



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 October 2015

Contact Energy brings global safety guru to Taranaki

Contact Energy is bringing global health and safety guru Dr Todd Conklin to Taranaki on Tuesday 20th October to lead workshops at the Stratford Power Station with its local team of employees and contractors.

Dr Conklin, Senior Advisor for Organisational and Safety Culture at Los Alamos National Laboratory in the USA, is a leader in new thinking about safety in the workplace and urges organisations to focus on enabling their employees to 'fail safely' rather than become preoccupied by an 'absence of accidents'.

"As an energy generator and retailer, Contact Energy's priority is providing a safe and healthy work environment in what is a high-risk industry," says Contact Energy CEO Dennis Barnes.

"We're advancing our approach from a culture dominated by compliance and rules to one where we are constantly learning and improving with strong two-way trust between management and those working at the front line.

"Our hope is that Dr Conklin, as a global leader in this field backed by his significant academic and professional expertise, will inspire and support our continued progress."

"Our Stratford based team have a huge focus on ensuring that everything we do here is carried out safely", says Paul Fougere, Contact's Head of Generation – Taranaki.

"Earlier this year we achieved the milestone of three-years without a recordable safety incident, but we know we must remain vigilant and constantly look for ways to improve, which is why it's fantastic to have Dr Conklin working with us."

Since Dr Conklin's first visit in 2014, Contact has already implemented changes such as adding learning teams as another tool to learn and improve from safety incidents, complementing the more traditional technical investigations. Learning teams explore the 'how' elements behind incidents.

Another change in Contact's safety leadership approach involves a shift from needing information immediately following an incident to one of support. This change has helped advance Contact's safety culture towards one of empowerment at the 'sharp end', where safety risks are managed each and every day away from a reactive culture of "what the hell happened, and who did it" from Head Office.

And evidence shows that Contact's safety culture is advancing through these small changes



which have supported a 55% performance improvement in Contact's main safety indicator for their 2015 financial year.

Dr Conklin holds a Ph.D. in organisational behaviour from the University of New Mexico, is also the author of several books, including the best-selling Pre-Accident Investigations, in which he defines safety as: "Safety is the ability for workers to be able to do work in a varying and unpredictable world."

For Dr Conklin, a change in leadership thinking is critical, moving from a blame culture where workers are regarded as problems that need to be fixed, to a generative learning culture where workers are seen as solutions to be harnessed.

ENDS

For media: Dr Conklin can provide an international perspective on critical issues in New Zealand such as the new Health and Safety at Work regulatory framework which will come into effect in April 2016, major safety incidents such as Pike River and Contact Energy's performance as a company that is ahead of the curve in changing New Zealand's organisational safety behaviour.

About Contact

Contact is one of New Zealand's largest electricity generators and retailers, powering around 562,500 customers across the country with electricity, natural gas and LPG supported by a team of around 1,050 based in communities throughout New Zealand. www.contact.co.nz

Media enquiries:

Shaun Jones,
Corporate communications
ph: 64 4 462 1058 mob: 64 21 204 4521