



Independent Forensic Practitioners Institute
Annual Seminar Day
14 September 2024
 Rydges Hotel Federal Street

<p>11.00 – 11.30</p>	<p>Arrival and registration.</p> <p>Tea and coffee.</p>
<p>11.30 – 12.30</p>	<p>Dr Suzanne Blackwell MNZM</p> <p>The psychologist as an expert witness; the trials and tribulations</p> <p>This address will begin with a brief overview of my experience as an expert witness over the last far too many years. This has included risk assessments for Parole Boards, and for the Court in relation to Preventive Detention sentences, Extended Supervision Orders, and Public Safety Orders. This experience has also included, since 1981, the provision of specialist reports to the Family Court pursuant to the Care of Children Act and the Oranga Tamariki Act. Since 1991, I have provided expert evidence in child sexual abuse trials, and more recently, since the new Evidence Act 2006, educative counterintuitive expert evidence about child sexual abuse, rape myths and intimate partner violence. My expert evidence has also involved providing critiques of the reports of other expert witnesses in terms of the methodology used.</p> <p>I will discuss some research we undertook about jurors’ beliefs about expert witnesses and what we might learn from this. I will also touch on the importance of adhering to the evidential basis and mention our other research that significantly accurately predicted jury verdicts in child sexual abuse trials, even before the trial had begun.</p> <p>However, the main thrust of my address will be to discuss why the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses is our friend and what factors might be an impediment to fulfilling our obligations to this code and to the court, as well as maintaining a good reputation as a neutral expert witness, rather than a hired gun.</p>
<p>12.30 - 1.15</p>	<p>Lunch</p>

1.15 – 1.45	<p>Dr Nicholas Powell</p> <p>Future availability of renewable transport fuels in New Zealand – can we make enough?</p> <p>Use of petroleum-derived transport fuels produces problematic emissions of CO₂, a long-lived greenhouse gas. Hydrogen has been suggested as a replacement for fossil fuels, but requires significant energy to produce, compress and distribute, and is far from ideal as a fuel for aeroderivative gas turbines or heavy transport vehicles.</p> <p>Alternatives to hydrogen would consume more electricity than New Zealand currently produces. Liquid biofuels can be produced from crops but would require a significant percentage of New Zealand’s land area to be cultivated for fuel crops.</p> <p>Yield calculations suggest that the need to decarbonize aviation and heavy transport, and the practical difficulties involved in biofuels production mean that New Zealand will face future shortages of renewable transport fuels, electricity, or both.</p>
1.45 – 2.45	<p>Thomas Coyle MNZM</p> <p>Evolution of Forensic Science at Crime scenes</p> <p>"Every contact leaves a trace." This foundational idea, known as Locard's Exchange Principle, was established by Dr. Edmond Locard in 1920. Locard asserted that when two objects come into contact, they exchange material, however minute. This principle laid the groundwork for the field of forensic science.</p> <p>In the early 20th century, forensic science was limited by the tools and techniques available. The digital age has brought about significant advancements in forensic techniques incorporating high-tech tools (AFIS technology) and sophisticated methods like DNA profiling.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the field of forensic science is poised to continue its rapid evolution. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and advanced genetic techniques promise to further enhance the accuracy and efficiency of forensic investigations.</p>
2 - 45 – 3.00	Tea break

3.00 - 3.45	<p>Dr Leo Schep</p> <p>Alcohol and the Law</p> <p>Due to its widespread use in society, excess consumption of alcohol can lead to undesirable effects, including impairment. Alcohol, therefore, is regarded as the single most important drug in forensic toxicology. Laws regarding drinking and driving are predominantly centred on proving excessive blood concentration obtained from breath analysis and, in some cases, measuring blood concentration. This talk will discuss the methods police use, their advantages and potential failing, due to recent changes in an amendment to the Land Transport Act (2015).</p>
3.45 – 4.15	<p>University of Auckland Faculty of Forensic Science</p> <p>3 students of forensic science will provide a brief outline of their studies.</p>
4.15 – 5.00	<p>Steve Alexander</p> <p>Compliance with the rules of evidence in civil jurisdiction</p> <p>As time permits, Steve will discuss the law of evidence, how compliance with the High Court rules is simple but not easy and some challenges experts have writing evidence. Applying best practice for instructing experts could also assist with providing consistent evidence helpful to the Court.</p>
5.00	Drinks at the bar.

