

NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council – Strategic Plan to 2020

**Working towards world-leading work health and
safety in the NSW resources industry**



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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (March 2017). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development or the user's independent advisor.

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 Industry and independent experts.



MSAC met in early 2016 to develop an action plan for the next four years to foster world-leading work health and safety in the resources industry. The result, this MSAC strategic plan, details the strategic direction and action priorities for MSAC until 2020. It builds on MSAC's *Actions for World-leading Work Health and Safety to 2017* developed in 2012.

MSAC has identified six strategic action areas to work towards its goal of world-leading work health and safety. The strategic action areas are:

1. evidence based regulatory approach
2. participate, engage and communicate with industry and community
3. focus on health and wellbeing
4. identify risks of fatal incidents and disease
5. address emerging trends
6. human and organisational factors.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Harwin', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donald Harwin MLC
Minister for Resources

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About the 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 NSW Minister for Resources 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 organisation they represent are known and understood by others. The organisations represented on MSAC are NSW Department of Industry, NSW Minerals Council, Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union – Mining and Energy Division and the Australian Workers' Union. MSAC has an independent Chairman, the Hon. Carl Scully, and independent work health and safety experts as members.

Responsibilities

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

- a) to provide advice to the Minister on any policy matter relating to work health and safety in mines
- b) any other advisory function relating to work health and safety in mines that is prescribed by the regulations.

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.

Benefits

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

- industry WHS culture
- organisational behaviour
- productivity with safety
- industrial harmony
- social responsibility
- injury and illness rates

More information

To find out more about the MSAC and its initiatives, go to the MSAC web page: resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/msac

MSAC's strategic plan to 2020

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

In working towards achieving this vision, MSAC conducts regular strategic planning sessions that consider 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 six strategic action areas defined in this plan will contribute to a safer, healthier and more sustainable industry, and to the economic benefit of the NSW community.

Strategic action areas

During the planning process, MSAC identified six action areas that address emerging issues and realign current initiatives.



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.

Evidence based regulatory approach

MSAC is assisting to build trust between the regulator, operators and workers to promote a just working environment within the industry and to foster continuous WHS improvement. MSAC supports the regulator in implementing effective regulatory approaches that are consistent, fair and proportionate.

Taking an evidence based regulatory approach will enable MSAC, through its collaborative approach, to work with all stakeholders to research and apply best practice approaches to WHS issues within the mining context.

MSAC will work to understand the outcomes of regulatory activity and look to those outcomes to identify key issues and improvements for MSAC to communicate to the broader industry in the identified key MSAC priority areas of:

- respirable dust (in particular, coal and silica) and diesel emissions
- fatigue and hours of work
- safe design of plant and equipment
- musculoskeletal disorders
- bullying and harassment
- wellbeing (mental health, lifestyle factors)
- systematic health hazard control plans.

To progress this strategic action, MSAC will:

- collaborate with other mine WHS ministerial advisory councils in Australia and build relationships
- continue building relationships with other relevant bodies in NSW (e.g. Coal Services) and the NSW Mining and Petroleum Competence Board
- commission the benchmarking of the industry perceptions of the regulator’s performance in 2018 against the 2015 baseline report.

Airborne contaminants

Following the re-emergence of Coal Workers’ Pneumoconiosis in Queensland, MSAC will observe developments in Queensland and nationally. MSAC will work collaboratively with the regulator in NSW to address the harmful effects of airborne contaminants, in particular coal dust, silica and diesel emissions.

In applying the principles of this action area, MSAC will work to ensure industry, workers and the community understand the WHS regulatory approach.

Participate, engage and communicate with industry and community

To ensure the MSAC principles and tools are widely known and accepted, MSAC commits to developing a process to ensure it engages more widely with industry, workers and the community. MSAC will develop actions that enable greater participation in its approaches and provide greater accessibility for workers and the community.

