

Te Korowai Whakaruruhau

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service



May 2025

Kia ora Koutou,

A warm welcome to the May issue of Te Korowai Whakaruruhau; our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter. In this issue we cover a variety of interesting topics which include:

- The importance of the flu vaccine
- Damstra reporting
- HSW rep community of interest group (CoI)
- Let's talk about tech neck
- What is root cause analysis?
- What is a near miss?
- Dates in May
- Pink Shirt Day
- Mānuka Honey from New Zealand – Good from the outside in
- Training
- Whakatauki

Angus Clark
Associate Director – HSW

The importance of the influenza vaccination

Why is it important to be vaccinated against the flu?

Influenza (flu) is a common viral illness where most cases occur during the winter months between May and October in New Zealand. It is easily spread to others through talking, coughing, and sneezing. People are at risk of repeatedly catching influenza because the virus types or strains are constantly changing.

People catch influenza by breathing in virus-containing droplets that have been talked, laughed, sneezed, or coughed into the air by a person with the disease or, by touching their mouth, nose, or eyes after touching something that the infected droplets have recently landed on. This is because the virus survives outside the body for a short while.

The best ways to protect yourself and others do not differ greatly from the behaviours we learned throughout the COVID pandemic – stay home if sick; mask wearing if you can't; hand-washing and **vaccination**.

If you missed out getting to our vaccination popups, and need to get your flu vaccination, phone, or visit our Campus Pharmacy:


Unichem Campus Pharmacy
Level 1, Student Commons,
9 Symonds Street
Phone: 09 377-1991

Damstra



[Report Observations, Incidents-No Injury and Injuries](#)

Here is the path to follow on the University of Auckland Staff Intranet



UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
 Waipapa Taumata Rau
 NEW ZEALAND

[Staff intranet](#)
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My HR

Pay

Report a safety injury, incident or observation

Tupu (Career Tools)
Hono

Career and development

Academic Development and Performance Review
Tupu Professional Development and Performance Review
Internal jobs (SmartRecruiters)
Hono Learning

