

In confidence

Harmful Interactions – Risk Management Deep Dive

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Whāinga | Purpose: For noting

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary to the People and Culture Committee of the risks to our staff and transport workers due to Harmful Interactions (threats and occupational violence), and to advise them of the current work underway to reduce or mitigate these risks.

He kupu whakatau | Recommendations

Management recommends the Board:

- **Notes** paper and presentation about Harmful Interactions and asks and assures itself that actions are reasonably practicable and continues to review risk control data and reports as part of routine Board Reporting.

Take matua | Key points

- Harmful Interactions are experienced in different ways across our agency, for both direct staff and our frontline contractors. Our data and anecdotes indicate occupational violence is increasing and becoming more extreme.
- Our progress and improvements have focussed on staff awareness, training and building a strong sense of the operational and process improvements required to make change (eg improving call waiting times in our contact centre).
- In the last few months and in line with our unprecedented maintenance programme, we have increased public and contractor communications in an effort to lead change and improvement across the sector. This has included public communications campaign, contractor engagement and increased police collaboration.

He kōrero mō tenei kaupapa | Background

Severe storms and the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle resulted in an unprecedented number of road closures and temporary traffic arrangements around Auckland, Northland, Coromandel, Hawke's Bay and Te Tairāwhiti. As travel was disrupted, our contractors and staff reported increased prevalence of threats and aggression in the field.

In one case, a person threatened work crews with a gun, returning to the location on 2 separate occasions. While the person was apprehended by police and the effected contractor taking affirmative action to make their team safe, the Waka Kotahi Board was concerned about the situation and wanted to know what is being done about similar threats generally.

Kia mōhio mai koe | What you need to know

Harmful Interactions are the incidents, interactions and experiences that impact someone's safety and wellbeing – these interactions may be physical, verbal or online. Our data and feedback indicate our contact centres, engagement and partnerships representatives, and traffic control and maintenance teams are most exposed. Whether it results in physical or emotional harm, it is unacceptable, and we aim to get to a point where transport work is respected and no one at work is threatened or harmed in service of their community.

Waka Kotahi is monitoring cases, trends and feedback from all work groups to understand the issue and has developed an action plan to reduce the frequency and impact of these events.

Our data and feedback from industry, indicates cases are increasing and severity of threats more severe.

A working group representing all agency groups is coordinated by our Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team to oversee an improvement project comprising four main areas:

- People – awareness and capability to be safe and demand safety.
- Sector Leadership – driving change across transport sector.
- Customer Services & Operations – protecting our people across our workplaces.
- Frontline engagement – protecting our people and partners who work out in the community.

We are focussed on developing consistent guidance and training for all staff, especially those working at the frontline, facilitating sector engagement, awareness and learning. The action plan is summarised in the table below.

Current Data

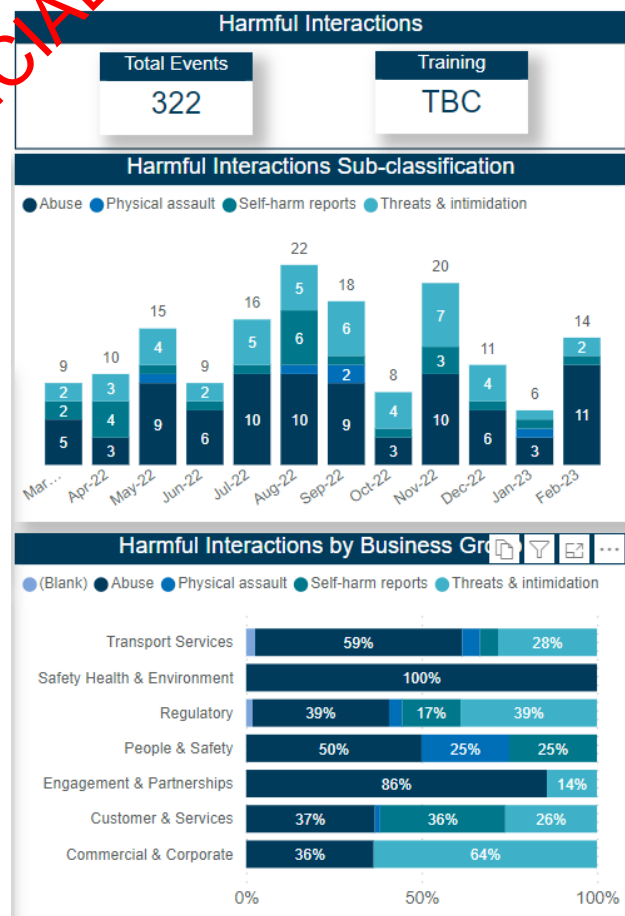
Reporting is volatile and many workers consider threats and disrespect as 'part of the job'.

