiation process, require additional eye protection. Normal safety glasses do not have this feature and should be replaced with products with UV filtering.

### These Are Our Members!



**Azelis**, a major supplier of specialty chemicals and food ingredients, the Belgian based life sciences and industrial chemical company has expanded into Latin America with the purchase of Mexican pharma, food and veterinary distributor Megafarma.



In New Zealand, Canadian-based **Methanex** was reportedly the first country to implement and demonstrate the full spectrum of the Responsible Care® initiative, including a proactive community advisory panel, support for more than 50 local community groups and maintaining the popular, bi-annual Open Day at the Motunui site.

Well-known **Methanex NZ** Manufacturing Director Brian Ropitini is retiring after a 34 year career with arguably the world's leading Responsible Care® practitioners.



**Evonik Industries'** NZ/Australasia Chief Executive and long-standing RCNZ Chairman Tom Barratt has also retired from his role and his 14 year Chairmanship of the Responsible Care NZ Board.

In 2014, Tom established the annual Evonik Industries German Scholarship at his alma mater Waikato University, to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Two first-year German studies students selected on academic merit, will benefit from assistance to acquire proficiency in the German language. Members wish Tom and Brian every success in the next phase of their busy lives.

## Welcome New Members



**Aorangi Forensic Supplies** manufacturer and supply forensic equipment and products. Aorangi began supplying the New Zealand Police with forensic items in the early nineties. Their range of fingerprinting powders is standard throughout NZ law enforcement.



**A S Wilcox and Sons** is a fourth generation, family-owned and operated market gardener and exporter, established in 1954. With sites in Northland, Pukekohe, Matamata and Ohakune and packing operations in Pukekohe and Raetihi, A S Wilcox is a major vegetable supplier to the domestic market - just in time for Christmas!



Founded in 1936, **Tailored Properties Ltd** sources and supplies energy and fuel solutions throughout the South Island, tailoring specially blended coal, wood and charcoal products to suit the solid fuel requirements of individual customers seeking environmentally friendly fertilisers and fuels.



## Sustainability



### Widespread Inertia for Paris Accord

The latest UN Report expresses disappointment signatories to the 2015 Paris Agreement to reign in greenhouse gas emissions have yet to deliver on their commitments. UN scientists noted the need to keep the increase in global temperatures well below two degrees centigrade. The world's 20 wealthiest countries were expected to lead the way by reducing emissions, including replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources such as geothermal, solar, wind generation and recently hydrogen powered vehicles, while expanding forestry.

Increasingly severe global weather events and rising sea levels continue to damage infrastructure and engulf low-lying communities, causing alarm in New Zealand's low-lying Pacific Island territories. New Zealand recently passed the Zero Carbon Act, which seeks to transition the country to a zero carbon economy with legally binding targets, together with the establishment of an independent Climate Commission of experts to advise and hold government to account for long-term policies and targets.

Our 0.17% contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is primarily from agriculture (animals) and transport, with 7% from industry. New Zealand expects to be using 90% renewable energy by 2025 courtesy of hydro, wind, solar, biomass and geothermal generation, retaining one gas turbine standby facility.



The UN Secretary General has led criticism of the Conference of Parties (CoP) 25 in Madrid, which has failed to agree a range of effective, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) necessary to demonstrate progress in achieving Paris Agreement obligations.

Postponing meaningful decisions until late 2020 is ironic, given the CoP 25 had the theme 'Time For Action' and this was the defining year for the 197 Paris Agreement signatories to submit climate action plans.

The failure of CoP 25 to agree meaningful and binding targets can anticipate more mass youth-led demonstrations and condemnation by Time Magazine's 2019 Person of the Year, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg.

While expressing serious concern about the continuing shortfall in restricting GHG emissions to prevent global temperatures rising above 2°C, delegates rejected many initiatives, including a fund to help poorer countries most affected by climate change (e.g. Pacific Islands) and establishing a global carbon trading system.

Meanwhile, firefighters from Canada, New Zealand and the US are helping our Australian neighbours battle devastating bushfires in two States, which are exacerbated by 40°C temperatures.



### Recent Calls to 0800 CHEMCALL®

Several callers in Australia and New Zealand have been suffering Acid burns in non-industrial circumstances – suggesting the possibility of clandestine activity with Corrosives.

