

Mine Safety Advisory Council

Actions for world-leading Work Health and Safety to 2017



**A collaboration to promote healthy, safe work in the
regional NSW mining and extractives industry**

What is the NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council?

The NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) is constituted under the *Mining Act 1992*. It fosters an industry with safety as a core value and provides the NSW Minister for Resources and Energy with advice and an agreed position on health and safety issues that are important to the NSW mining and extractives industry (the Industry).

Nominations to MSAC are approved by the Minister so that each stakeholder group can contribute actively by ensuring the perspectives of the organisation they represent are known and understood by others. The organisations represented on MSAC are NSW Trade & Investment, NSW Minerals Council, Cement Concretes and Aggregates Australia, CMFEU – Mining and Energy Division and the Australian Workers Union. MSAC has an independent Chairman, Hon. John P. Hannaford, and independent work health and safety experts as members.

What does MSAC do?

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 actions to address them; and
- gather, analyse, evaluate and communicate information on work health and safety.

How will this benefit the industry?

The outcomes of MSAC's work will benefit operators, workers, contractors and the regulator through improved:

- industry WHS culture;
- organisational behaviour;
- productivity;
- industrial harmony;
- corporate citizenship; and
- injury and disease rates.

How can I find out more information?

For comprehensive information on the NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council and its initiatives, see the MSAC website at: www.nswminesafety.com.au

How can I contact the council?

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Foreword

It is with pleasure that I present the Mine Safety Advisory Council's (MSAC's) Actions for world-leading Work Health and Safety to 2017.

The document outlines how, through the MSAC collaboration process, the industry will work during the coming years to achieve world-leading work health and safety.

MSAC is a collaborative forum between NSW Trade & Investment, the NSW Minerals Council, Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia, the Australian Workers Union and the CFMEU – Mining and Energy Division. MSAC also has independent members who have expertise in health and safety.



MSAC is one of the government's consultation processes with the industry on work health and safety issues. It was established to advise me on mine work health and safety matters that are considered to negatively influence health and safety. These issues are complex and difficult to address through traditional processes. MSAC provides a forum for stakeholders to understand different perspectives on complex issues and how they can be addressed. MSAC also provides advice on the implementation of continuous improvement strategies to address these and other issues.

The Actions to 2017 focuses on significant work health and safety issues through five strategic action areas that have been identified by surveying stakeholders, conducting research and considering issues through a regular strategic planning process, undertaken by MSAC members.

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 industry leaders to continue contributing to improving the industry's already world-class health and safety performance. MSAC will work in collaboration with all industry sectors to address the significant work health and safety issues it has identified.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris Hartcher".

Chris Hartcher MP
Minister for Resources and Energy

The five strategic action areas



Action area	Outcomes
1. Effective Regulatory Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select and apply the most effective regulatory approaches ○ Assess implementation of principal hazard management
2. Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dialogue between stakeholders and the regulator ○ Joint commitment and working towards common goals
3. Communication that improves safety and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted strategies and messages to specific industry segments ○ Actively promote good practice health and safety
4. Measuring WHS Culture & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmark work health and safety culture ○ Monitoring health management on site
5. WHS Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance information and assistance programs ○ Needs of vulnerable workers considered

Introduction

The NSW mining and extractives industry has a 10-point vision to achieve world-leading work health and safety (WHS). The vision has been guiding the MSAC strategic direction since the first leaders' summit in 2008 and reaffirmed in 2010. The vision is summarised in the diagram below:



In working towards achieving this vision, MSAC conducts regular strategic planning sessions that consider the perspectives of the stakeholder groups and examine evidence gathered through its own research programs. The Council reviews good mining practice demonstrated in other Australian states and overseas, as well as in other industries that might be relevant to the mining and extractives industry in NSW.

The Actions to 2017 will contribute to achieving NSW Trade & Investment's strategic goal of safe, healthy and biosecure industries by fostering safer and healthier work places in the NSW mining and extractives industry.

