

## > MCA Position on Occupational Health & Safety

April 2006

### Policy

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) and the Australian minerals industry, the Council represents, are committed to an industry free of fatalities, injuries and diseases. The safety and health of the workforce is the industry's omnipresent number one priority and is not subordinate to productivity.

The MCA's role and responsibility is in providing leadership, in promoting a culture of care and safety, the development and provision of good practice, in capacity building, in identifying and managing risk, reporting on performance and sharing information.

The MCA considers:

- > occupational health and safety is the price of entry to mining and minerals processing and companies must have the culture, the systems, the practice and the commitment if they are to participate in the business;
- > vigilance is required at all times by all employees, including all levels of management;
- > safety and health are not points of differentiation in the market, or a source of cost rationalisation for competitive advantage;
- > while the minerals industry can be hazardous and involve high levels of risk, it does not have to be dangerous – risk management is the key.

The capacity to achieve the goal of zero harm is founded in the belief of, and commitment to, five fundamental principles:

- > 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 improve.

### Strategy

The MCA's safety and health strategy is founded on four key elements:

- > leadership;
- > risk management;
- > performance recognition; and
- > learning and continuous improvement.

The strategy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of awareness - that safety and health is a state of mind where members are constantly aware of the possibility of injury and act accordingly at all times.



# MCA Position on Occupational Health & Safety

The focus of the MCA's policies and work program is on:

- > strong leadership and a culture based on sharing experiences and effective communication;
- > nationally consistent approach to mine safety based on a strong partnership between employers, employees and regulators;
- > Safety and health as a fully integrated part of the business.

## Specific Initiatives

- > Annual **CEO Safety and Health Forum** to challenge current beliefs and strategies and facilitate CEOs working with their peers in considering innovative approaches to improving safety and health performance.
- > Annual **MINEX, or Minerals Industry Safety and Health Excellence Awards** to assist companies continuously improve their safety and health performance:
  - providing an industry benchmark for self-assessment of safety and health management systems;
  - providing peer assessment of systems against agreed criteria; and
  - recognising leading practice, excellence and improvements based on performance.
- > Annual **National Innovation Awards** to ensure that excellence and innovation at individual sites are recognised and that best practice, in terms of safety and health policy, systems and practice, is identified and promoted.
- > **National Minerals Industry Risk Assessment Guideline** developed as an on-line resource to improve the quality of risk assessment in the minerals industry.
- > **National, strategic approach to working arrangements** developed for the minerals industry focussing on extended shifts; the relationship between work design, fatigue and sleep; and science-based fatigue management.
- > **National guideline for the management of rockfall risks in underground metalliferous mines** produced as a non-prescriptive tool for eliminating fatalities from rockfall, one of the chief causes of death in the industry
- > A project to provide guidance on issues that need to be considered in **managing strata control risks in underground coal mines**.
- > **A project known as the Minerals Industry Cooperation Initiative (MICI)** managed by the Minerals Industry Safety and Health Centre (MISHC) under direction and with financial support from the MCA, to demonstrate the industry's capacity to collaborate on safety and health:
- > **Root cause analysis of significant incidents involving mobile equipment** to determine whether there are any underlying factors that explain why such incidents occur.
- > **Safety Performance Reporting** on a quarterly and annual basis to ensure the Australian minerals industry has access to consistent, relevant, authoritative national safety and health performance data.
- > An **increased focus on health**, with emphasis on identifying appropriate health management indicators; development of a job exposure matrix linking specific exposures to occupation and industry sector; and an assessment of the feasibility of health tracking schemes.
- > **Cooperation with China to improve coal mine safety** through exchanges of information on regulation, technology and equipment.

MCA Secretariat  
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