

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON MINERALS	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2002 CONFERENCE OF CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MINES</b></p> <p>Darwin, NT <span style="float: right;">22 - 26 JULY 2002</span></p>
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## COMMUNIQUE

During the week of 22 July 2002, the Northern Territory hosted the 44<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of Chief Inspectors' of Mines (CCIM). The conference was chaired by Peter Morris from Papua New Guinea and was attended by all States and Territories of Australia, as well as New Zealand and PNG, with the exception of Tasmania whose regular representative was unable to attend for personal reasons.

Pre-conference visits to two very different mines gave an opportunity to learn from new approaches and challenge current thinking. Doug Grimmond and his enthusiastic and capable team at Alcan's bauxite mine on the remote Gove peninsula gave of their valuable time to demonstrate their commitment and determination to lead safety and environment improvements. CCIM members were left with a prime example of mines being organised and successful; with Alcan's impressive operator training school involving the local aboriginal community, comprehensive and implemented safety management systems and evident leadership, and the township developed for the mine. The visit to the Macarthur River Mine also left a strong impression. Brian Hearne and his team have remoteness, exceptionally fine-grained mineralogy in a complex array, and a highly faulted orebody dipping at an average of 17 degrees with which to contend. Again the welcome was appreciated, discussions were down-to-earth and frank, as is normal in the industry. CCIM members contemplated the gestation period for the development of this mine and appreciated how this was impacted by the mine's challenges.

CCIM members gained an appreciation of the remoteness of NT mines. The flight to Gove took the group over the Ranger mine to gain an appreciation of its location and issues. The flight from Gove to Macarthur River took the group over Groote Eylandt with its manganese mine, evidently well-organised. The return flight from Macarthur River back to Darwin enabled a thorough albeit aerial view (at 1500 ft) of Anglo Gold's Union Reefs Mine near Pine Creek, which was striking for its organisation and rehabilitation. The CCIM met Stan Padgett, the mine's CEO and member of the Northern Territory's Mining Board, as well as Richard Weston from Ranger, Paul Scarf from Groote Eylandt, Brian Fowler from Newmont and Departmental staff at an informal evening meeting the night after the return. Boral co-hosted the gathering but were unable to attend. Feedback from this gathering, and the site visits, reinforced the need for a national approach, which was the central theme for the conference.

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The conference got underway with instructions from the new Ministerial Council on Minerals and Petroleum Resources to develop an action plan to implement the Council's National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF). The Council was formerly known as ANZMEC. This framework was agreed at the Council's 4 March 2002 meeting. The document itself can be viewed on the CCIM web-site, namely <http://www.ga.gov.au/ccim>.

The conference also reflected on serious incidents and safety performance in the mining industry to add weight to conference deliberations. Performance data and information is one of the seven key roles for governments outlined in the NMSF. Other key roles include a legislative framework, competency development, compliance support, enforcement, consultation and research. All seven roles were discussed to develop respective action plans. Each was discussed from an 'intent' (what outcomes are we looking for?), 'approach' (how are we going to develop the plan), 'content' (what specific objectives need addressing), 'structures/relationships' (who and what is involved), and jurisdictional status appendices. Each State/Territory took accountability for a topic. Actions plans arising from the tasks include an initial draft document, coordination across the nation, followed by jurisdictional discussions/consultation, and reconciling into further actions. A report will be submitted straight after the conference to the Ministerial Council.

Other matters on the agenda for the conference included the development of information across the nation for the common good, an associated MISHC meta-database being developed for web access to the industry's 'body of knowledge', and sharing of experiences and pooling of resources generally.

The action plan will be accessible via the CCIM web-site in the near future. It is also planned to have 'work in progress' charts on the web. The CCIM expressed its appreciation for Geoscience Australia's ongoing coordination of the conference and development of the web-site. Dr Bill McKay, a long-term valuable team member of the CCIM was unable to attend this year, but he was ably replaced by Ron Sait from Geoscience Australia.

Plans are being made for the next conference to be hosted by Papua New Guinea in mid-July 2003. In the meantime considerable work needs to be undertaken.



### **Delegates, Darwin, July 2002**

(from left to right) Kee Hah (NT), Rob Regan (NSW), Rob King (VIC), John Walrond (NZ), Roger Billingham (QLD), Peter Morris (PNG), Peter Minahan (QLD), Howard Lole (PNG), Greg Marshall (SA), Graham Terrey (NSW), Graeme McLaughlan (VIC), Ron Sait (COMM), Martin Knee (WA), John Mitas (VIC), Tim Gosling (NT) and Ian Tansell (SA)

### ***Graham Terry***

for Peter Morris  
CCIM Chair 2002  
Chief Inspector of Mines  
Department of Mining  
Mines Division (PNG)  
July 2002