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What is the NSW Mining Competence Board?
The NSW Mining Competence Board is a statutory board that advises the Minister of Resources and Energy and the mine safety regulator on the:

- setting of competence standards
- standards for assessing competence
- requirements for the maintenance of competence

for exercising functions at a mine that impact on the health and safety of any person.

It is established under the *Work Health and Safety (Mines) Act 2013* and *Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulation 2014*.

The NSW Mining Competence Board (the board) comprises people representing the interests of employers and employees, officers of NSW Department of Industry (the department) and independents with expertise in the development and assessment of competence standards for people performing functions at mines. The board is chaired by an independent chairperson.

Vision
To improve mine safety by contributing to the development of world-leading competence standards in the NSW mining and extractive industries.

Objectives
The NSW Mining Competence Board aims to ensure the competence of people performing safety critical roles in NSW mining operations, as part of an overall strategy to improve mine safety performance by:

- maintaining a strategic focus on significant competence issues
- undertaking consultation with all relevant stakeholders when progressing competence matters
- ensuring processes are put in place to quickly identify emerging issues and respond accordingly
- liaising with other jurisdictions, with an aim to promote consistency in competence standards
- ensuring that all key stakeholders have access to consistent and accurate information regarding competence standards.

How can I find out more information?
For comprehensive information on the board and its activities, see the webpage:


The role of the NSW Department of Industry as the regulator
The department takes advice from the board on how to carry out its functions under the WHS (Mines) legislation to:

- determine the requirements for certificates of competence and conduct examinations
- administer the issuing of certificates of competence and practising certificates, including requirements to maintain competence.

How can I contact the board?
NSW Mining Competence Board c/- NSW Department of Industry
PO Box 344, Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310
Ph: 02 4931 6636 Email: mcb.secretariat@industry.nsw.gov.au
Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the Mining Competence Board’s five-year Strategic Plan to 2020.

The plan outlines how the board will function and advise myself and the mine safety regulator on setting and assessing competency standards for statutory functions that are world leading in contributing to workplace safety and health in NSW mining (coal, metalliferous and extractives).

The board is a tripartite forum between the NSW Department of Industry, the NSW Minerals Council, Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia, the Australian Workers Union and the CFMEU – Mining and Energy Division. The board also has independent members who will assist the board.

The board is one of the government’s consultation processes with the industry on work health and safety issues. It is a tripartite body that provides a forum for stakeholders to understand different perspectives on complex issues and how they can be addressed. The board provides advice on the development of competence standards for statutory functions and the assessment of candidates. It engages with key stakeholders to develop effective and efficient competency standards that contribute to a productive and safe workplace.

The Strategic Plan to 2020 focuses on modernising certificates of competence and implementing the new practising certificate scheme. At my request, the plan was developed to address key priority issues for statutory functions.

The NSW government is committed to working with industry employers, workers and their representatives to provide safe and healthy mining work places that support economically vibrant regional communities.

I call on the industry and key stakeholders to continue contributing to the work of the Mining Competence Board that will improve the industry’s already world-class health and safety performance. The board will work in collaboration with all industry sectors to address the work health and safety competency matters it has identified in this plan.

Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Resources & Energy
Vision for the strategic plan

To develop an efficient and effective scheme to ensure people carrying out statutory functions under Work Health & Safety (WHS) laws are competent to carry out those roles to best practice WHS and engineering standards.

The four strategies

![Image of four strategies]

Summary of objectives and outcomes

<table>
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| 1. Develop world leading competence standards for statutory functions | 1.1 Develop a scheme for managing the standards for certificates of competence.  
1.2 Develop effective and efficient assessments for certificates of competence.  
1.3 Integrate specific requirements for emerging skills set into standards and assessments. |
| 2. Develop a scheme for practising certificates | 2.1 Advise on a scheme for the issuing of practising certificates.  
2.2 Establishing requirements for maintaining competence to hold a practising certificate. |
| 3. Identify and address emerging issues for statutory functions | 3.1 Develop guidance for continuing professional development for statutory functions requiring certificates.  
3.2 Monitor the mining industry for changes that may impact on the operation of the competency schemes for certificates. |
| 4. Develop and implement a collaborative communication strategy | 4.1 Develop a communication strategy for informing stakeholders.  
4.2 Develop key messages to be communicated.  
4.3 Adopt a collaborative approach. |
Introduction

The Mining Competence Board has developed this strategic plan to pursue its vision over the next five years.