Staff support

Staff benefits
Find people and places
Share files with FileSender

New staff

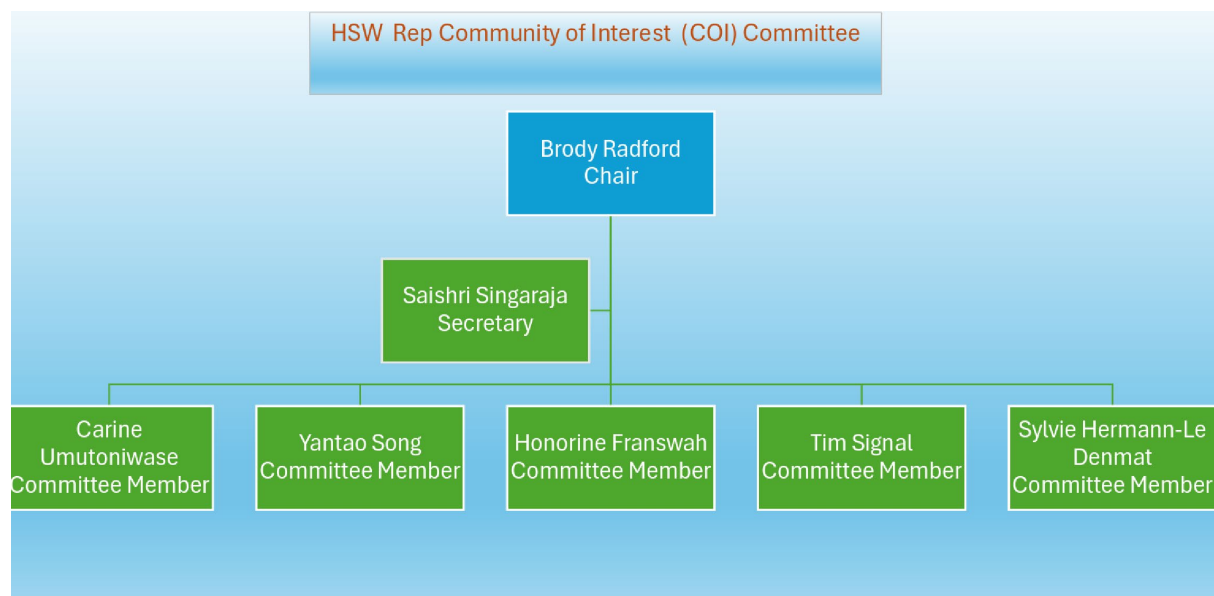
University glossary
Kuputaka

HSW Rep Community of Interest Group (CoI)

The University of Auckland Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative Community of Interest Group (CoI) currently has over 100 members. The members and the committee represents everyone at the University and brings a level playing field of representation from across the University to the Senior Leadership HSW Committee meetings.

The 2025 inaugural Community of Interest (CoI) meeting took place on March 26, with CoI Chair Brody Radford hosting the event at B303-RG03. During the meeting, the Committee called for volunteers to join their ranks and were delighted when Carine Umutoniwase, Honorine Franswah, and Sylvie Hermann-Le Denmat enthusiastically stepped forward. We welcome them to the committee!

Below is the 2025 HSW Rep Community of Interest Committee Structure:



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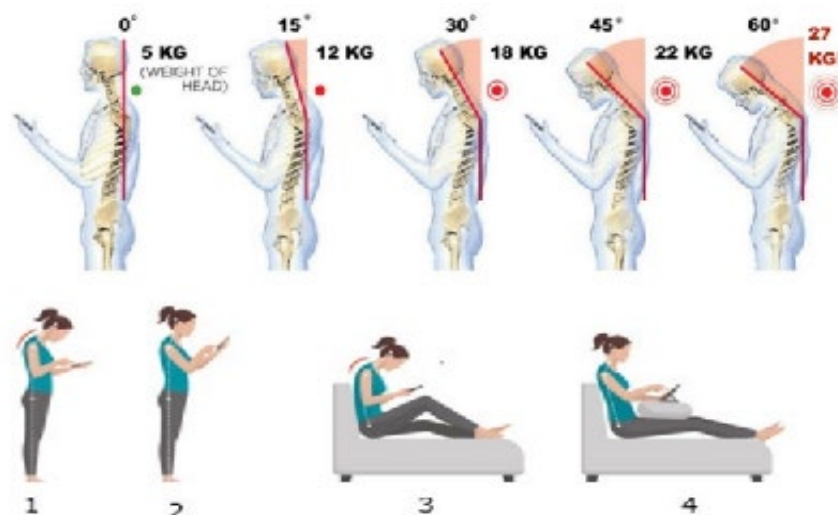
graph TD
    A[HSW Rep Community of Interest (COI) Committee] --> B[Brody Radford  
Chair]
    A --> C[Saishri Singaraja  
Secretary]
    B --> D[Carine Umutoniwase  
Committee Member]
    B --> E[Yantao Song  
Committee Member]
    B --> F[Honorine Franswah  
Committee Member]
    B --> G[Tim Signal  
Committee Member]
    B --> H[Sylvie Hermann-Le Denmat  
Committee Member]
  
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Request to join the HSW Rep Community of Interest Group via hsw@auckland.ac.nz

Let's talk about tech neck

Tech neck is the term used to describe the neck pain and damage sustained from looking down at your cell phone, tablet, or other wireless devices too frequently and for too long. Using a mobile device can often lead to poor posture and symptoms of tech neck while using technology.

A human head weights approximately 5kg when upright and is balanced by a thin bone which weighs much less than your head. When we use mobile phones, we bend our heads by up to 45 degree. In that position our head puts a force the equivalent of 22kg. When we bend further to approach 60 degrees, this force increases to 27 Kg.



