

COMMUNIQUE

The 46th annual Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines (CCIM) was held in Brisbane from 9 –10 August 2004. The conference was hosted by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (NRME), Queensland and chaired by Mr Rob Regan, Director, Mine Safety Operations, New South Wales, with representation from all States (except Tasmania), Northern Territory, Commonwealth and observers from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Safety Performance

Conference reviewed circumstances involving fatalities and high potential or major/significant incidents in each jurisdiction for 2003-04. Final statistics and data for the period will be reported by each State and the Northern Territory via websites or published reports.

National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF)

At the 4th Session of the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources in late July 2004, Council endorsed the Implementation Plan for the National Mine Safety Framework and the timetable for its introduction, noting particularly that each of its strategies were to be progressed in close consultation with key stakeholders in industry and government. Council noted also that some strategies would require further clearance through regulatory assessment processes instituted by the Council of Australian Governments. The Council's Standing Committee of Officials (SCO) is to manage the implementation process and report annually to the Council on progress. The Implementation Plan will be released shortly on the website of the CCIM — <http://www.ga.gov.au/ccim>, as companion document to the NMSF.

The CCIM completed a preliminary scoping and analysis of business required to address the tasks and timeframes embodied in Implementation Plan, which includes building on existing initiatives being implemented by the Minerals Industry Safety and Health Centre and under national competency standards. Each strategy involves consultation through working parties or obtaining feedback on draft documentation before submissions on implementation can be finalised for endorsement by Council. Sound planning and effective high-level coordination will be crucial to reporting on progress, timely development and submission of each strategy, particularly where regulatory impact statements have to be cleared. Allocation of adequate resources to the development of the whole implementation process is also a matter of significance to ensure the targets for completion of each stage are met.

In developing the Implementation Plan, the CCIM will address mine safety and health in the context of broader national efforts to improve occupational health and safety. Wherever appropriate, initiatives undertaken as part of the Plan will be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the National Occupation Health and Safety Commission and in line with its broader efforts under the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012. NOHSC advice and representation on working parties will therefore be sought in regard to all strategies.

National Standard for Plant

The National Standard for Plant is currently under review by NOHSC. The standard addresses: — duties of care regarding plant; risk assessment and control; some particular types of risk control on certain plant (e.g. roll-over protection); verification and registration of design of certain types of plant; registration of each item of certain types of plant; certain inspection and maintenance of prescribed types of plant; and, keeping of records. As the review is of interest to all jurisdictions, the CCIM's collective consideration of the Standard will be communicated to NOHSC by the Chair.

Administration and Legislation

Conference received briefings on changes in management and regulation of mining operations, details of which for each jurisdiction are summarised under the Links section of the CCIM's website. Departmental mergers, restructuring and changes to administrative arrangements will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure the NMSF's strategies remain focussed and achieve their objectives.

Presentations

Invited presentations on the *Maintenance of Competencies for Statutory Officials* and *Diesel Particulates* were given at the Conference by officials from Anglo Coal and NRME respectively. Both subjects are topical matters for the Conference, competency being addressed by the Mine Managers Association of Australia in the context of continuing professional development, while diesel particulates is an emerging occupational health issue for the industry.

Post-conference

Following the conference, the Chief Inspectors visited Simtars' testing and certification facilities at Mackay, Goonyella Riverside and Moranbah North Coal mines in the Bowen Basin and the offices of CH4 Gas Limited at Moranbah.

The visits provided the Chief Inspectors with excellent overviews of these operations and the important and innovative contributions they are making in areas of mining research and development and to coal and coal bed methane production from the region. Presentations were combined with discussions about site specific issues and industry-wide safety, health and environmental management.

The Chief Inspectors appreciated the time made available and the opportunity to have open and frank discussions with executive and senior management, planning and operating staff at each site. Thanks in particular are extended to Paul Harrison (Simtars), Ben Zietsman and Guy Mitchell (BMA), Ernest Johnson and Dennis Black (Moranbah North Coal) and Scott Malson and Laurie Morris (CH4).

CCIM 2005

The 47th Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines will be held in New South Wales around August/September 2005.



CCIM representatives, August 2004

Left to right: Kee Hah (NT), John Mitas (Vic), George Munro (NZ), Martin Knee (WA), Peter Minahan (Qld), Graeme McLaughlan (Vic), Roger Billingham (Qld), Firoz Patwa (PNG), Rob Regan (NSW), Denis Hally-Burton (advisor), Brian Lyne (Qld), Greg Marshall (SA), Tim Gosling (NT), Bill Loizides (SA), Bill McKay (Com)

Rob Regan
Chair, CCIM 2004
Director, Mine Safety Operations
New South Wales
August 2004