This Strategic Plan to 2020 will contribute to achieving the Resources & Energy goal of safe and sustainable extraction of resources for the economic benefit of NSW, with operations at best practice health, safety and engineering standards.

Over the next five years, the board will pursue four strategies to achieve its objectives:

1. Develop world-leading competence standards for statutory functions requiring certificates of competence.
2. Develop a scheme for practising certificates.
3. Identify and address emerging issues for statutory functions involving certificates of competence.
4. Develop and implement a collaborative communication strategy.

Further action plans and activities will be developed to carry out the strategies, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The board will regularly review the progress of the plan and report to the Minister on an annual basis.
Strategies

1. Develop world-leading competence standards for statutory functions requiring certificates

There are existing competence standards for statutory functions requiring certificates of competence.

Competence standards need to be monitored and revised in response to emerging issues (this is further addressed in strategy 3) to ensure safety standards are maintained. The NSW Mining Competence Board is continuing the work of the previous Coal Competence Board and Metalliferous Mines & Extractive Industries Competence Board to advise the mine safety regulator on updating the competence standards for statutory functions requiring certificates of competence.

The NSW Mining Competence Board will also advise the mine safety regulator on the standards that should apply in the processes to assess applicants.

This strategy will enable the competence standards for statutory functions to be up to date, relevant and world leading so people conducting these functions are competent and support safe mining operations.

Objectives

1.1 Develop a scheme for managing the standards for certificates of competence

There is a long-standing scheme of competence standards being applied to assess an individual’s competency for a certificate. The existing scheme will be further developed through the following process:

- Establishing the new underground (non-coal) supervisor certificate of competence.
- Developing role descriptions for all statutory functions requiring a practising certificate, taking into account other jurisdictions similar roles.
- Identifying other safety critical roles that may require inclusion as a statutory function requiring a certificate of competence and develop role descriptions for them.
- Undertaking a gap analysis of existing competency standard requirements against agreed role descriptions.
- Recommending any changes in competence standards to achieve the benchmark in the role description and be consistent with other jurisdictions.

A major part of benchmarking and maintaining consistency within Australian jurisdictions will be sought through board member representation on the proposed Australasian Mining Competency Advisory Committee (AMCAC), whose purpose is to pursue consistent competence standards.

1.2 Develop an effective and efficient assessment scheme for certificates of competence

The assessment scheme for certificates of competence involves panels of people from industry and the mine safety regulator assessing the eligibility of applicants, including examining candidates through written and oral assessments. The scheme needs to remain efficient and effective so only suitable people receive a certificate of competence. The board will consult and advise when reviewing the scheme to meet the needs by:

- ensuring the assessment process and examination content for each type of certificate of competence are effective and fair
- supporting examiners to develop and/or maintain their competence to assess candidates, as determined against competencies identified
- maintaining protocols and standards for assessing the equivalency of alternative qualifications and experience against those prescribed in the competence standards
1.3 Integrate specific requirements for emerging skills sets into competency standards and assessment

In reviewing the schemes for competency standards and assessment, emerging skills sets for statutory functions need to be identified and integrated into the competency standards. Emerging skills sets to be considered under this plan include:

- emergency management, in particular co-ordinating with emergency services
- associated non-technical skills (ANTS), which have been identified as critical to complement the technical skills for safety
- technology, with innovations requiring changes in managing safety
- supervision/leadership, to reflect industry practice and flexibility
- skills needing to reflect the different size mining operations and level and types of risk.
2. Develop a scheme for practising certificates

Practising certificates are required by people to exercise the statutory function prescribed in mine safety legislation. They are a new requirement and a scheme is to be set up by the mine safety regulator to issue practising certificates and establish requirements for a holder to retain their practising certificate, including maintaining their competencies. The NSW Mining Competence Board will advise on how the new scheme should be implemented by the mine safety regulator.

The benefits of implementing a practising certificate scheme are that it will provide a means to ensure holders competently carry out their statutory function to support a safe and healthy workplace at mines.

