

# Mining Industry Advisory Committee

## COMMUNIQUE

A summary of the 8 December 2021 meeting

### 1. Department of Health – COVID-19 and vaccine roll-out

A presentation by the Department of Health's Industry Liaison Group detailed the latest WA Country Health Service COVID-19 vaccination coverage figures.

The Government's COVID-19 Task Force is focusing on aligning indigenous vaccination rates with the rest of the community. A door-to-door approach is being used, in conjunction with Aboriginal liaison officers.

Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) operational staff are required to comply with the Government vaccination mandate. A Union Member expressed concern that DMIRS inspectors' core responsibilities may be impacted by a requirement to check mine sites' vaccination status.

Members discussed the possible impacts on communities, business, travel and transport once WA opens its borders and COVID-19 cases inevitably occur. Information of these emerging issues will be shared with members accordingly.

### 2. Competencies for mining statutory functions

DMIRS officers provided an update on consultation in relation to the competencies required for statutory positions in the mining industry under the new Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

Consultation continues and there was positive feedback from a DMIRS online forum for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Examination questions will be reviewed this month, by a selection of Mines Safety District Inspectors, members of the Board of Examiners and industry volunteers.

Concerns were raised about the number of people who need to complete the program within a short time frame. In addition, modelling of the proposed training program found that the cost to the sector for the estimated 10,000 supervisory positions is approximately \$100 million.

Feedback received indicated that the training program is useful, but relatively inflexible for non-RTO companies. A submission will propose changes to allow non-RTO companies to provide their own training and criteria to map courses. This may assist students to complete the training within the planned timeframe.

Concerns were raised that the proposed DMIRS RTO accreditation process appears to duplicate TAC and ASQA regulatory functions.

A DMIRS officer noted the key to the online examination process is identification of students through Unique Student Identifier (USI). DMIRS is open to suggestions about how to access exams utilising USIs.

Industry Members noted that it is important to wait until the WHS regulations are available to finalise the proposal.

### **3. Information Sheet – Gendered Violence: Notification of Sexual Harassment and/or Assault to Mines Safety**

The information sheet provides guidance to industry on the requirements for notification of instances of gendered violence on mine sites under sections 76 and 79 of the *Mine Safety and Inspection Act 1994*. In consultation with industry and other external stakeholders, including the Western Australian Police and Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC), two further information sheets are being developed to provide guidance in relation to a risk-based approach to the management of gendered violence as a workplace psychosocial hazard.

The fact sheets will provide specific information in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment and refer to obligations relevant across industries under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

### **4. Mines Safety Management System and contractor safety management systems**

Under the new WHS (Mines) Regulations, mine operators will be required to prepare, implement and maintain a mine safety management system (MSMS) for a mine/exploration operation. Three submissions have been received in relation to this matter and these will be considered by a working group.

### **5. FIFO and DIDO worker statistics**

Members were advised of a census that will be conducted in June/July 2022. The census will capture fly-in fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in drive-out (DIDO) worker statistics. DMIRS will develop a form with guidance notes for the census, in consultation with key stakeholders.

The information is being collected in line with recommendations 1 and 2 of the Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee's report, *The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health*. The report is available for download at the following link:

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/\(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID\)/2E970A7A4934026448257E67002BF9D1/\\$file/20150617+-+Final+Report+w+signature+for+website.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/2E970A7A4934026448257E67002BF9D1/$file/20150617+-+Final+Report+w+signature+for+website.pdf)

### **6. Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation**

Work continues on the WHS regulations. The mining regulations are expected to be finalised in coming weeks.

The WorkSafe Commissioner's *Statement of regulatory intent* and guidance information is available on the DMIRS website, with updates provided to stakeholders via newsletters and social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). The WHS laws section of the website is available at the following link:

<https://www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/taxonomy/term/251>

## **7. 2022 MIAC transition to Mining and Petroleum Advisory Council (MAPAC)**

Members were advised that MIAC meetings will continue to be held bi-monthly in 2022. The transition to MAPAC will occur after the new WHS legislation is proclaimed in 2022. The *WHS Act 2020* allows for MIAC to continue to operate for six months, while MAPAC is being constituted and members appointed.

## **8. Mines Safety Directorate: Upcoming events 2021**

Safe Work Month information is available on the DMIRS website.

## **9. Mental Health**

With regard to the information sheet '*Gendered Violence: Notification of Sexual Harassment and/or Assault to Mines Safety*', further information sheets are in development which incorporate feedback provided by MIAC, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA, Western Australian Police and Sexual Assault Resource Centre.

## **10. Significant incident reports**

Members were advised that Mines Safety Bulletins and Safety Alerts have not been issued since the October 2021 MIAC meeting. The format of significant incident reports is being changed in anticipation of the WHS laws in 2022.

## **11. Mines Safety Statistics**

Mine safety statistics in accordance with the current reporting framework were discussed, noting the release of a safety digest relating to 2020-2021 data.

Frequency rates and fatalities are trending downward. Not all reported fatalities have been confirmed as work-related, with some awaiting Coroner's reports.

It was noted that an increase in exploration trends may impact health and safety statistics, with more inexperienced people being employed in the field.

## **12. Commission Report**

The Commission report provided information from meetings of 3 November and 1 December 2021. The Commission minutes can be viewed on the DMIRS website.

## **13. Beyond 2020 Commitments**

An update was provided on the progress in achieving the Beyond 2020 commitments, noting the continued use and focus on four key focus areas of hazardous manual tasks, repeat hazard exposure, contractor management; and mentally healthy workplaces.

## **14. Next meeting: 9 February 2022**

For information on the Mining Industry Advisory Committee, refer to the DMIRS website:

<http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/What-is-the-Mining-Industry-8578.aspx>.