During the 2012 planning process, MSAC has identified five action areas that address emerging issues and realigns current initiatives (see the MSAC website www.nswminesafety.com.au/projects for further information). Over the next five years this document will steer MSAC's strategic action areas of:

- effective regulatory approach;
- collaboration;
- effective communication that will improve WHS;
- measuring WHS Culture & Performance; and
- work health and safety continuous improvement strategies.

MSAC will play an important role in overseeing the development of detailed actions. These actions will promote, implement, monitor and evaluate initiatives to enable continuing improvement of the industry's work health and safety performance.

1. Effective regulatory approach

Building trust between the regulator, operators and workers has been a theme in recent years since the 2007 Macken Board of Inquiry into the Department's application of its Enforcement Policy. The regulator understands that an effective regulatory approach needs to be applied in a consistent, fair and proportionate manner. Expectations of the regulatory approach need to be achievable and understood by industry stakeholders.

This strategic action area will enable the regulator to research and apply an effective and efficient work health and safety mining regulatory approach in NSW. The effective regulatory approach action area will enable the regulator to:

- select and apply the most effective regulatory approaches to ensure the health and safety of workers that are consistent with the NSW legislative framework;
- develop strategies to enable clear and timely communication about the cause and prevention of major incidents;
- achieve appropriate resource allocation and ensure competent staff and maintenance of professional standards;
- assess the effective implementation of principal hazards management plans and be responsive to the WHS needs of different sectors, drawing on lessons learned from other high hazard industries;
- collaborate with other mine work health and safety jurisdictions in Australia and build relationships to achieve consistency in enforcement policies;
- maintain an effective dialogue with the industry in order to build trust and sustain WHS continuous improvement; and
- benchmark performance with other mine WHS jurisdictions in Australia.

Applying the principles of this action area will develop and maintain an effective WHS regulatory approach that has consistent processes, tools and strategies that are clearly defined, fair, proportionate and just. This is in keeping with the vision for world-leading WHS agreed at the 2010 CEO Summit.

2. Collaborative approach (shared problems, shared solutions)

Implementation of this strategic action area will be through a meaningful and effective collaborative approach under the auspices of MSAC. A problem for one stakeholder is understood to be a problem for the whole industry. MSAC is well known for its strong emphasis on identifying areas of common ground and creating joint strategies to provide solutions. The principles of the collaborative approach established by MSAC are:

- evidence based on research;
- developing trust and understanding;
- joint decision making;
- recognition of what needs to be changed;
- stakeholder commitment to achieving common goals;
- a focus on achievable and sustainable work health and safety improvement; and
- agreement on what success looks like.

MSAC takes action through forming tripartite working parties supported by technical expertise that address specific issues. These include fatigue and hours of work; safety incentive schemes; WHS culture; and health management (for more on this: www.nswminesafety.com.au/projects). The working parties make recommendations to MSAC on how to resolve issues. The Council also holds consultative forums in which wider industry can participate to provide feedback on MSAC initiatives. These have included musculoskeletal disorders; health performance indices; and Future Inquiry workshops during the Digging Deeper Project.

Sector Safety Advisory Committees are forums that look at sector specific issues, both technical and non-technical. MSAC uses the detailed information gathered by these committees to resolve issues. These sector specific advisory committees allow a wider representation of stakeholder groups. This includes other agencies such as Coal Services and other organisations that are not represented on MSAC.

Applying these principles will enable effective dialogue between industry stakeholders to build trust. Stakeholders will be able to engage in effective consultation that consolidates the WHS improvements that have been made to date and will catalyse a joint effort in moving forward.

3. Communication that improves safety and health

Implementation of this strategic action area at the workplace relies on communication between the regulator, decision makers, supervisors and workers. The main challenge is positioning information, guidance and assistance programs and other products through a sound understanding of how to engage with workers and management groups about their WHS responsibilities.

The goal is to have them see the advice as credible and effective.

MSAC has been researching organisational behaviour and individual psychology in building a work health and safety culture. MSAC's recent experience with the Participatory Ergonomics project (see: www.nswminesafety.com.au/projects) supports the evidence that a participatory approach engages workers and gets them involved. The messages must be meaningful to people in different sectors and segments of the industry to connect good practice with what actually happens on site.

