



**Event Cancelled!**  
**29 July 2014**

Renewed emphasis on safety in New Zealand workplaces since the Pike River disaster is making life more complicated for companies.

Organisations are under greater obligation to ensure their workers come to no harm. For companies working with the public, this level of responsibility is even higher.

Companies which stage public events are particularly affected, to the point where the increased cost of compliance can force cancellations.

Until recently, most event medical intervention services were provided by St John which recently it hiked its prices [source *Otago Daily Times*, 3 Feb 2014], putting it out of range for many smaller organisations.

Now, however, the burgeoning number of paramedical service providers changes the problem from “how to afford it” to “who to choose”. This also assists to relieve delivery pressures on the St John's service which have been regularly reported in the media.

Australasian Safety Management Group (ASMG), is a new paramedical consultancy that works with companies – in particular event management companies.

The first of its kind in New Zealand, it ensures all aspects of the health and safety process are considered, planned for and provided.

Directors, Graham Roper and Kevin Thompson, say ASMG identifies the risks and regulations around running an event and compiles them into a Request For Proposal that is put out to tender.

The company running the event chooses the successful tenderer and works with them to ensure the appropriate level of coverage is provided.

Once the event is over, ASMG audits the service provided to ensure it was up to standard.

Graham Roper says, “The cost of providing medical coverage is, in many instances, prohibitive. For instance, St John has recently raised its prices for attending such events – known as private hire – by 38-percent.”

Rally of Otago recently used ASMG's service. Chairman Norman Oakley says it saved 20-percent by doing so.

"Medical cover is one of the most significant costs of running the rally – at around \$160 per competitor – and the costs just keep going up.

"ASMG acted as a broker, writing a specification on what was required for the event and tendering it out. We received three proposals back and chose the one that best fitted what we needed. It wasn't necessarily the cheapest and nor was it our historical provider but the company chosen did a good job."

Graham Roper's medical background, Oakley says, meant he could "talk the language of medical qualifications and standards" which the event organisers were unfamiliar with.

Motorsport New Zealand, too, supports the service ASMG is offering. Brian Budd, who heads the organisation, says, "They're offering a product at a level we expect and we encourage organisations throughout the country to explore this option."

Mark Wederell, manager of the Mike Pero Motorsport Park in Christchurch, says the new service is expected to save his organisation up to \$9000 per year. Although that's not the reason they decided to use it.

"I was being approached by different providers, each telling me a different story. It was confusing. ASMG is able to deal with everyone on my behalf, simplifying the process. Graham Roper has detailed knowledge of the industry so it saves me time not having to meet with each provider."

Mark Wederell says the auditing aspect of the service is also an advantage. "In the past we could only assume we got what we paid for, but ASMG checks the skill level of the personnel provided against what was promised. Then we pay accordingly."

All of which, Kevin Thompson says, "Is a win-win all round."

The rules have changed around health and safety provisions at events and are now more strict than in the past. As Graham Roper says, "What got you to here, will no longer get you to there."

**ENDS**

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