

NZIEH NEWSLETTER

Edition 1
September
2016

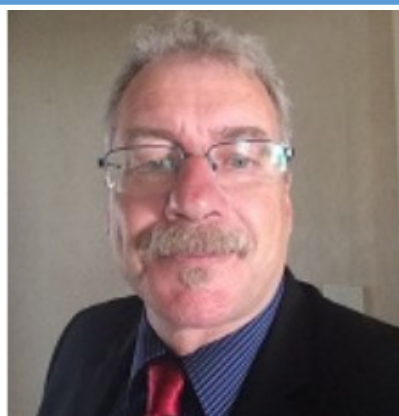
Welcome to the Newsletter

You may remember the Journal. You may also know it was hard work to maintain with a small member base. Moving forward we aim to use a Newsletter format to provide members with timely, informal updates.



In this issue:

- ♦ An introduction to your Executive Committee members
- ♦ What does belonging to an active NZIEH branch bring to your career
- ♦ Feedback on surveys of South Island branches and national training survey
- ♦ The future for the South Island
- ♦ Applying to MPI for Quality Management System and Food Safety Officer Approvals



Who are the NZIEH National Executive:

For those who don't know the Executive members, to help you put faces to names, we would like to introduce ourselves over the next few newsletters and give an idea of what the NZIEH means to us.

President's Message - Darryl Thompson

President of NZIEH and Principal Environmental Health Specialist
Licensing & Compliance Services - Auckland Council

I was asked to put down in writing a few words as to what the Institute means to me. I think the first thing that springs to mind is PRIDE. I am proud to belong to such a worthwhile and prestigious organisation that has at its core the principle of protecting our environment and the health of our people. I would love to think that I can make a difference, even if it is only a small one. To get the most out of an organisation such as ours you need to actively participate in it and to put your hand up and become actively involved. That is why I put my hand up for the President's position as well as to be the Congress Chair for the upcoming World Congress. During my tenure as President I would like to see our Institute have a higher profile and to be able to support our members in their chosen career, whether it be as an EHO, HPO or student studying towards a career in health. I urge you all to get involved and make a difference to Environmental Health.

As with many organisations such as ours, in this current economic climate, it is easy to think that there is no point in belonging to a society or institute. Members often ask, what is in it for me, or say it is a waste of time and money, or that there is no point in belonging. I think this is a very short sighted way of thinking and strongly believe that belonging to the Institute and actually enthusiastically taking part in it can make a difference and belonging to the Institute can help us in our day to day working lives.

Continues overleaf

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Having a network of like-minded professionals who we can turn to and seek help from and share our knowledge with is of great benefit and I feel the best way to do this is by belonging and contributing to our institute and actively participating as much as possible.

It is great to see that the South Island is looking at re-establishing a centre(s) and are planning on getting together on a regular basis to share knowledge and help others who may not necessarily be exposed to the range of issues that others are. I will be attending a meeting in Christchurch in November to discuss this further.

Planning is well underway for the 2018 World Congress in Environmental Health Conference. I've had an amazing response to a request for help with eighteen people putting up their hand to help. We've got our first planning meeting on the 22 September 2016 to start dealing with the nitty gritty and I'm confident we will put on a World Class event that we can be proud of.

2018 IFEH Conference

Venue: Grand Millennium Hotel, **Auckland**

Hosted by NZIEH

Dates: **18th to 23rd March 2018**

See website for detailed leaflet

The other National Council members are

Vanessa Coull - Vice President

Tamsin Sutherland - Executive Director

Sue Reynolds - National Cllr (Waikato BOP)

Rana Naser - National Cllr (Central North Island)

Raaj Govinda - National Cllr (Wellington)

See website for contact details to get in touch.

Stephen Bell - Response Manager MPI (Immediate Past President of NZIEH)

As a newly qualified Health Protection Officer I joined the NZIEH knowing very little about it, but the others in the office recommended it. Joining NZIEH helped extend both my personal and professional network and I made a lot of friends through it. The best part was knowing who to discuss an issue with, and also participating in some of the quite passionate arguments held over policy, procedures, and sometimes the rules of NZIEH. The support I received from members was always welcome and when I was on the wrong side of an argument over an environmental health issue with an outsider, be it planner consultant or member of the public, having my position validated by my peers was encouraging.



