

Barbara Hegan
Cancer Society of New Zealand
National Office
Level 2 Red Cross House
69 Molesworth Street
WELLINGTON



4 May 2012

Dear Barbara

Cancer Society of New Zealand submission on Department of Labour's Occupational Health Action Plan

Thank you for your correspondence in regards to the Cancer Society of New Zealand (CSNZ) submission on the Occupational Health Action Plan (the Plan). I apologise for the length of time it has taken to get back to you, our colleague who worked on the Plan is currently on secondment and without her insight it has taken a bit longer to look into this issue.

We did receive the CSNZ's submission on the Plan and our usual process is to send out an automatic response acknowledging submission. I apologise that you did not receive a response and thank you for bringing the oversight to our attention. CSNZ's submission was included in the summary of submissions analysis undertaken by the Department and was used to inform the final design of the Plan.

One of the changes we made as a result of CSNZ's submission was to re-name the priority hazard from 'occupational carcinogens' to 'cancer-causing agents in the workplace' to be more accurate and inclusive of issues such as UVR exposure for outdoor workers. UVR exposure is covered by the 'cancer-causing agents' focus of the Plan but we acknowledge that the revised document does not explicitly reference the hazard of UVR exposure. The lack of explicit reference should not be taken to mean that UVR exposure as a hazard is not covered by the Plan, it just reflects the wide range of cancer-causing agents in the workplace and by keeping the focus broad we will incorporate further cancer-causing agents as we become aware of them. This is in line with research into sectors with a high number of outdoor workers (such as "Effective Occupational Health Interventions in Agriculture") where a wide range of cancers are identified and a broad definition is called for.

I hope this addresses your concerns in regards to your submission. Input from submitters is essential and we value the knowledge they provide.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Murphy,
Manager, Workplace Health and Safety Policy