

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ministerial Council<br/>on Mineral and<br/>Petroleum Resources<br/>(MCMPR)</b> | <b>2006 CONFERENCE OF CHIEF INSPECTORS OF<br/>MINES — a Subcommittee of MCMPR</b><br><br><b>Perth, WA</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>7-10 November 2006</b></span> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **COMMUNIQUE**

The 48<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines (CCIM) was held in Perth from 7 -10 October 2006. The conference was hosted by the Western Australia Department of Consumer and Employment Protection and chaired by Mr John Mitas, Chief Inspector of Mines, Victoria, with representation from all States (and apologies from Tasmania and Papua New Guinea), Northern Territory, Commonwealth and New Zealand. The Hon Clive Brown, a former Chair of the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources and Minister for Trade and State Development, Western Australia, attended the first plenary session of the conference in his capacity as Chair of the recently convened National Mine Safety Framework Steering Group.

### **Pre-conference**

Prior to the conference, the Chief Inspectors visited Alcoa Australia's Huntly bauxite mining and Pinjarra processing operations about 90km south of Perth. With annual production of over 20 mtpa, Huntly ranks as the world's largest bauxite mine and has achieved international recognition for its restoration of landforms and rehabilitation after mining of self-sustaining jarrah-marri forest ecosystems within water supply catchments. Briefing and discussions with Alcoa officials, led by Bill Knight (Manager of Mines, WA Operations), provided the Chief Inspectors with an overview of the company's tenure under its State Agreement mining lease, resources, mining and rehabilitation operations in the Darling Range. Following the visit to Huntly, Chief Inspectors were accompanied by Kim Horne (Alcoa's Director Human Resources & EHS Australia) on a short tour of the Pinjarra Refinery, which processes most of the ore from the mine to smelter grade alumina.

At both sites the Chief Inspectors appreciated the time freely given by operations staff to outline initiatives and programs developed to address site-specific challenges in relation to conservation, environmental management and the safety and health of employees. Visits of this nature provide the CCIM with a collective opportunity each year to interact with site personnel within jurisdictions, and have become a valued informative part of the Conference process.

### **Conference**

#### **National Mine Safety Framework**

Mr Clive Brown provided the CCIM with an outline of decisions taken by the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (MCMPR) and Prime Minister and State Premiers under the Council of Australian Governments over the last 12 months in relation to progressing development of the National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF). The NMSF Steering Group was established at the request of the MCMPR and is committed to progressing three of the NMSF strategies dealing with Legislation (Strategy 1), Data (Strategy 5) and Consultation (Strategy 6) over the next 12 months.

The Legislation Working Group with representation from the New South Wales and Queensland governments, Minerals Council of Australia, Queensland Resources Council, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and Australian Workers' Union has prepared a draft overarching legislative principles document. A summary of legislation within each jurisdiction has been compiled and the MCMPR Secretariat has identified 49 mining health and safety legislative instruments in Australia.

Data and Consultation strategies, prepared by Victoria and South Australia respectively, have been provided to Steering Group representatives for comment. Working Groups have subsequently been convened to consider data 'stock-take', explore models for the collection and dissemination of commonly collected statistics, consider national consultation mechanisms, and make recommendations on legislation (Act, regulations, codes) to be fed into the Legislation Working Group.

In early 2007, jurisdictions will be asked to provide an objective and informed understanding of the extent to which their safety and health legislation complies with the overarching legislative principles. While conscious of the demand this request will place on jurisdictions with respect to available resources, Mr Brown advised that the Legislation Working Group would be initiating this process following its meeting in late November 2006. At the next Steering Group meeting it is expected there would be agreement on broad consultation to commence after March 2007 and the holding of three workshops in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. These activities would feed into the final recommendations from the Steering Group, which are scheduled to go to Ministers towards the end of 2007.

### **Safety Performance**

Conference reviewed circumstances involving fatalities and high potential or major/significant incidents in each jurisdiction over the last 12 months. Final statistics and data for the period will be reported by each State and the Northern Territory via websites and published reports.

Conference agreed on the development of a template for the timely reporting and dissemination of safety alert advice in a risk management format, which would be compatible with the Mineral Industry Risk Management Gateway (MIRMgate) website database. This matter is to be progressed by Queensland and Victoria, with a draft template to be circulated to all jurisdictions in early 2007.

### **Competency Standards for Mines Inspectors**

Conference reviewed current practice in each jurisdiction in relation to developing and maintaining consistent standards for mines inspectors. Information on the Advanced Diploma in Industry Workplace Inspection, which is to be introduced by the Queensland inspectorate as an eligibility criterion for advancement between levels in the Mines Inspectorate career path, will be disseminated to all jurisdictions.

### **Institute of Quarrying Accreditation System**

Mr Darrel Adam, Education Officer with the Institute of Quarrying Australia, provided the Chief Inspectors with an overview of the Institute's system for recognising the professional status of quarry managers and supervisors throughout Australia. The Chief Inspectors agreed to consider Mr Adam's request for some level of formal support by the CCIM of the Institute's Quarry Management Certification System.

### **Jurisdictional Reviews**

Conference received reports on the findings of reviews on the approach to mine safety regulation or its administration in five jurisdictions (WA, NSW, Qld, Vic and NT). All jurisdictions 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's website as they become available.

### **Website**

The Chief Inspectors noted the establishment of a separate NMSF page on the website and that updates on the development and implementation of the Framework would be posted on the site as soon as possible.

### **CCIM 2007**

The 49<sup>th</sup> Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines is scheduled to be held in Tasmania around late October 2007.

John Mitas  
Chair, CCIM 2006  
Chief Inspector of Mines  
Victoria  
November 2006



### **CCIM attendees, November 2006**

Left to right: Bill McKay (Clth), Simon Ridge (SA), Sue Kruze (Clth), Alan Gooch (WA), Kathy Harman (Clth), Mike Downs (Qld), John Mitas (Vic), Martin Knee (WA), Clive Brown (WA), Rob Regan (NSW), Bill Taylor (NZ), Roger Billingham (Qld), Tim Gosling (NT), Rod Morrison (NSW), Kee Hah (NT), Greg Marshall (SA)