I never thought 'what's in NZIEH for me' and found the more I put into NZIEH the more I benefitted. More recently, as President working with the International Federation of Environmental Health, my role in NZIEH brought me into contact with many more passionate Environmental Health professionals, such as Tim Hatch from the USA who ran our Emergency Management Courses. Sometimes when I look at the daft decisions being made that create issues for us I think "...what's the point?" Then I look around at these passionate Environmental Health professionals and remember that we have a worthwhile career and we "do stuff" to make the results of those decisions work.

For me NZIEH has always been my battery, when feeling grumpy or down about what's going on in the world there is always one or more Environmental Health professionals in my extensive network who is an 'Energizer Bunny' to reinvigorate me. Otherwise I would not still be in the profession after 40 years.

Regional Centres of NZIEH

The Central North Island Branch (CNIB) of the NZIEH is a successful and active regional branch. **Doug Scott** (CNIB President) explains what it means to him, to be a member of an active NZIEH branch.

Central North Island Branch (CNIB) update

The CNIB of the NZIEH meets four times a year to deliver training to our members, discuss issues that we are experiencing and to network. A lot of the CNIB members come from small to medium Councils where they may be the only EHO. Our meetings are a great way for these EHOs to discuss problems and work out a solution gained from the combined knowledge and experience of 15-20 EHOs from other areas. Our meetings aren't limited to Council EHOs, we have members from the Defence force, Fonterra, retired EHOs and Public Health Units.



Our meetings are generally held in Palmerston North which is the most central location. However, we do try and hold a meeting occasionally on either the west or east coast. Our meetings start with a presentation followed by an update from each EHO which usually leads into a discussion of problem areas. The presentations come from our members or we try and source a speaker from outside our membership. This has included presentations on asbestos awareness, running investigations under the Search and Surveillance Act, emergency response, professional development/standards and numerous case studies. The CNIB is able to pay for presentations when we deem specific training necessary, however the bulk of our training/presentations is delivered free of charge. What we do try to do is to stay away from presentations on the requirements of the Food Act, as this is usually covered during our cluster meetings set up by MPI.

I would strongly recommend that other areas seriously look at activating their NZIEH Branches again. To begin with, maybe two branch meetings a year would probably be enough. What is required would be one or two people to organise the meeting and find someone to give a presentation or field trip. Try looking within your Council for someone willing to speak on a topic of interest, this could be your engineering department, legal department, regulatory department or even a Medical Officer of Health.

Having active Branches across New Zealand can only help to enhance the credibility and strength the NZIEH, which is something that we all want.

If anyone would like to discuss how the CNIB operates please feel free to contact me on Ph: 06 278 055 (wk) or email: doug.scott@stdc.govt.nz

2017 National Conference

Hosted by Central North Island Branch

Venue: Distinction Hotel & Conference Centre - **Palmerston North**

Dates: **22nd to 24th February 2017**

MPI day: 23rd February

The Central North Island Branch has been working hard to put together the 2017 conference that Environmental Health Professional will benefit from attending. The theme of the conference is 'Working Together' which reflects the unique diversity of skills and experience that EH professionals have throughout NZ. The conference is aimed at EHOs working for Councils and the private sector, Health Protection Officers, Environmental Health / Health Science students and professionals with an interest in Environmental Health. Joining details to follow on the NZIEH website and Health Protect.

We had hoped to fully launch the website this month, but this has been delayed until November. To receive:

- Notification of job advert postings
- Updates to NZIEH news

submit your email here at the bottom of the homepage.