- A mute child with ADHD glued his fingers to eyelids and forehead with a Loctite product that sets on contact, causing severe dermal injury.
- A 200 litre Hydrogen Peroxide drum swollen by internal pressure, appeared ready to explode whilst stored legally among other chemicals in proximity.
- A pregnant woman using a 'synthetic beeswax' as furniture polish noticed a strong odour. It transpired that the product contained 60% Toluene and was sold locally by a large retail store.
- A three year old boy sprayed his newborn baby sister head to toe with a corrosive, anti-rust epoxy.

- Cleaning fluid flicked under safety glasses into a construction worker's eye, causing vomiting and loss of balance; no onsite water supply or first aid station were available.
- A specimen jar containing a human organ preserved in Formaldehyde smashed when dropped.
- A prolonged, undetected release of a Nitric Acid cleaning solution flowing from a factory, crossed a public walkway and into a river.
- A pallet of car batteries was dropped, smashing the entire load and releasing H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> acid solution.
- A knapsack spray operator became seriously unwell and suffered multiple skin burns.
- A chemical accident at a swimming pool resulted in strong fumes and prolonged closure of the facility.

### **In Memoriam: Chemical Expert Tony Haggerty QSM**



Tony Haggerty, recipient of the Queens' Service Medal for services to the chemical industry and emergency services, NZ Fire Service chemical safety expert and mentor, Chairman of the NZ Chemical Industry Council (now RCNZ) Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Development Committee, Chair of the NZS 5433 Standards Committee and veteran RCNZ CHEMCALL® responder, has died in Auckland.

Leaving the UK chemical industry, Tony joined the NZ Fire Service in 1980. In the aftermath of the 1984 ICI Fire, he emerged as a leader in his field of Chemical expertise and enthusiastic supporter of our industry endeavours to safely manage chemicals.

### **Career Highlights**

- Technical Liaison Officer and instructor at the NZ Fire Service College in Island Bay, Wellington.
- Strong advocate for the Hazardous Substances Technical Liaison Committee (HSTLC) network.
- Inaugural Chairman of the NZS 5433 Standards Committee, developing the first Standard for transporting Dangerous Goods on road and rail in NZ, which coincidentally RCNZ Compliance Manager Ken Clarke is chairing 23 years later.
- As the industry representative on the ERMA Board (now EPA), Tony contributed to the development of the HSNO Act and Regulations, together with industry codes of practice.

A valued CHEMCALL® Emergency Responder from the inception of the NZ Chemical Industry Council's popular chemical emergency response advisory service, Tony's leadership and chemical safety expertise was an essential contribution to the safety of firefighters attending hazardous substance callouts.

In 2002, Tony and Ken worked together to introduce gas detection equipment still in use by the Fire Service today.

Tony retired from the NZFS in 2005 but was not ready to hang up his litmus paper, chairing a hazardous substance conference for RCNZ - memorable for legendary anecdotes that captivated the audience.

Tony helped shape our national safe chemical management regime and brought emergency services and the chemical industry closer toward the common goal of helping to ensure safer communities. His sage advice, commitment and compassion will be sorely missed. Rest In Peace Tony.





## Looking Ahead

As the politically designated 'Year of Delivery' gallops off into the sunset, the global chemical industry also faces an increasingly diverse range of challenges, many related to society's concerns regarding global warming, but also the ramifications of the accelerating demise of truthfulness in our daily lives.

As we look forward to next year, the disappointing outcome of the CoP 25 meeting in Madrid underscores the continuing importance of our global industry's commitment to decisive action. Science continues to provide solutions to a bewildering array of challenges facing society not just today, but also tomorrow.

Our proactive engagement in studies into microplastics, our support for the Alliance to Clean Up Plastic Waste and encouraging the implementation of the UN GHS, are positive examples of the global chemical industry's contribution to sustainability.

Responsible Care® practitioners are committed to ensuring safer products are better managed through comprehensive product stewardship initiatives. Our growing family of Responsible Care® associations is ideally placed to identify the needs of local government and industry and then where possible, deliver the required products and services through proactive capacity building initiatives, now helping nine African countries seeking to improve chemical safety by implementing Responsible Care®.



Having enjoyed the Festive Season with family and friends, let's all strive to ensure 2020 and every year thereafter is a 'Year of Delivery' for improving chemical safety and safeguarding our communities through our unique Responsible Care® initiative.



## Summer Break

**The Responsible Care NZ office closes Friday 20th December 2019  
and re-opens Tuesday 21st January 2020.**

**We wish our Members, Partners and Responsible Care® colleagues worldwide a joyful,  
safe Christmas and a happy New Year.**