Dinner will follow at a Viaduct Harbour restaurant.

Bookings are now open:

Members \$140

Non members \$200

The venue is Rydges Hotel and Conference Centre, Federal Street.
Registration includes lunch, tea and coffee and all speakers.

Please register your interest by **28 AUGUST** by emailing secretary Leo Schep leo.schep@toxinform.com. Please make payments direct to:

INDEPENDENT FORENSIC PRACTITIONERS INSTITUTE INCORPORATED

Account number: 38 9005 0055036 00

IFPI	Seminar day	Your surname
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Please book early to allow catering numbers to be confirmed.

Speaker Biographies:

Dr Suzanne Blackwell is a clinical and forensic psychologist and a Fellow of the New Zealand Psychological Society. She has provided expert evidence for both prosecution and defence, and has advised counsel on pre-trial and trial matters. She headed a sexual risk assessment team for the Medical Council of New Zealand in the years 2003 to 2023, and from 1987 to 2020 chaired disciplinary conduct committees for the New Zealand Psychologists' Board. She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Psychology, University of Auckland. In 2004-2007 she conducted research into jurors' knowledge of child sexual abuse issues, this project being funded by the New Zealand Law Foundation. She has published in the area of child sexual abuse and trial issues. In 2011, she was awarded the Ballin Award by the New Zealand Psychological Society for "her significant contributions to psychology and the legal profession." With Emeritus Professor Fred Seymour, she was an editor of the book, Psychology and the Law in Aotearoa New Zealand (2011, 2018, 2021, and 2022). She is on the verge of complete retirement.

Suzanne was admitted as Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2024 Kings Birthday Honours List for services to clinical and forensic psychology and the law.

Dr Nick Powell is a court-going forensic scientist who gives evidence on drugs, firearms and physical evidence. He also works in the areas of transport fuels, energy and industrial chemistry. Nick is a foundation member of the Independent Forensic Practitioners Institute.

Mr Thomas Coyle worked for the Metropolitan Police in London from 1988 to 2004 in forensic roles, before holding senior forensic roles with the New Zealand Police in Auckland from 2004 to 2017.

Mr Coyle has been a Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) expert at many events including the 2004 Asian Boxing Day Tsunami, the 2010 Fox Glacier air crash and the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. He has been instrumental in the implementation of new finger/palm print recovery techniques in New Zealand including his published research into the use of Acid Violet in examining major crime scenes. His business Forensic Insight Ltd., established in 2019, provides the public insight into the Crime Scene Investigation process. He has taught forensic science nationally for the Ministry of Education and has provided forensic exhibit courses for the Auckland District Law Society.

He has volunteered in Auckland's performing arts sector. He has co-managed Centrestage Youth Theatre, supporting workshops for ages five to seventeen. He was a judge for the Northern Area Performance Theatre Awards from 2015 to 2017. He has been stage manager for several major theatre productions including 'The Producers', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Kids on Broadway' and 'Hair'. Mr Coyle has held numerous other behind the scenes roles for productions at Auckland theatres since 2008.

Thomas was admitted as Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2024 Kings Birthday Honours List for services to the New Zealand Police, Disaster Victim Identification and theatre.

Dr Leo Schep was employed by the University of Otago for 32 years, 19 of which were with the National Poisons Centre. There he provided poison information concerning all aspects of human acute and chronic poisoning, lectured on Forensic Toxicology, and publishing over 50 papers and 6 book chapters. He has also provided advice, and presented seminars, to the New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Emergency Departments, and other health care providers. He has also provided teaching seminars throughout the country, to various community organisations, Maraes, and secondary schools. He established his consultancy firm, ToxInform Ltd, in 2008, where he continues to provide expert opinions in various court cases, both in Australia and New Zealand.

Steve Alexander has been a pioneer of forensic investigation of buildings in New Zealand, has investigated over 1000 defective buildings, attended over 500 mediations in his capacity as an expert on mechanisms of building failure and presented evidence in courts periodically over 27 years. He is also a Fellow of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute, on panels lists for mediation, adjudication and arbitration and on a panel for dispute resolution arising under the Natural Hazards Insurance Act.