

Te Korowai Whakaruruhau

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service



July 2026

WHAT'S NEW, FOR YOU?

The Wellbeing Pulse is coming

From **22 July to 5 August**, all permanent and fixed-term staff (with 3+ months of service) will be invited to participate in the University's [Wellbeing Pulse Survey](#).

As Health, Safety, and Wellbeing colleagues, your voice and advocacy are so important. Please complete the survey when it arrives on 22 July and encourage the teams around you to do the same.

This 21-question survey takes 5-10 minutes to complete and is designed to help build a clearer picture of staff experiences of workplace wellbeing.

Drawing on themes heard through Kōrero Mai, the Wellbeing Pulse also builds on the 2024 wellbeing survey, moving from initial discovery to focused insight that will directly inform and prioritise our new Wellbeing Strategy.

[Privacy, confidentiality and data protections](#) remain the same as Kōrero Mai, and results are reported in aggregate to the University by Culture Amp, helping to inform University-wide priorities and our new Wellbeing Strategy. Results will be shared with all staff from late August.

Keen to help promote the survey to others? Please request communication resources by emailing od@auckland.ac.nz.

WELLBEING DOMAIN

Health and Safety Rep Conference 2026

I can't believe how quickly this year is flying by and it's harder to believe we're already past the midpoint of the year and preparing to celebrate Matariki, with the star cluster visible from 8–11 July (clouds and rain permitting!). The theme for the 2026 national celebrations is **Matariki herenga waka, gathered at the place of canoes.**

As I was reading about this year's theme, it really resonated with me and got me thinking about our 2026 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative Conference, which will be held in November. Matariki herenga waka is about people coming together with different experiences, knowledge and strengths, united by a shared purpose. At the University of Auckland-Waipapa Taumata Rau, that feels particularly meaningful. We all come from different backgrounds and roles, but together we create an environment where HSW people can learn, teach, research and thrive safely while supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone in our community.

Health, safety and wellbeing isn't the responsibility of one team or one person, it's something we all contribute to, and our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative community plays a vital role in making that happen.

One idea we're exploring for this year's conference is:

Many Voices. One Purpose.

Working together to create safer, healthier environments for everyone.

As we begin planning, we'd love to hear from you. What would you like to see at this year's conference? Are there particular topics, speakers, workshops or conversations that would help you in your HSW Representative role?

Please share your ideas in the comments or email us at hsw@auckland.ac.nz.

We'd really value your input and look forward to shaping the conference together.



Pictured: Andrew Phipps, Human Resources Director, opening the 2025 conference

REGULATORS CORNER

Nitrous Oxide Use for Research at the University of Auckland

New Regulations for the use of nitrous oxide have been introduced. Below are the key takeaways:



There is no change for nitrous oxide used in a laboratory, scientific, educational or clinical setting, if it is not being used as a psychoactive substance. For example, these uses are exempt:

- Use as a medical device
- Use in maintenance of laboratory equipment or in other laboratory purposes where there is no administration to humans.

There is a change for nitrous oxide that is being used in **research of nitrous oxide as a psychoactive substance**. If you do or plan to use nitrous oxide for this purpose, please contact Emily Boyd (Chemical Risk Management Advisor) for details on the additional requirements.

Limbic risk explained

The way the human brain responds under pressure is one of the most overlooked drivers of workplace incidents, according to Australian critical risk management specialist Nada Wentzel. And until organisations design systems and processes with that in mind, critical controls will keep failing.

Wentzel, CEO of the Jonah Group, uses the term "limbic risk" to explain why well-designed systems still produce serious incidents. The limbic system – the part of the brain responsible for fast, automatic responses – acts like a boom gate when workers are under sustained pressure, closing off access to the logical prefrontal cortex and rational decision-making.

"When limbic risk is present, the brain defaults to inattention," she told attendees in a recent ecoPortal webinar. The result? Rushing, poor decisions, procedural creep and tunnel vision.

"There's been work done on human factors, which is how people respond. But limbic risk is taking a deeper cut and saying, how does the brain work? How will it respond under pressure?"

Wentzel identifies five limbic risk states which increase risk – pressure, irritation, distraction, fatigue and complacency. *"Complacency is not an attitude problem," she adds. "It is what the brain defaults to if it's doing the same thing day in, day out."*

Her advice for H&S practitioners is to design systems and procedures that support people when they're operating under pressure. This includes making procedures visually accessible, using white space, diagrams and colour, since brain imaging research shows these features activate more effective cognitive processing than dense text.

She also called for training workers to recognise when they are in a limbic risk state, using what she describes as "language interruptions" and personal checks.

But she warns that focusing on just one component won't work. *"It's an interdependency of the three elements that is going to enable us to manage critical risk."*

(Safeguard 15 June 2026)

OUT AND ABOUT WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY

Advice for campus attendance when unwell and displaying symptoms

Protecting our university community from communicable illness and diseases, such as colds, influenza (flu) and other viruses is essential. It helps us to stay safe and to ensure our staff and students can meet their learning and professional goals.

There are several ways we can protect ourselves and others, including vaccination, regular handwashing, mask wearing and staying away from campus when displaying symptoms.

You are at your most infectious and likely to pass on your illness when you start displaying symptoms such as fever, coughing, headache and/or a runny nose. If you have any of these symptoms, consider studying or working from home instead. If you're unable to do so, you are strongly encouraged to wear a mask on campus to prevent any infections passing onto your friends and colleagues.

