



Business Leaders'
Health & Safety Forum

Leading the Change:

Creating Safer & More Productive Work Together

**Electricity Supply Industry Health and Safety
Workshop**

EEA

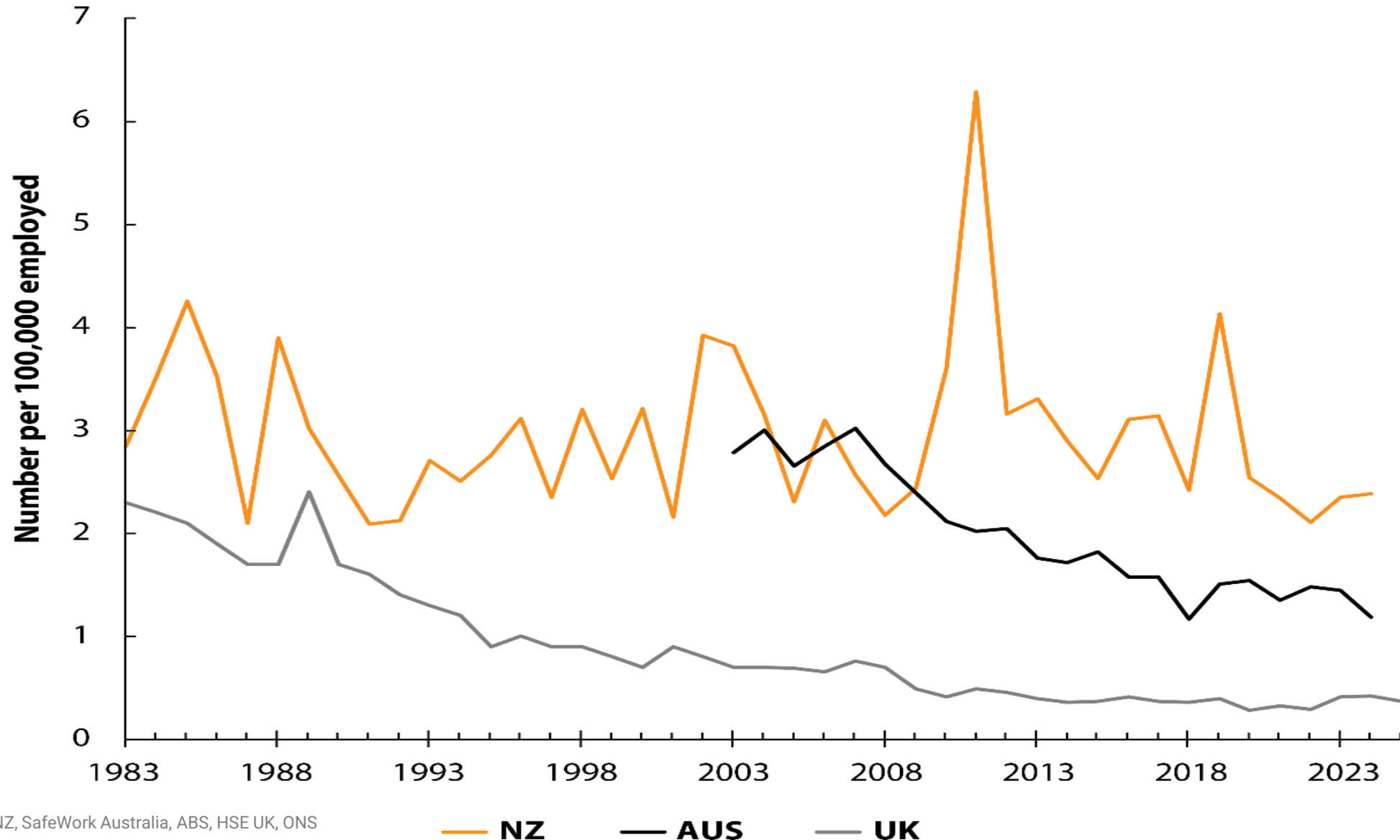
12 August 2026



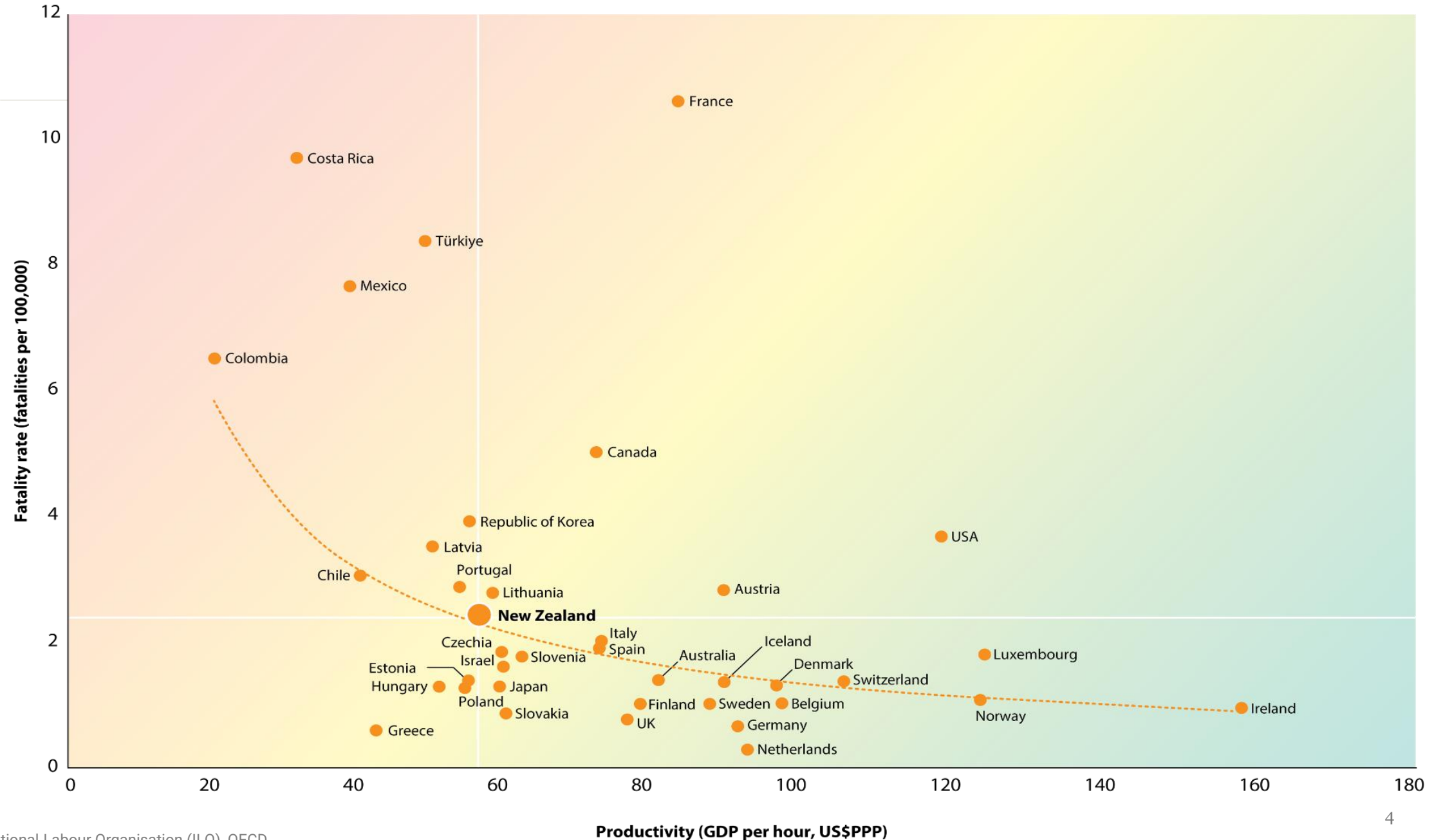
Workplace death in Mt Wellington



Workplace fatality rate: NZ, UK & Australia



Fatalities vs productivity



Business leaders have a choice about safety... ... an opportunity or a burden

Safety provides a **unique, high-quality lens** into business performance:

- Equipment and tool quality
- work design and procedures
- leadership effectiveness and supervisor quality
- Communication quality
- Resource sufficiency

Use safety as a **strategic and operational diagnostic**, not a compliance burden to understand and improve

- productivity
- quality
- workforce capability
- resilience

70 years of leadership thinking is clear It's the system not the individual

“94% of problems belong to the system, 6% belong to the worker”

W. Edwards Deming – one of the fathers of quality

“If the worker has been blamed, then there has been no kaizen”

(aka no continual improvement) Taiichi Ohno – Exec Vice President Toyota 1975-1978

“Operators tend to be the inheritors of system defects”

James Reason – author of the Swiss Cheese model

“Error is normal - context drives behaviours”

Todd Conklin – one of the fathers of Human Organisational Performance (HOP)

Work as Written

How work is specified

Policies, procedures, targets, schedules, plans and formal expectations about how work should be carried out.

Work as Adapted

How work is adjusted in practice

How people adapt work in response to real conditions, constraints, priorities and trade-offs.





Ask better questions...when things go wrong

<u>T</u>ELL me...	what happened and how it happened
<u>E</u>XPLAIN to me...	the conditions under which this occurred
<u>D</u>ESCRIBE to me...	how this played out – how did we get here – tell me the story
<u>S</u>HOW me...	where this happened, where it has happened before, and other places it could happen

...or from normal work...

<u>T</u>ELL me...	What doesn't make sense to you
<u>E</u>XPLAIN to me...	What is different than we told you or has changed
<u>D</u>ESCRIBE to me...	What makes things harder than they should be
<u>S</u>HOW me...	Where things are riskier than they should be because of our systems or processes

Time to reframe the choice for our leaders

Leadership opportunity

Accept error is normal

Better understand work-as-adapted

Learn and improve rather than blame

Change the work

Management burden

Compliance as your “ceiling”

“Brain fart” incident causation

Police boxes being ticked

Change the worker

