

NewsBrief

Christmas Edition No. 108 December 2020



As a turbulent 2020 draws to a close in the busy run up to Christmas, we can all take comfort in our enviable circumstances which to date have enabled us to largely avoid the worst effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Escalating deaths in the United States, many EU members and India, are horrific. The worldwide roll out of several approved, but as yet unproven, vaccines offers hope to many, although vaccination programmes will not reach the majority for many months, a distribution and inoculation challenge which will test our collective capabilities and expertise.

Locally, free vaccination of the general public is anticipated to begin mid 2021.

New Zealand is benefiting from the government following the science in determining counter measures which have largely kept us healthy. The key role of our scientists in managing Covid-19 is recognised by numerous overseas authorities, beginning with the World Health Organisation. While our economy absorbs the loss of earnings from tourism and foreign students, increased demand for our exports and lower than expected unemployment, is cushioning the impact. Our resilient economic performance continues to out-perform predictions, with unexpected 13-14% growth in the third quarter to September, driven by retail, food production, forestry and construction. Spending on gifts and domestic holidays will help boost the less promising October-December quarter.

Business operators are increasingly upbeat as our economy continues to do better than forecasted. Measures to keep employees and the public safe, including the largely successful transition to working online and from home, have resulted in minimal Covid-19 constraints and the resulting disruption to social and economic activities.

The closure of the border to all but returning Kiwis and those deemed 'essential workers' is helping the return to a more familiar lifestyle. With the exception of wearing face masks on domestic flights and on all public transport in Auckland, there is presently little evidence of a community under threat. As our international colleagues return to 'lockdown' conditions, detection of a new strain in the UK is a timely reminder confidence in science is essential.

As we celebrate our Southern Hemisphere festive season without offshore family members attending the traditional gathering, the wonder of the Internet will hopefully lessen the impact of enforced separation. The promise of allowing travel to particular Australian states and the Pacific Islands offers hope for family reunions early next year.

Post-Covid recovery globally will take years, while complacency remains a constant threat. Let us each be thankful for and continue to reinforce (and extend) our fortuitous collective circumstance throughout the year ahead, ensuring those less fortunate are not left behind.





2021 Awaits!

Significant changes in employment law will affect Members, as the Government implements election promises.

Sick Leave

The minimum entitlement will almost certainly be increased to 10 days each year, to reflect the Covid-19 environment. The maximum number an employee can accumulate remains at 20 days.

Minimum Wage

The 2021 budget will honour the promise of a final increase to \$20 per hour from 01 April 2021. Starting out and training minimum wage will rise to \$16 per hour (80% of adult minimum wage). This will give approximately 175,000 wage earners another \$44.00 per week (before tax/benefits).

Collective Bargaining

Contentious agreements between employers and unions which replace individual employment contracts and set minimum terms and conditions to apply throughout an entire industry sector or occupation, will begin next year. The 'Fair Pay' agreements will not recognise regional employment circumstances and are likely to be a critical test for 'good faith' bargaining provisions.

The collective bargaining provisions will include Contractors deemed to be "Effectively controlled by an employer".

Container Chaos Over Hyped?

Dire predictions that transporting 1,200 containers from Whangarei to Auckland would create chaos for holiday traffic by clogging Highway 1 have yet to materialise, with observers noting traffic running smoothly.

Congestion at the Ports of Auckland means containers being off-loaded in Northland in order to deliver goods in time for Christmas.

Exporters cite delays of up to three months due to the shortage of both containers and ships. A roadside observer reported 63 trucks passing in 30 minutes, however only six carried containers, most on trucks capable of carrying multiple containers, which would further reduce truck movements. Nevertheless, nearly all containers have now been delivered in an accident-free operation.

Sadly, checking every truck at Police weigh stations revealed 20% were not road worthy, highlighting concerns of local residents worried about their safety, with up to 300 laden trucks a day passing through their rural communities

The involvement of Northport has revived calls for a four lane Auckland-Northland expressway and accelerating the long delayed construction of a rail link to Marsden Point, to cope with predicted growth in container freight, while providing an alternative to our major port, already struggling to plan for future demand.



Meanwhile, the barista in a strategically located SH1 coffee cart is ecstatic about her new customers!

Smelter Waste Heads Overseas

The Environment Court has directed the 8,500 tonnes of controversial waste product ouvea premix stored in the former Maitua paper mill, will be packed into containers in preparation for export to Australia.

The future of the Class 6.3A (Skin Irritant), 6.4A (Eye Irritant) and 9.1C (Aquatic Ecotoxic) dross has been negotiated between the court, the Environmental Defence Society and NZAS. While disappointed the removal of the product from Maitua will not be achieved before Christmas, locals are relieved a solution is underway.





