

Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (MCMPR)	2007 CONFERENCE OF CHIEF INSPECTORS OF MINES — a Subcommittee of MCMPR Hobart, Tasmania 23-28 September 2007
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COMMUNIQUE

The 49th annual Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines (CCIM) was held in Hobart from 26-28 September 2007. The conference was hosted by Workplace Standards Tasmania and chaired by Mr Tim Gosling (Northern Territory) with representation from all States, the Commonwealth and New Zealand. The Hon Clive Brown, Chair of the National Mine Safety Framework Steering Group, participated in the first plenary session of the conference by video link.

Pre-conference

Prior to the conference, the Chief Inspectors visited Zinifex's Rosebery zinc mine about 90km south of Burnie in the west coast region. With annual production of over 70 ktpa zinc, Rosebery is one of Tasmania's larger underground mines, recently celebrating its operational centenary. Discussions with Deputy General Manager, John Lamb provided the Chief Inspectors with an overview of the company's resources, mining operations and safety management. A visit to Barrick's Henty gold mine followed where it was noted that the last two years have been lost time injury free. Matt Daly, General Manager at Henty conducted a tour of the mine which included tele-remote mining, ore loading, shaft hoisting, stope backfilling and a new refuge chamber.

The Chief Inspectors appreciated the time given by operational staff to outline safety, health and environmental initiatives and programs. Visits of this nature provide the CCIM with a collective opportunity each year to interact with site personnel and to exchange experiences within jurisdictions. These have become a valued and informative part of the Conference process.

Conference

National Mine Safety Framework

The Hon Clive Brown (Chair NMSF Steering Group) gave an overview of the status of the NMSF and the plan going forward. The NMSF tripartite Steering Group was established at the request of the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (MCMPR), and met for the first time in July 2006. The initial focus was developing three of the seven Framework strategies: Legislation, Consultation and Data. Working Groups were established to progress each of these strategies for endorsement by the Steering Group. After public consultation in June 2007, the Steering Group considered the feedback and progressed the three strategies at its meeting in Darwin on 12-13 September. These will be delivered to MCMPR for endorsement in an out of session paper in November 2007.

At the MCMPR meeting on 3 August 2007, Ministers agreed to seek whole of government endorsement of the strategies. The out of session paper will include material that jurisdictions can use to prepare submissions to their respective cabinets for endorsement. This will enable the Steering Group to consider Governments' feedback at its meeting in March 2008. The Steering Group will develop the remaining four strategies (Research, Enforcement, Compliance and Competency) over the next twelve months through newly established Working Groups.

Safety Performance

The Conference reviewed fatalities and major/significant incidents in each jurisdiction over the last 12 months. Statistics and data for the period are reported by the States, Northern Territory and New Zealand via their individual websites and published reports.

Safety Alerts

The Conference considered a model format for the timely reporting and dissemination of safety alert advice which would be compatible with the MIRMgate web site data base. The objective is to provide the industry with early information to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. It was agreed that this will be adopted after final editing.

Health Surveillance

Health surveillance arrangements in the various jurisdictions were discussed. NSW advised that it was undertaking a review of health surveillance and was looking at the arrangements operating in other jurisdictions. WA agreed to provide a statistical report which is currently being prepared from its 15 years of accumulated health surveillance data.

Competency Standards

The CCIM discussed current practice in each jurisdiction for developing and maintaining consistent standards within the mining industry including mines inspectors. Reviews of national competencies through the SkillsDMC were discussed including participation in this process by each jurisdiction.

In relation to mines inspectorate competencies, the Advanced Diploma in Industry Workplace Inspection is to be introduced by the Queensland inspectorate as a competency for Mines Inspectors. Similar strategies are already in place in Victoria and South Australia where a Diploma of Workplace Inspection is being undertaken by inspectors through TAFE.

Jurisdictional Reviews

The reviews of mine safety/inspectorates within jurisdictions were reported and discussed. All jurisdictions will have a considerable number of recommendations to implement in conjunction with the strategies under the NMSF.

Administration and Legislation

Conference received briefings on changes in administration and management within jurisdictions. These will be updated on the CCIM website as they become available.

Website

The Chief Inspectors noted a revision of the CCIM website is to be undertaken shortly and updates on the development and implementation of the NMSF will be accessible via links from the site.

CCIM 2008

The 50th Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines is scheduled to be held in South Australia around October 2008.

Tim Gosling
Chair, CCIM 2007
September 2007



CCIM attendees, September 2007

Left to right: Rod Morrison (NSW), Greg Marshall (SA), Keith Porritt (Cwlth), John Norcott (NSW), Fred Sears (Tas), Keith Stewart (NZ), John Mitas (Vic), Tim Gosling (NT), Martin Knee (WA), Mike Firmin (NZ), Simon Ridge (SA), Alice Gibson (NMSF), Rob Regan (NSW), Roger Billingham (Qld).

Experience is a hard school but fools learn by no other.