NZIEH website: www.nzieh.org.nz

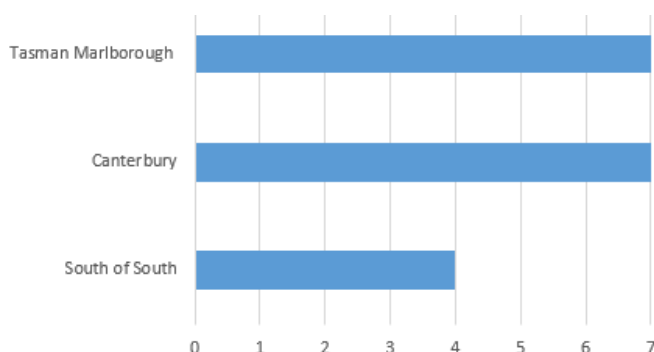
Survey Results

The South Island Survey

There are approximately 62 members in the South Island. It is a huge geographical area. This presents some obvious problems.

22 members completed the survey.

The survey showed that there was an even spread of preferred centre base.



17 organisations offered to host meetings, from the very top to the very bottom of the Island.

Most people were very keen to see some form of NZIEH regional branch re-start in the South Island, particularly those from smaller organisations.

Outcome:

Overall, the strongest support was for a Canterbury based centre. We hope to ensure that an AGM takes place in Canterbury prior to 30th November 2016 so that the branch can be active in 2017.

We appreciate that this is not going to suit all members. Anyone from the South Island who wants to become a member of an active branch is invited to attend Wellington centre meetings.

We hope that the viability of starting other South Island branches can be looked at in detail in 2017.

Please refer to the AGM dates in next column.

Future Newsletters:

Future newsletters will be published in a digest email format, with links to articles hosted in the members only section of the website.

We hope you will find this one-off pdf format useful.

Training surveys

These were specific to each centre. The results have been sent to each Centre Secretary (where a centre exists) to inform the meeting/training format in 2017.

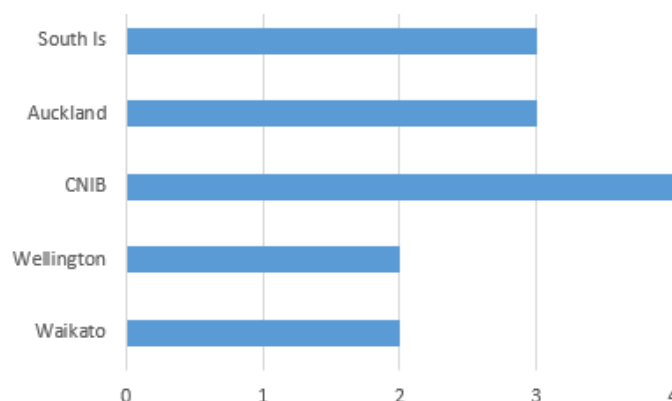
The response rate overall for the survey was less than 50%. However, those that completed the survey showed a strong interest in the training/meeting format and there were lots of potentially interesting topics identified.

The top 10 most interesting topics - all regions:

Food act infringement notices	Labelling and the Food Standards Code
Clandestine labs	Search & Surveillance Act implications
Food Act & emergency response	Becoming NP verifiers
Food Act and the building code	Noise
Seizing and detaining food	Housing

The full survey results will be shared with the 2017 conference organising committee - watch this space for more info!

The "ideal" number of meetings held each year varied from region to region. Note - the Rules require a Centre to meet no less than twice a year.



We know how busy working life is, these centre meetings must provide good 'value' to justify taking time away from your workload.



to everyone who completed the surveys

We appreciate your input.

NZIEH Centres - AGM 2016

North Island Centres

Auckland:

Date: 24th November - 11am—1pm

Venue: Training Rooms, Graham St, Auckland

Secretary: andrew.gordon@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne:

Date: 18th November 2016 - 10am

Venue: TBC

Secretary: shancock@taupo.govt.nz

Central North Island Branch:

Date: 30th November 2016 - 10am

Venue: Manawatu DC, Fielding

Secretary: NEIL.CORLETT@nzdf.mil.nz

Wellington:

Date: 17th November - 10am

Venue: TBC

Secretary: vanessa.coull@huttcity.govt.nz

South Island Centres

Canterbury:

Date: we hope to hold an AGM before 30th Nov

Venue: TBC

Details to follow when arranged

South of South:

We hope to support the re-start of the South of South branch in 2017.

More details of all meetings to follow on the website.