New CHEMCALL® Advisor

We are delighted to welcome Brett Newcombe to our experienced team of Responders. Brett brings valuable chemical management expertise acquired throughout a long industry career, most recently with Jasol New Zealand.



Climate Emergency Declared

A signatory to the 2016 Paris Agreement, New Zealand has declared a 'climate emergency' to accelerate our transition to a carbon-free economy by 2050.

We are presently falling short in meeting our self-imposed goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Our emissions have plateaued and planned reductions will severely impact agricultural efficiency.

The passing of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 requires a framework to implement stable and clean climate change policies which contribute to achieving our Paris Agreement obligations.

New targets for 2050 include net zero GHG emissions, other than biogenic methane and 10% below 2017 biogenic methane emissions by 2030. The Government vehicle fleet is to be progressively converted to electric vehicles.

A global virtual conference commemorating this month's fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement noted 190 of the 197 signatories have ratified their commitment. US President Elect Biden proposes to reverse the US withdrawal, while China has announced significantly higher performance standards for industry.

Leadership Opportunity in Regional Trade Pact?

New Zealand has an impressive record in trading with China. New Zealand championed China's accession to the WTO and was the first country to complete free trade agreements with Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. Our advocacy could now encourage China, having joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement, to sign up to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Such a move could encourage the United States to join both FTAs, achieving APEC's goal of an Asia-Pacific free trade zone and adding billions of consumers for New Zealand products.

We are hosting the 2021 APEC Summit and will hopefully seize the opportunity to advocate and facilitate collaboration between the world's most influential trading economies.



NZS 5433:2020

The Standards NZ Committee, chaired by RCNZ Compliance Manager Ken Clarke, together with MBIE Standards Co-ordinator Brian Bell, has completed this essential reference for the logistics sector.

The new version, replacing NZS 5433: Part 1 2012 including Amendment No.1, is more concise due to incorporating references to UN information, rather than incorporating the extensive text directly - helping to future-proof the Standard for years to come. As a result, the retail price has been reduced to \$105.00+GST. This Standard can now be ordered from us at our usual generous Member's discount.

The companion NZS 5433: Part 2 2012, is replaced by a new handbook SNZ HB 5433:2021 *UN Dangerous Goods List*. This will enable more efficient and timely revision, enabling the document to be updated every few years and is scheduled for release early 2021.

The popular SAA/NZS HB76 2010 DG Initial Emergency Response Guide is expected to be replaced later in 2021.



Emergency Preparedness

Each Summer, CHEMCALL® subscribers enjoy peace of mind, knowing any chemical incident involving their products throughout the supply chain will be safely managed by experienced RCNZ CHEMCALL® responders. It is important site Emergency Response Plans (ERP) are available to to CHEMCALL® responders.

Please remember to send your electronic ERP to Ken@responsiblecarenz.com

It's not too late to enquire about arranging for us to safeguard your products and your reputation, while you enjoy peace of mind during a well-deserved Summer break.



These Are Our Members



A remarkable role model for Responsible Care®, Member **Interchem Agencies** have been inadvertently short-changed. Their site re-certification represents an unprecedented seventh award and their latest prestigious PRINCE Gold® Certificate received from RCNZ Chairman John Morgan this month, is being replaced.

We humbly apologise to the amazing Interchem team.

Left to right: Pat du Preez (Compliance Officer), Tim Cammell (Compliance Officer), Linda Haydon (Compliance Manager), Chalice An (Compliance Officer), Hannah Muir (Commercial Manager) and Jesicka Goei (Compliance Officer).



The world's leading methanol producer **Methanex** is deferring routine maintenance at the smaller Waitara Valley facility, due to a reduced gas supply coinciding with lower world commodity prices.

Methanol exports to Asia Pacific customers from the three Taranaki production sites totalled 1.55m tonnes in third quarter 2019, falling to 1.24m tonnes for third quarter 2020.



Three individuals and 10 organisations, including government agencies, facing charges under the HSWA Act 2017, had their court appearance adjourned to next year. A petition asking for charges to be dropped against two helicopter pilots who evacuated victims to hospital, has over 110,000 signatures. WorkSafe NZ says enforcement action and the subsequent charges do not apply to the rescue and recovery operations.



Careful With Lithium Batteries

Etching identification details on lithium ion battery power packs may damage the internal insulating membrane, which in turn may result in a short circuit or even a 'thermal runaway'.

Take extra care with these power packs, commonly used for a wide range of tools and garden appliances.



Responsible Care[®]
OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Summer Break

Joanna, Ken and Barry wish you and your family a healthy and relaxing festive season.

Take extra care as we reflect on our fortunate circumstances and look forward to a promising 2021.

