

Deloitte Fast 50: Health and safety costs not hindering dangerous business

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“IFS Growth chief executive James Treadwell says you cannot put a price on staff safety in forestry.”

Some businesses want the next government to reduce health and safety costs, but one business in a dangerous industry says paying to save lives has not hindered its growth.

The New Zealand Chambers of Commerce's Business Election Manifesto released last week, said some of 990 businesses surveyed want health and safety compliance costs cut by the incoming Government.

Forestry company IFS Growth boss James Treadwell said almost half of his business expenditure was for health and safety, but he would not have it any other way.

IFS manages forests for land owners. Treadwell said its major safety costs included salaries for forest supervisors, staff training and software licensing.

If the Government did not require him to comply with safety regulations, he would still pay to keep his employees safe, he said.

Doing so has not held his business back. It was listed on the Deloitte Fast 50 last year with 721 per cent annual revenue growth.



SCOTT HAMMOND/STUFF

Three people have died at forestry sites this year.

He said health and safety was ingrained in the business and most of the money spent on it was self imposed not enforced by WorkSafe New Zealand.

"I struggle to see how any other business can actually say they have a lot of compliance costs. What they are actually saying is lives are not important."

A WorkSafe spokesman said he was surprised that so many businesses called for a cut to health and safety costs because the legislation left most choices up to the individual business.

The Health and Safety at Work Act requires businesses to ensure safety where ever is '[reasonably practicable](#)'. It says all staff must be involved in making that happen, including contractors and visitors.

The spokesman agreed that health and safety should not be looked upon as a cost.

"Compliance is the wrong way of looking at it. It is looking after workers.

"We typically say that good health and safety is good for business."

Treadwell said if his business did not follow all reasonable health and safety steps, it would not be in business given the high death rate of its industry. Three forestry workers have [died](#) at work this year.

"We are doing everything we can so I can sleep at night."

He said that businesses in industries at lower risk of fatalities and injuries could be spending too much time ticking boxes.

Treadwell said he wanted health and safety agencies to be consistent, not cheaper.

"All I want is consistency across the country."

- Stuff