If you want to be more involved in the Institute, you may feel like you want to stand on your regional branch committee. Each Regional Centre has its own committee:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| * President | |
| * Vice President | * National Councillor |
| * Centre Secretary | * Centre Councillor |

These positions should be filled at the Centre AGM.

If you want more information about what each job means, look on the website in the members only section, under “constitutional documents”.

Nominations can be made to the Centre Secretary prior to the AGM, or made on the day of the AGM.





The changes introduced by the Food Act 2014 are far reaching. If you have not already signed up for updates from the Ministry for Primary Industries go to <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-act-2014/information-for-regulators-and-verifiers/> and sign up for the fortnightly Food News.

At the time of writing, 8 Territorial Authorities (TAs) had applied for recognition as National Programme verifiers. To date, only Dunedin City Council has been approved.

Tanya Morrison, EHO from Dunedin City Council and Co-ordinator of their Quality Management System (QMS) explains their experience of gaining approval.

National Programmes – Gaining recognition and undertaking verifications



Gaining recognition to verify National Programmes (NPs) has not been easy; however we hope the path we have now travelled has become clearer for those that wish to follow. Gaining recognition started with developing our Quality Management System (QMS). Regulation 110 of the Food Regulations 2015 provided guidance for writing the QMS. We applied for and gained approval as 'Generic' NP verifiers, rather than sector specific. Our QMS documents our systems to deliver a consistent, knowledgeable and experienced service for all verifications. Peer reviews, training courses or shadowing fellow verifiers are ways to demonstrate ongoing staff development, an area our QMS heavily focuses on. In some ways, we found writing a QMS similar to writing a Custom Food Control Plan – allowing for every scenario that may occur, recognising your 'critical control points' when it comes to quality and ensuring consistent delivery of service.

Our QMS was first submitted to MPI for desktop approval. Following feedback with some suggested amendments we gained approval. An onsite assessor then came to verify our QMS system which included interviewing staff, viewing specific QMS records (such as training records) and file review of previous food verifications undertaken. The assessor also observed staff undertaking actual verifications – this assessment was required for individual verifier recognition. Individual verifiers must be approved in addition to gaining 'organisation' approval of your QMS in order to actually undertake NP verifications. Ironically we were unable to verify NP businesses without recognition; therefore the observed assessments were of template Food Control Plan (FCP) verifications. Individuals lastly had to complete five eLearning modules related to Food Safety Officer training to complete their applications.

To date, Dunedin City Council has 25 National Programme businesses registered and approximately half of these have received their first verification. What we have found interesting is that NP Level 2 and 3 manufacturers require quite a different approach to what we have been used to in the past, compared to coffee carts or dairies which are very similar to the template FCP's verifications.

To verify manufacturers, sound knowledge of their process flows is required. We recommend completing process flow diagrams and obtaining documentation from operators before conducting their verification. This may include for example HACCP documentation/systems identifying Critical Control Points within production. Knowing the business you are going to verify before you physically go on site really assists the verification process. This 'homework' also assists you in selecting the right verifier to undertake the verification and can offer training opportunities for other staff to observe and gain experience in less common industries through shadowing.

Overall, we have enjoyed undertaking NP verifications as they add great variety, knowledge and new experience to our roles. Staff have become more familiar with the new legislation as we specifically reference clauses from these documents within our verification reports. Whilst it has been a long, bumpy road to get there, we recommend getting on board with NP verifications. We are happy to offer any advice or further detail about our journey if you would like to contact us.

Tanya Morrison - Quality Systems Co-ordinator and EHO, Dunedin City Council

Food Consultation to come in 2016

October - Draft Regulations will be released for consultation.

December - Notices will be released, these include some significant changes in templates and interpretation.

NZIEH will co-ordinate a members response. Details to follow via health protect and the website.



Becoming a Food Safety Officer—how hard can it be?

For those of us working in food, the next challenge is to become a Food Safety Officer, warranted by MPI under the new Act. There are questions about how TA staff will demonstrate competency. I am not suggesting this is any sort of required standard, but just for information, here is what I submitted. My application was successful.



