



MINE SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Strategic Plan to 2023



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Foreword

The NSW Government is committed to building safer communities and continued improvement in work health and safety performance.

The NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) has been established under the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* to provide me with advice and guidance on matters relating to work health and safety in the NSW resources industry. MSAC is a tripartite committee made up of representatives from the resources industry, including employer and employee representatives, the NSW Department of Regional NSW and independent experts.

This Plan outlines the strategic direction and focus areas for MSAC until 2023. The priorities identified in the plan have been developed in consideration of what Council members believe to be pivotal issues the mining industry must address in order to sustain efforts to improve safety outcomes into the future.

MSAC has identified the following priority focus areas to work towards its goal of world-leading work health and safety. The priority focus areas are:

- Focus on health
 - Health surveillance
 - Airborne contaminants
 - Health and wellbeing
- Focus on fatal incidents, serious injuries and illness
 - Serious injuries and illness
 - Incidents and employment status
 - Identifying risks of fatal incidents and disease
- Focus on emerging trends

MSAC will play an important role in observing, implementing and facilitating the strategic action areas for continuous improvement of the industry's work health and safety performance. I look forward to working with MSAC, the industry and community over the coming years to achieve these outcomes.



The Hon. Paul Toole MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales

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NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council

The NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) is constituted under the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* (WHS (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act). It fosters an industry with health and safety as core values and provides the Minister with advice and agreed positions on health and safety issues that are important to the NSW resources industry.

Nominations to MSAC are approved by the Minister so that each stakeholder group can contribute actively by ensuring the perspectives of the organisations they represent are known and understood by others. The organisations represented on MSAC are the NSW Department of Regional NSW, NSW Minerals Council, Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia, the Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union (Mining and Energy Division) and the Australian Workers' Union. MSAC has an independent Chairperson, the Hon. George Souris, and two independent members with expertise.

Role and function

The functions of MSAC under the WHS (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act are:

- to provide advice to the Minister on any policy matter relating to work health and safety in mines
- to advise the Minister on any matter, other than a policy matter, relating to work health and safety in mines that is referred to it by the Minister, and
- to advise the Minister on any other matter, other than a policy matter, relating to work health and safety in mines that it considers relevant.

MSAC is a collaborative partnership that integrates the views of all stakeholders while working towards common goals to:

- strengthen relationships and build trust
- agree on priority work health and safety issues and promote actions to address them
- gather, analyse, evaluate and communicate information on work health and safety.

More information

To find out more about the MSAC visit:

www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/safety-and-health/about-us/advisory-council

Strategic plan to 2023

MSAC has a vision for the mining industry in NSW to be recognised as achieving world-leading work health and safety.

In working towards achieving this vision, MSAC regularly considers the perspectives of the stakeholder groups and examines evidence gathered through its own research programs. MSAC reviews good practice demonstrated in other Australian states and overseas, as well as in other industries, that might be relevant to the resources industry in NSW.

The priority focus areas defined in this plan will contribute to a safer, healthier and more sustainable industry, and to the economic benefit of the NSW community.

Priority focus areas

MSAC has identified the following issues as its priority focus during the term of this strategic plan:

1. Focus on health

- Health surveillance
- Airborne contaminants
- Health and wellbeing

2. Focus on fatal incidents, serious injuries and illness

- Serious injuries and illness
- Incidents and employment status
- Identifying risks of fatal incidents and disease

3. Focus on emerging trends

MSAC will play an important role in researching and providing advice on the action areas to promote initiatives to assist in facilitating continuous improvement of the industry's work health and safety performance.

Focus on health

The health of workers in the NSW mining industry continues to be a major focus for the MSAC.

In recent years there has been a re-emergence of coal worker pneumoconiosis and silicosis in the Queensland and NSW mining industries. NSW has had a robust and multi-faceted framework in place for managing the risks associated with occupational dust disease in the coal mining sector for many years. This includes a comprehensive regulatory scheme in place under the Resources Regulator and Coal Services, with specific mining health and safety legislation.

The Queensland Coal Mine Dust Lung Disease Collaborative Group has made recommendations to the Queensland Government regarding the ongoing implementation of the medical recommendations of the 2016 Review of the Respiratory Component of the Queensland Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme.

