

THE BATTLE LINES OF US VS THEM

I'm only a few months into my role as CEO of MinEx but the key message I want to get across is we all have skin in this game. Sometimes our own skin.

Too often in life we get into the Us and Them game. Battle lines are drawn. 'It's not us.' My experiences working in quarries and mines over a lifetime is we are all in this together.

That's certainly where I see the real issues in health and safety in the New Zealand extractives industry. The new H+S at Work Act underscores this; everyone shares responsibility. Worker to Director. We can no longer sit on our hands believing that we are managing safety well, and that it is others who are having harm incidents.

The other major focus is on generally improving the industry's image following the Pike River disaster in 2010, and eight extractive industry fatalities since. We have to show we are a good industry to work in and can get our health and safety to a level society expects - firstly by lifting our compliance and secondly with increased community engagement. I'd like to see a greater industry-driven level of compliance. Companies need to stand up and ensure

people who aren't compliant are helped to get there. There has to be improvement.

The industry in Australia and New Zealand is very similar, although Australia is probably further ahead in terms of health and safety largely because it experienced large-scale mining disasters earlier than New Zealand. Health and safety legislation on either side of the Tasman is generally written with the larger players in mind which can cause problems for smaller operators who struggle to comply.

When it comes to assessing risks I am pleased to see a rethink underway from looking at every potential risk to a specific focus on serious harm and death injuries. We need to focus on the fatal hazards in our industry and the key areas where these mostly occur; falls, collision, entanglement and pressure release.

Quarries and mines are two parts of the same whole; we earn our living from what we extract and while we often point to the

differences, the rest of society sees us as two sides of the same coin. If we want to emerge from the dark side, there has to be an end to Us and Them.



PROFILE

WAYNE scan

Wayne Scott took up the role of CEO of MinEx in New Zealand in July after 30 years working in Australia, most recently for the Queensland government.