Symptoms of tech neck include common complaints such as headaches, stiff necks, neck spasms, and pain between your shoulder blades. However, tech neck can also cause issues beyond your neck and shoulders such as lower back pain, headaches, herniated disks and joint pain. The root cause, tech neck, is often overlooked. To prevent tech neck, focus on maintaining proper posture, taking regular breaks, and making ergonomic adjustments to your device usage.

What is root cause analysis?

Root cause analysis is the process of discovering the root causes of problems in order to identify appropriate solutions. Root cause analysis assumes that it is much more effective to systematically prevent and solve underlying issues rather than just treating ad hoc symptoms and putting out fires. Root cause analysis can be performed with a collection of principles, techniques, and methodologies that can all be leveraged to identify the root causes of an event or trend. Looking beyond superficial cause and effect, Root cause analysis can show where processes or systems failed or caused an issue in the first place.



The 5 Why's

Let's look at a couple of examples of the 5 Why's which is a method commonly used to determine a root cause.

Problem: A project is over budget.

1. Why? The project scope was expanded.
2. Why? The initial requirements were not well defined.
3. Why? There wasn't enough stakeholder input during the planning phase.
4. Why? The project manager didn't solicit enough feedback.
5. Why? A clear communication plan was not developed.

Problem: A machine is producing defective products.

1. Why? The machine is overheating.
2. Why? The cooling system is malfunctioning.
3. Why? The pump is not working properly.
4. Why? The pump's filter is clogged.
5. Why? The filter wasn't replaced during the scheduled maintenance.

This process is meant to encourage you to ask why more than once or twice, in order to dig below the surface where the symptoms lie and find the root cause. Sometimes you will need more than 5 why's to come up with the root cause. In the same way you may find the root cause in only 3 why's.

Dates in May

- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Road Safety Week 20-26 May
- World Smokefree Day 31 May
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- Pink Shirt Day 16 May <https://pinkshirtday.org.nz/>

Pink Shirt Day 2025 - Friday 16 May

Pink Shirt Day is about working together to stop bullying by celebrating diversity and promoting kindness and inclusiveness.



It's about creating a community where all people feel safe, valued and respected, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion or cultural background.

Pink Shirt Day is the day Aotearoa comes together to take a stand against bullying. The [Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand](#) (MHFNZ) has run the campaign since 2012, inspiring tangata to **Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu, Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora – Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying!**

Celebrated annually around the globe, Pink Shirt Day began in Canada in 2007 when two students took a stand against homophobic bullying after a new student was harassed for wearing pink. Learn more about the Pink Shirt Day kaupapa [here](#).

Pink Shirt Day is funded by your donations. By donating to Pink Shirt Day, you're helping create a kinder, more inclusive Aotearoa, where everyone feels safe, valued, and unafraid to be themselves.

pinkshirtday.org.nz

What is a near miss?

Take, for example, a missing hazard label. If there is no event, the missing label itself is not a near miss, but if an employee is nearly injured by the improperly labelled substance, the event would be considered a near miss.

A near miss report should lead to hazard resolution and preventative measures. However, if the event isn't reported or addressed, a serious injury could easily result—possibly only hours later—from the same or similar circumstances.



What a Near Miss Isn't ...

If the event led to property damage or bodily injury, it is an accident.

Where there wasn't an event or action at all, most people use the terms hazard, safety concern, or unsafe condition. Reporting unsafe conditions is equally important, of course, and some companies roll hazards onto their near miss reporting form while others handle them separately.

The following are examples of a **Near Miss**

Slips, Trips, and Fall Near Misses

1. A worker slips on condensation that had dripped onto the floor but doesn't fall (this time).
2. A worker trips over an unmarked step and falls without injury.
3. A trip occurs when a worker attempts to walk through packaging materials dispersed across the floor.
4. You trip and fall in a dimly lit space.