Actions will include:

- supporting the Department of Industry’s Mine Safety Industry Assistance Unit (IAU) to develop information and guidance in line with the regulator’s program of works
- supporting the Metalliferous and Coal Sector Advisory Safety Committees
- conducting MSAC meetings and open sessions for community members in regional areas
- bringing leaders of industry, unions and government agencies together in 2020 to review progress and agree on a WHS vision to 2030 for the industry
- developing a communication strategy that promotes the MSAC brand and identity by:
 - creating shared learning opportunities
 - continuing to develop the MSAC website as the “go to” place for work health and safety
 - developing education and assistance programs in regional areas and via web-based technologies
 - participating in and sponsoring safety conferences of member organisations (e.g. panel sessions of MSAC members) and the Department of Industry’s seminars (e.g. mechanical and electrical engineering and Mine Safety and Health Representatives seminars)

- providing support to strategic actions for WHS improvement
- developing and convening a network with professional groups not represented on MSAC.

Focus on health and wellbeing

This action area focuses on specific health and wellbeing strategies. The focus is to provide advice on systematic risk management and risk control in priority health and wellbeing areas. MSAC is dedicated to ensuring that operators, workers and inspectors are able to put the principles of good health and wellbeing into practice.

As identified previously, MSAC priority areas include:

- respirable dust (e.g. coal and silica) and diesel particulate
- fatigue and hours of work
- safe design of plant and equipment
- musculoskeletal disorders
- bullying and harassment
- wellbeing (mental health, lifestyle factors)
- systematic health hazard control plans.

Through its collaborative approach MSAC will research and provide advice on actions to foster continuous improvement in the management and control of the priority health and wellbeing areas.

Identify risks of fatal incidents and disease

MSAC will examine the causal pathways that contribute to significant incidents and exposures and, where appropriate, explore preventative measures including critical controls and emergency management within the context of the NSW industry.

Actions will include:

- observing and reviewing significant incidents and exposures that occur in the NSW industry
- reviewing findings from relevant inquiries and reports from other states, the Commonwealth and overseas and provide advice to the department and the minister
- researching and providing advice on tools for investigations that look to causal factors
- promoting to the industry and the community relevant learnings from research into significant incidents.

Address emerging trends

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

Some current issues or trends may include:

- diesel emissions
- psycho social issues
- lighting in open cut mines
- proximity detection systems
- sedentary work
- use of progressive technology in safety control systems.

Actions will include:

- developing strategic networks and connections with other organisations to confirm trends and issues
- examining new technologies and associated matters
- re-aligning current activities and initiating new activities in response to emerging issues
- recognising current issues
- promoting to the industry and the community relevant learnings from research into significant incidents.

Human and organisational factors

MSAC will support the regulator's implementation of its human and organisational factors approach and the integration of issues such as worker fatigue, safe design, organisational culture and safety critical communication into its approach. MSAC will also work collaboratively with the Department of Industry and enable it to work with stakeholders in applying best practices approaches.

WHS culture project

MSAC will continue to support research of a site based WHS culture assessment process that will enable sites to benchmark the maturity of their WHS culture and the organisational features that represent their culture including contractors working at the sites. Baseline assessments have been facilitated for over 30 sites. MSAC will continue to support work on a positive WHS culture in the industry.

MSAC will support the next phase of the Mine Safety IAU program to ensure it is directly relevant to the values and practices of the Australian resources industry, with a particular focus on:

- a just culture where people are mindful of what can go wrong
- encouraging reporting without fear of blame
- individual accountability and open discussion of errors and human and organisational factors
- trust in management to implement and verify practices that manage critical controls for principal mining hazards through due diligence programs
- tension between the acceptable level of risk and production targets.

Safety-critical communication through associated non-technical skills

Safety-critical communication is important for maintaining a safe and healthy working environment when conducting risk assessments, validating risk controls, undertaking emergency response, during shift change overs and during coordination between different work groups.

People working in the industry need to have suitable levels of associated non-technical skills (ANTS) and an understanding of human and organisational factors in order to ensure safety-critical communication is effective.

In order for organisations to ensure the issues above can be improved, the people working in the organisation must have a suitable level of ANTS (leadership, team work, decision making; communications and situation awareness) to support continuous WHS improvement.

MSAC will continue to promote the use of the ANTS through the development and implementation of education and assistance programs through the Mine Safety IAU. The development of these skills supports effective organisations that are better placed to address multifactorial WHS issues such as bullying and harassment, fatigue, organisational and human factors.

Conclusion

MSAC's Strategic Plan to 2020 outlines six strategic action areas for improving WHS for the NSW resources 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. To do this MSAC will develop actions plans with specific outcomes and performance objectives for each of the six strategic action areas.