The process—

1. Register on the MPI website for FSO training and request access to Tiritiri. (A RealMe account is needed)
2. Complete 9 e-learning modules online, 2 have an 'exam' component.
3. Once you've completed all modules do the face to face module with a 'trained trainer'.
4. Complete the field log with evidence that you have met the professional standards required, get this signed by your manager* and upload this to the Tiritiri website.
5. Complete the application forms for FSO recognition and submit with evidence of qualifications.

*Note—the requirement is for your manager to assess your competency, this may be harder in small TAs where you are the only EH qualified person in the Council.

I think the biggest uncertainty is 'what standard does the field log require'? There were some areas I could not demonstrate easily, eg submitting a labelled sample for analysis. In these cases you are encouraged to make up a scenario, and explain how you would take each step.

As evidence, I submitted:

- A witness statement I gave to WorkSafe for an incident witnessed during an inspection
- A report to ARLA on liquor licensing non-compliance, and one to a DLC opposing an application
- A scenario based food complaint with sample labelling
- Investigation of two food complaints - labelling and food practices
- Evidence of qualification - auditing, degree and training in HACCP

My tips:

Training and mentoring staff who need to gain experience will be a significant part of this process

The face to face training is designed as a group activity, it is likely to work best as a group from your cluster, not just one to one.

Use scenarios as much as you need to so you can demonstrate your knowledge and investigation techniques - again these may work well as a cluster group exercise.

Don't aim for perfection - I was told that this process is not meant to be prohibitively difficult for EHOs.

Tamsin Sutherland - EHO and Food Safety Officer, Whangarei District Council



Introduction to Environmental Health and Disaster Management

Wellington, New Zealand – 18 through 21 July 2016

2016 EHDM Class Participants



Dr Peter Davey, Griffith University; Tim Hatch, MPA REHS, Alabama Department of Public Health (USA), and Stephen Bell, Immediate Past President, New Zealand Institute of Environmental Health

The international course “An Introduction to Environmental Health and Disaster Management” was proudly delivered on 18 through 21 July 2016 in Wellington, New Zealand. This was the second International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) endorsed disaster risk reduction initiative and a continuation of the global effort which began in 2012.

The course was delivered through a partnership between IFEH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Environmental Health Association (USA), New Zealand Institute of Environmental Health and the Ministry of Primary Industries. There were 21 environmental health and disaster management professionals who participated from across New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific.

The course had a particular focus on strategies for addressing environmental health issues before, during and after floods. A special session on the public health effects of volcanic eruptions and the ash they produce was included by Dr. Carol Stewart, Massey University. Other presentations were on drinking water, shelters, responder safety, food safety, wastewater, disease-causing vectors, solid waste, hazardous materials and disaster management systems. The role of environmental health in the responses to the Christchurch earthquake, the Gulf Oil Spill and recent Asia-Pacific cyclones were also covered. As a new and emerging environmental health issue, Dr. Peter Davey discussed climate change and how communicable diseases must be attended to as a critical need of citizens during and after disasters. His lecture on environmental health and disaster risk reduction was timely and pertinent to the overall goals of the course.

The course concluded with an exercise, which focused on the preparation and response activities to a flood threatening a nearby community. This allowed participants to identify what was to be undertaken when preparing for and responding to a local flood event. It also allowed participants to understand disaster response frameworks, challenges faced and tools for systematically addressing environmental health risks. The course evaluation found the content met all expectations and participants indicated they would recommend the training to other professionals. On average the awareness level of environmental health risks associated with a disaster increased by 21%. Participants indicated they would use the concepts covered in their disaster management activities.

The course could not have been successful without the interaction of the participants. A special thank you goes to Chris Hewins and Carol Stewart for their participation and presentations. The course was delivered by Dr. Peter Davey (Griffith University), Tim Hatch (IFEH; Alabama Department of Public Health (USA)), and Stephen Bell, Immediate Past President of NZIEH. As part of continuing to implement its disaster risk reduction initiative, IFEH plans to work with CDC, NEHA, Griffith University and its other partner organizations to continue to deliver more courses in New Zealand, Australia, Europe, India, Indonesia and Jamaica in the coming months. For further information please visit www.ifeh.org.

Article supplied by IFEH