Vaccination

Many vaccinations are available free within Aotearoa New Zealand. For details, [check the National Immunisation Schedule](#).

The University provides most students and staff with a free influenza vaccination, details of which are on the notice 2026 influenza vaccination for staff and students now available.

When to seek medical advice

Seek medical assistance if you have any of the following symptoms – even just one or two:

• Headache	• Light sensitivity
• Feeling sleepy/drowsiness	• Vomiting
• Fever	• Joint pain
• Stiff neck	

You can get free phone advice from Healthline – call 0800 611 116

If you are enrolled with the [University Health and Counselling Service](#), you can make phone appointments.

For information on Covid-19, read the [latest Te Whatu Ora guidance](#).

Occupational Health Checking at the University

Hearing and Lung Function checking is underway across the university. The University has a duty of care to protect the health and safety of its workers by implementing appropriate occupational health monitoring. This includes providing regular hearing and lung function checks where there is a risk of exposure to noise, dust, fumes, or other respiratory hazards, to ensure early identification of harm

These hearing and lung function checks are relevant to staff members, lecturers and PhD students who may be exposed to health hazards such as excessive noise levels, dust, fumes, and powders. This is particularly relevant for those who regularly work in workshops, grounds, early childcare settings, or supervise/teach music and dance classes where the volume often exceeds 82 dB(A).

If you work in one of these types of environments, talk to your manager about getting a hearing and/or lung function test. Health checks finish on 22 July.

Future date(s) as required will be booked in August/September.

Support at Your Fingertips!

Topics available on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing website

Resources for you: Did you know that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing website offer many helpful University of Auckland standards? A list and links in alphabetical order can be found below.

Health, safety and wellbeing standards

University standards help to ensure that potential hazards are identified, and appropriate controls put in place.

Accident leave and weekly compensation protocol and procedures

Learn about the University's accident leave and weekly compensation protocol and procedures.

Asbestos Management Standard

This standard provides a strategy for management and control of risks from asbestos material at the University of Auckland.

Biological risk management and containment standard

The University's Biological Risk Management and Containment Standard apply to all staff and students who direct or participate in deliberate work that requires biological risk management and containment.

Chemical Risk Management Standard

This standard applies to those at the University who direct or participate in the use of hazardous chemicals.

Emergency Response Standard

This standard applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and tenants whether physically located on university property or elsewhere, and to all premises which are to any extent under the control of the university.

Fire Safety Standard

Fire Safety Standard Learn more about the University's fire safety systems, especially regarding building design.

Health and safety committee's standard

Read about the University of Auckland's health and safety committees standard.

Health and safety incident reporting and management standard

This states the requirements and responsibilities for incident reporting

Health and safety risk management standard

To provide the basis for all faculties, schools, departments and services to identify and assess risks, implement control measures and check progress as part of the broader health and safety management system.

Ionising radiation safety standard

To provide the basis for all faculties, schools, departments and services to identify and assess risks, implement control measures and check progress as part of the broader health and safety management system.

Rehabilitation standards and procedures

Find out more about the University of Auckland's rehabilitation standards and procedures.

Laser safety standard

This overarching standard can be measured against the standards AS/NZS IEC 60825.1 and AS/NZS IEC 60825.14.

Machinery and plant standard

This standard states the minimum requirements for the operation and management of machinery and plant within a workplace.

Monitoring and measuring health and safety standard

Learn about the University of Auckland's monitoring and measuring health and safety standard.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing policies and protocols standard

University standards help to ensure that potential hazards are identified, and appropriate controls put in place.

Health, safety and wellbeing procedures

These support University standards through clarification and provide detailed information of how to meet your obligations.

Health and Safety Rep Community of Interest Group (Col)

The University of Auckland Health and Safety Rep Community of Interest Group currently has over 160 members. The purpose of the group is to represent everyone at the University, bringing a level playing field of representation from across the University to the Senior Leadership HSW Committee meetings.

Information on meetings will be posted on the HSW Rep Community of Interest MS Teams page.

Meetings are hybrid to encourage inclusivity and participation across the University.

Not a member? - request to join the HSW Rep Community of Interest Group via hsw@auckland.ac.nz

GROW YOUR LEARNING

COURSES

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

The Mental Health 101 course gives people the confidence to recognise, relate and respond to people experiencing mental health challenges and reducing stigma and discrimination toward people with mental health challenges.

Evac Chair Train the Trainer Sessions

Phil Jackson is now able to offer train the trainer sessions for the Evac Chairs we have installed. The cost of the session is \$750 + GST, with a maximum of 8 people per session. Anyone wishing to become a trainer must have received training in the use of the chair prior to attendance.

If you know anyone who wishes to deliver Evac Chair training in-house, let us know via email hsw@auckland.ac.nz and we'll set up a session.

REO SPACE

MĀNAWATIA A MATARIKI

Honouring Matariki: Ideas for Recognition and Reflection:

- Cook a meal and offer it to Matariki.
- Plan for the next year.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Have a Matariki feast.
- Plan to grow a garden.
- Write down your wishes for the year.
- Take time to remember loved ones who are no longer with us.

Hei te tau hou, me
whakapakari tō tinana,
kia pai ai tō oranga

*In the new year,
strengthen your body, to
enhance your well-being*



TE RAU ORA

[Read Previous Issues of this Newsletter](#)