Taking a strategic approach, MSAC has endorsed and will oversight an independent quality assurance review of the coal industry health surveillance scheme in NSW to ensure that the system is providing robust and effective health surveillance for coal workers, and to provide assurance to industry that the health surveillance system in NSW is effective in the early identification of health conditions or potential health conditions that may affect workers.

MSAC has also supported the introduction of an exposure standard for emissions of diesel particulate matter of $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$, a reduction to the exposure standard for respirable coal dust to $1.5\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ earlier than the specified date for commencement in the *Workplace Exposure Standard for Airborne Contaminants* and a reduction in the exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica to $0.05\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.

MSAC will monitor developments nationally and internationally and work collaboratively with the Resources Regulator to address the harmful effects of airborne contaminants and the implementation of the new exposure standards.

MSAC is also dedicated to ensuring that operators and workers are able to put the principles of good health and wellbeing into practice. Through its collaborative approach, MSAC will consider and provide advice to the Minister, mine operators and workers on actions to foster continuous improvement in the management and control of the priority health and wellbeing areas.

Strategies

In focusing on this priority area MSAC will:

- consider and provide advice on the positions of Safe Work Australia in its review of the workplace exposure standards for airborne contaminants

- consider and provide advice on the development of a managing psychosocial hazards model code of Practice and supporting guidance framework under the model Work Health and Safety laws
- review airborne contaminants data and information from the Resources Regulator and the Coal Services Standing Dust Committee
- monitor the implementation of the revised exposure standards for diesel exhaust emissions, respirable crystalline silica and coal dust, and the supporting reporting requirements
- consider and provide advice to the Minister on the recommendations from the independent review of the coal industry health surveillance scheme in NSW
- monitor reporting from Coal Services on health surveillance in the coal sector
- examine health surveillance in the metalliferous mines and extractives mine sector
- consider advice from the Resources Regulator on the effectiveness of the regulatory framework for managing airborne contaminants
- share industry feedback and discuss positions on relevant health issues.

Focus on fatal incidents, serious injuries and illness

Fatalities and serious injuries and illnesses are key measures which are the focus of health and safety performance in the NSW mining industry. While they are lag indicators, fatality and serious injury and illness data are indicative of the effectiveness of the implementation of critical risk controls.

MSAC will monitor detailed analysis of the notification of serious injuries and illnesses to the Resources Regulator to detect any operation type trends and changes in the nature of serious injuries and illnesses that are being reported.

MSAC will also continue to monitor the correlation between incidents and the employment status of workers in the NSW mining industry (i.e. permanent employees of mine operators compared to contract labour).

MSAC will examine the causal pathways that contribute to significant incidents and exposures and, where appropriate, consider and provide advice on preventative measures including critical controls within the context of the NSW mining industry.

Strategies

In focusing on this priority area MSAC will:

- observe and consider significant incidents and exposures that occur in the NSW mining industry
- review findings from relevant inquiries and reports from other states, the Commonwealth and internationally and provide advice to the Minister
- review the relationship between employment status and incidents
- provide ongoing monitoring on the advice from the Resources Regulator on incident and injury notifications and any identified trends
- consider advice from the Resources Regulator on the effectiveness of the regulatory framework for incident prevention and risk controls
- consider issues relating to incidents and injuries occurring internationally and across Australia, not just in NSW.
- proactively share information, resources and learnings about incidents and injuries.

Focus on emerging trends

MSAC will monitor and consider relevant information to anticipate emerging (or re-emerging) issues and provide the opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss solutions or research going forward.

Strategies

In focusing on this priority area MSAC will:

- examine information and data and consider the impacts and concerns relating to the following issues:
 - vehicle interactions in open cut mines
 - remote-controlled mining operations
 - isolation of energy
 - proximity detection systems
 - fatigue

- sedentary work
- use of progressive technology in safety control systems
- examine and consider the views of the NSW mining industry about the nature of employment (eg casualisation and labour hire) and the impact this may have on safety reporting culture.

Conclusion

MSAC's Strategic Plan to 2023 outlines three priority focus areas for improving WHS for the NSW mining industry. Stakeholders should recognise the need for WHS improvement in priority areas and commit to active participation in improvement strategies.

MSAC will oversee the implementation of the actions and will provide the Minister, industry and the community with regular updates on its progress.