The regulator communicates with industry using multiple mechanisms such as standards; safety alerts and bulletins; legislative information; and technical guidance. MSAC provides information and guidance through its website, education assistance activities and distribution of documents. MSAC aims to better understand how to present health and safety information and tailor information that suits the needs of different target groups.

MSAC will do this by overseeing research and development of communication strategies that will acknowledge the diversity of the industry by identifying specific segments and have targeted mechanisms for:

- workers;
- supervisors;
- persons in control of a business or undertaking (managers);
- company officers;
- work health and safety representatives and professionals; and
- mining communities.

The strategies will consider and respond to the WHS needs of vulnerable workers (e.g. contractors, inexperienced and older workers) and also draw on best practice across other industry sectors.

This action area will actively promote good practice health and safety messages and principles that positively influence work health and safety behaviours and attitudes in not only the workplace but into the wider mining communities.

4. Measuring WHS culture and performance

This action area will research data and evaluation techniques that will build lead indicators that enable industry to measure progress in the development of a maturing WHS culture. MSAC is currently overseeing research and the establishment of industry baselines for a number of indicators on work health and safety culture and health management that will enable a benchmarking process to 2017.

Following the outcomes of the Digging Deeper project, MSAC embarked on the development of a process to assess the industry's WHS culture against the baseline collected during the project (see www.nswminesafety.com.au/projects for details about Digging Deeper).

Through the collaborative process aided by technical experts on organisational behaviour and WHS culture assessment, MSAC has created a "WHS Culture Benchmarking and Planning Program Manual".

The project assesses the practical application and effectiveness of the WHS benchmarking method to sustain continuous improvement in WHS performance on site and for the industry as a whole.

Again using its collaborative process, MSAC has developed a baseline via a tele-survey of 224 NSW sites that assesses the industry's application of health management plans at site level, and the industry as a whole. This enables the Council to monitor improvements, particularly against priority areas such as noise, musculoskeletal disorders, fatigue, dust and diesel particulates. (For more see www.nswminesafety.com.au/projects).

MSAC will oversee continuing research looking into the measurement of work health and safety culture and performance.

MSAC will:

- be informed by the national strategy and targets, based on evidence;
- consider a mix of lead and lag indicators, including data on potential catastrophic incidents;
- assess operators' uptake of safety systems and practices; and
- research what success looks like in achieving world-leading WHS.

5. Work health and safety improvement strategies

This action area focuses on specific continuous improvement strategies. The focus is to develop the capacity of workers at all levels, persons conducting a business or undertaking and the regulator to conduct systematic risk management and risk control in priority areas. Since a problem for one stakeholder is understood to be a problem for the whole industry, MSAC is dedicated to making sure its principles and practices are taken on by operators, managers and workers. MSAC wants the industry to have shared WHS values and commitment to world-leading culture and practice.

Identified priority areas include:

- fatigue and hours of work;
- principle mining hazard control;
- health hazard control;
- bullying and harassment; and
- safe design of plant and equipment.

Guidance information and assistance programs will be developed through the MSAC collaborative and consultative approach to enable workers at all levels to be competent to work safely.

The WHS needs of vulnerable workers (e.g. contractors, inexperienced and older workers) will be considered when guidance and assistance programs are developed and implemented. Many of these hazards will still be present in 2017 and specific initiatives are required for their control. Company Officers will be encouraged to show commitment and to carry out their positive duty to demonstrate due diligence on these priority issues.

MSAC will oversee specific actions to foster continuous improvement in the management and control of the priority areas and will, in particular, monitor maturity of work health and safety culture and practice, including the use of safety incentive schemes and any unintended negative consequences of the schemes.

Conclusion

The Actions outline the five strategic action areas for achieving world-leading work health and safety for the NSW mining and extractives industry. Stakeholders will need to recognise the need for work health and safety improvement in priority areas and commit to active participation in improvement strategies.

MSAC will oversee and monitor implementation of the Actions and will provide the Minister, industry and the community regular updates on progress.