



# MEDIA RELEASE

## MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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### **Governments must continue health and safety reform**

Statement by Mitchell Hooke, Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia

Tomorrow's Workplace Relations Ministerial Council should back the Federal Government's commitment to harmonised safety laws by supporting the development of a Model Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Council will meet tomorrow to agree the content of the model OH&S Act that will introduce harmonised, uniform OH&S laws across Australia for the first time.

The MCA maintains that OH&S laws that provide the same rights, protections and responsibilities for every worker in Australia are fundamental to improving safety outcomes.

Duplicative and different laws across jurisdictions and between industries do nothing to enhance workplace safety. There are currently 10 principal statutes – six state, two territory and two Commonwealth - governing OH&S in Australia as well as numerous industry-specific Acts, regulations and codes of practice in place.

A uniform OH&S Act will enable all businesses to focus on improving health and safety outcomes rather than satisfying the raft of overlapping OHS laws, standards and requirements.

An Expert Review Panel engaged by the Federal Workplace Relations Minister Julia Gillard in April 2008 to identify the optimal content of a national model OHS Act has presented a series of recommendations that will lead to a modern, balanced, preventative focused legal framework within which we can all continue to improve safety.

The MCA applauds the Government for undertaking this major reform and we encourage Australia's Workplace Relations Ministers to seize the opportunity to deliver improved outcomes under a Model OH&S Act based on the Review Panel's recommendations.

The MCA has long advocated for OH&S reform to enhance, rather than diminish, the protections of workers.

The minerals industry maintains that:

- All fatalities, injuries and diseases are preventable.
- No task is so important that it cannot be done safely.
- All hazards can be identified and their risks managed.
- Everyone has a personal responsibility for the safety and health of themselves and others.
- Safety and health performance can always be improved.
- Every worker on any piece of land, and in any industry, is entitled to the same level of protection.

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