Our reporting tends toward cases that have 'escalated' or are higher risk.

Customer & Services Engagement & Partnerships and frontline Transport Services contractors receive more threats and verbal abuse than physical harm.

Most causes relate to:

- Contact process – eg long call wait times.
- Debt management and collection (RUC etc)
- Revocation of licences
- Road closures
- Land acquisition or controversial transport planning decisions (e.g. at Community consultation events).



Recent Actions & Success

Our working group and partnerships have allowed us to mature actions from beyond our offices and into the field. Our recent work includes:

Internal

- Virtual Reality (VR) training – experiences and learning for our people to practice in a safe space and hone skills to best respond to threats and difficult situations.
- Intranet homepage – a central and updated mix of safety and engagement resources for our staff.
- Keeping Ourselves Safe – e-learning. RSOLT support all staff completing this module (KPI of 80% completion rate by end of June).

External

- Public advertising campaign featuring frontline teams and edgy content.
- Trip Planner website updated with road work locations and plans (to help the public make better route decisions to avoid road works).

Action Plan & Vision

We have a mission to eliminate the risk and impact of harmful interactions across the whole transport sector. While we have started internally, we want to engage, other agencies, trade unions and our delivery partners to create respect and safety for transport workers across Aotearoa.

We have an action plan in place and a role established in our HSW Team to design, lead and drive the work.

As our Operating Groups develop their specific HSW Actions, Harmful Interaction elements will be included, and Harmful interactions will continue to feature in routine operational and governance reporting.

He whakaaro anō | Other key considerations

Hauora me te haumaru | Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This paper describes a good example of how Health, Safety & Wellbeing, Human Resource Management and Operational Management intersect to get good or better outcomes for our people. No further HSW considerations are determined by this paper at this time.

Ngā whakariringa | Attachments

Attachment 1

Harmful Interactions – Action Plan Overview

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Attachment 1

Harmful Interactions – Action Plan Overview

Strategic Element	Element Objectives	Work Completed	Current Work Plan
People - Awareness & Capability Building awareness of the scope and impact of Harmful Interactions across all of Waka Kotahi through our communications processes, and training.	Harmful Interactions are recognised and never accepted by anyone at Waka Kotahi. Training, support and systems are in place to protect everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HI guidance and links on On Ramp • HI debrief guidance for people leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed data deep dive and HI Working Group actions •
(Sector) Safety Leadership Waka Leading change across policy, PT operators, partners.	We engage the transport industry to understand the risk, harness best practice and help everyone protect workers in every setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for industry learning and engagement – forum • Online Awareness and communications programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade union engagement & collaboration • Online Awareness and communications programme. • Industry engagement and planning (as part of HSW forum)
Customer Service & Operations Transport workers at the frontline, including construction workers and licensing agents	Frontline people are not exposed to disrespect or people set to threaten, mistreat or harm. Our processes, systems and platforms create respectful and positive customer outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Operating Procedures and incident reporting/GOTCHA • Construction sector communications, engagement and awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HI questions within site project health check • Operational process reviews – aims to reduce wait times, enhance operator training and support.
Frontline engagement Our people going out into the community to work on transport initiative – regulatory, land acquisition, events, community engagement	Our work is respected and understood as supporting communities with sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational safety VR module (RS) • Lone worker guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event plans & templates • Landowner engagement training and Land Acquisition Resolution Service (TS) • Situational safety practical skills workshop (RS). • Update VR and other training to consider transport services scenarios.