Objectives

2.1 Advise on a scheme for issuing practising certificates

Advice is to be provided to the mine safety regulator on the issuing of practising certificates including:

- How people who are issued with a certificate of competence are then to be issued with a practising certificate
- How existing certificate of competence holders are to be issued with a practising certificate
- The conditions to be placed on a practising certificate
- Requirements for renewal of a practising certificate
- Suspension and cancelling of practising certificates
- Mutual recognition of interstate practising certificates.

2.2 Establishing requirements for maintaining competence to hold a practising certificate

One of the challenges for the practising certificate scheme is to support holders to maintain their competence to practise in their statutory functions.

The board will advise the mine safety regulator on what conditions should be imposed on the practising certificate for maintenance of competence, including:

- requirements for continuing professional development to be set out in guidelines on the different suitable schemes available (see also strategy 3 objective 3.1)
- bridging processes and requirements for certificate of competence holders to re-enter the mining industry after an extended break and obtain a practising certificate.
3. Identify and address emerging issues for statutory functions

The schemes to implement the statutory competency framework need to be responsive to industry changes, as mines seek to be more productive and safe. These changes need to be identified and the impact on the competencies of statutory functions considered. This strategy will support the board in the early identification of emerging issues and advise on proactive steps to respond appropriately so people remain competent to the determined standards.

Objectives

3.1 Develop guidance for continuing professional development (CPD) for statutory functions

Statutory functions require competent people to carry them out. As these competencies required change, there is a need to ensure people stay current. One way of ensuring currency of competencies is for CPD to underpin requirements for practising certificates (refer to strategy 2 for practising certificates).

Draft guidelines on CPD for certificates of competence will be developed. The board will finalise the guidelines so people carrying out statutory functions follow them as a minimum general standard of competency across the mining and extractives industry.

3.2 Monitor the mining industry for changes that may influence the operation of the competency schemes

The NSW Mining Competence Board will draw upon its tripartite representation from across the mining industry to identify emerging trends affecting competency. Advice will then be provided by board to the mine safety regulator and the Minister for Resources and Energy on the appropriate response to any emerging issues, whether they are:

- technical
- economic
- social
4. Develop and implement a collaborative communication strategy

As part of implementing the strategic plan, the NSW Mining Competence Board will collaborate and communicate with the mining and extractives industry on their activities and progress, including key stakeholders. This approach will assist in ensuring relevant people are informed and draw upon the expertise and resources of all involved for the desired outcomes.

Objectives

4.1 Develop a communication strategy for informing stakeholders

A communication strategy will be developed to ensure stakeholders are informed of the activities of the board including:

- potential applicants for certificates of competence
- people seeking to obtain the competencies required for statutory functions such as the ventilation officer
- the mining industry, including mine operators, workers and stakeholder organisations
- registered training organisations (RTOs) and educational bodies/institutions.

4.2 Develop key messages to be communicated

As part of the communication strategy, key messages will be identified to ensure that people are made aware of them including:

- There is one mining competence board serving the whole industry (coal, metalliferous, extractives).
- The board is facilitating effective and efficient schemes for competence assessment and maintenance.
- The board is working towards a world leading framework for statutory functions.
- The board is overseeing the implementation of a scheme for practising certificates.

4.3 Adopt a collaborative approach

The NSW Mining Competence Board will engage with stakeholders to collaborate on actions to achieve the strategies in this plan. Collaborative relationships and processes to be established include:

- the board and its working parties to ensure consensus on matters
- working with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) through a proposed Memorandum of Understanding to ensure the delivery of quality training for statutory functions
- engaging with Skills DMC as the national industry skills council for the resources and infrastructure sector to effect changes at the national and state levels
- the Australasian Mining Competency Advisory Council (AMCAC) for working with all mining jurisdictions to achieve consistent competency standards
- mine safety consultative bodies including the Mine Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) and the Metalliferous, Extractive and Coal Industry Safety Advisory Committees.
Review
The NSW Mining Competence Board will review the implementation of this strategic plan on a regular basis and provide advice on any amendments required.

Reporting
The NSW Mining Competence Board will report to the Minister for Resources and Energy annually and communicate progress to industry on a regular basis identified in its communication strategy.