

## **New Workplace Health and Safety Council begins work**

The Workplace Health and Safety Council has been set up to advise government on workplace health and safety matters. The Council will provide leadership and co-ordination, and advice on relevant legislation, standards and policies. In particular, Council members will focus on the best ways to make progress with the Workplace Health and Safety Strategy for New Zealand to 2015.

For the Strategy to work, government, industry and employers, and individual workplaces and employees must all play a part in reaching its vision, 'Healthy people in safe and productive workplaces'.

The Council is well placed to build consensus among the groups involved, with its tripartite membership: the seven-member group includes government, employer and employee perspectives on workplace health and safety. Ex officio members are the Hon Ruth Dyson, Minister of Labour and Minister for ACC, Phil O'Reilly, chief executive of Business New Zealand, and Ross Wilson, president of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

Other members, appointed to the Council for an initial term of three years, bring valuable interest and experience in workplace health and safety to the Council. They are Carol Beaumont, secretary of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, Andrew Casidy, general secretary of the finance sector union Finsec, Paul Jarvie, manager Occupational Health and Safety at the Employers and Manufacturers Association (Northern), and Panu Raea, barrister and managing director of a consultancy company which specialises in environmental, health and safety and risk management and 2003 Pacific Business Leader of the Year.

The Council held its first meeting on Tuesday 22 May 2007. A key item for the Council will be the priority measures, both short and long-term, to achieve the Strategy vision. Working together, government, business, unions and communities can all play their part in making workplaces healthier and safer.