Narrow Escapes

1. Your leg was momentarily caught between a pallet of materials and a support structure (no injury).
2. A worker's clothing gets caught in machinery; it tears before an injury is sustained.
3. A worker jumps out of the way moments before getting hit by a hot item being carried by another worker through a narrow walkway, narrowly avoiding severe burns.
4. A piece of cladding falls from a building to the footpath below, narrowly missing pedestrians.

Signage & Hazard Communication

1. An area of the workplace is under construction, but employees weren't notified, so multiple workers walk through the area without taking proper precautions.

Mānuka Honey from New Zealand – Good from the Outside In

For generations, Māori communities in Aotearoa New Zealand have turned to the native mānuka plant for its powerful healing properties. When bees gather nectar from the delicate white and pink mānuka flowers, the result is one of nature's most remarkable honeys. Originally prized as a natural remedy for wounds and skin infections, mānuka honey is now backed by modern science and used not only on the skin but to support digestion, immunity, and overall wellbeing — proving it's truly good from the outside in.

What Is Mānuka Honey?

Mānuka honey originates from the nectar of the native *Leptospermum scoparium* plant, known as mānuka, which grows in the rugged landscapes of New Zealand. Its use dates back to indigenous Māori communities, who valued mānuka for its medicinal properties, applying it to wounds, burns, and infections as a natural antiseptic. Unlike ordinary honey, mānuka honey contains methylglyoxal (MGO), an active compound that gives it potent antibacterial properties. This breakthrough led to its formal adoption in medical wound-care applications, with hospitals and clinicians using it to aid healing in burns, surgical wounds, and diabetic ulcers.

Expanding Its Health Benefits



What began as an external remedy has since progressed into broader health applications. Clinical research has demonstrated that mānuka honey is effective not only for topical care but also for oral and throat health. Thanks to its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, it has become a trusted ingredient in lozenges, sprays, and oral hygiene products, helping to soothe sore throats and support healthy gums.

Now, scientific interest is shifting toward its internal health benefits. Emerging studies suggest that mānuka honey could play a key role in supporting:

- Gut Microbiome & Digestive Health – Research indicates that mānuka honey may help balance gut bacteria, potentially aiding digestion and easing symptoms of conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).
- Immune Function – With its natural antimicrobial activity, mānuka honey could support immune defences, helping the body fend off infections.
- Antibiotic Support for Respiratory Health – Some promising studies are exploring how mānuka honey may assist in fighting antibiotic-resistant lung infections, offering a natural adjunct to traditional treatments.

Read more about the gold standard of [Mānuka Honey](#).

umf.org.nz, April 2025

Training Dates



- [Fire Safety and Warden Training](#)
- [First Aid Refresher](#)
- [Comprehensive First Aid Course \(with Online Pre-Learning\)](#)
- [Health and Safety Representative Training: Stage 1](#)
- [Health and Safety Representative Training: Stage 2](#)
- [Health and Safety: Role of a Leader and Manager](#)
- [Moving and Handling Training \(Manual Handling\): On-demand sessions](#)
- [Chemical Safety Management in Labs](#)
- [An Introduction to Personal Safety & De-escalation: On-demand sessions](#)
- [Mental Health 101 \(MH101\)](#)
- [Incident Management & Investigation course](#)

- [Risk Assessment](#) : University staff and students often work in situations where they can be exposed to risk. Effective risk assessments are essential to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students, contractors and visitors. This workshop will assist staff in understanding how to undertake a successful work-related risk assessment for activities and locations. This course is suitable for members of staff and postgraduate students involved in the risk assessment process.

Your HSW team

Should you need to contact the University of Auckland's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team your contacts can be found [here](#)

Whakatauki

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi Engari, he toa takitini

My successes are not mine alone, they are ours – the greatest successes we will have are from working together

(Tātai Aho Rau Core Education)

[Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.](#)