



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety**

Mental Health Strategies Working Group close out report

14 September 2020

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Executive summary

The Mental Health Strategies Working Group (MHSWG) was formed following the Mining Industry Advisory Committee's 14 April 2016 meeting to assist in identifying a framework to support good practice for positive mental health and wellbeing in the resources sector. The main role of this working group was to consider the relevant recommendations in the Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee's report, *The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health*.

Since its first meeting on 15 June 2016, the MHSWG has seen one term of operation end in July 2018 and a second term of operation commence in August 2018. The MHSWG met on 16 different occasions during this time.

The code of practice, *Mentally healthy workplaces for fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers in the resources and construction sectors* has been published and supporting resources have been developed in the form of the mentally healthy workplaces webpages.

The MHSWG met via teleconference on 29 July 2020 to discuss the status of and progress made on the Jacobs Report recommendations and the future steps for the working group. Following the meeting, the register of progress on the Jacobs Report recommendations was updated. This updated progress register is attached.

Introduction

On 18 June 2015, the Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee (Standing Committee) tabled its final report, *The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health*. The Standing Committee made a number of findings and recommendations in its report relating to the Mental Health and Mines and Petroleum portfolios.

The government provided its response to the Standing Committee's recommendations in October 2015, which included the Mining Industry Advisory Committee (MIAC) progressing those relevant recommendations.

To assist in identifying a framework to support good practice for positive mental health and wellbeing in the resources sector workplace, it was agreed at MIAC's 14 April 2016 meeting to establish the Mental Health Strategies Working Group (MHSWG).

Membership

The MHSWG has changed in form and structure since its inception in 2016.

Initially, fifteen active members were registered in the terms of reference, with additional interested parties from industry and government attending meetings.

The first MHSWG comprised as a minimum:

- (a) at least one member of MIAC **or** the State Mining Engineer
- (b) at least **one** member nominated by the Mental Health Commission
- (c) at least **one** member nominated by the Western Australian Association for Mental Health
- (d) at least **one** MIAC member appointed on the nomination of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia and the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies Inc
- (e) at least **one** MIAC member appointed on the nomination of Unions WA
- (f) other representatives from government, industry, unions, and experts who have knowledge of or experience in occupational health and safety in the mining industry, as deemed necessary and appropriate by the MIAC.

The Chairperson was required to be a member of MIAC.

The term of operation of this MHSWG ended 31 July 2018.

Initially, the Chairperson was an industry representative; however, as much of the work on the code of practice and supporting resources was undertaken by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's (DMIRS) officers, it was agreed that the Chairperson, while being a member of MIAC, should be an officer of DMIRS. Ms Christina Folley, Regional Inspector of Mines, took over as Chairperson with the formation of the second MHSWG in August 2018.

As is customary with most government working groups, the MHSWG was re-established as a tripartite sub-committee comprising:

- (a) Chairperson: a member of MIAC
- (b) **two** industry representatives: from AMEC and CMEWA
- (c) **two** unions representatives
- (d) **two** government representatives
- (e) experts as required, based on the content of each meeting.

Role of MHSWG

As set out in their Terms of Reference version 6, updated in 2019, the role of the MHSWG was to:

- (a) revisit outstanding actions from the previous working group, to determine relevant issues that are either actioned or discarded
- (b) examine available research and other resources to support an evidence-based approach
- (c) consider strategies to clarify and promote positive wellbeing for all resources sector employees, not just the fly-in, fly-out or drive-in, drive-out workforce
- (d) promote vicarious learnings to MIAC in relation to the identification of a good practice framework to support positive workplace mental health outcomes
- (e) report regularly to MIAC on its progress and timelines
- (f) provide a final report and recommendations to MIAC on or before 30 July 2020.

Matters that were out of scope for the MHSWG included:

- (a) considering treatment of mental or physical health conditions
- (b) considering industrial relations or human resources matters which are not directly relevant to workplace safety and health; and
- (c) considering external, non-work related factors which may have an impact on individual wellbeing, but are outside the control of employers; or
- (d) becoming involved in the day-to-day operations of MIAC or DMIRS.

Meetings

Since its first meeting on 15 June 2016, the MHSWG has met on 17 separate occasions. These meetings include:

- 5 meetings in 2016
- 6 meetings in 2017
- 3 meetings in 2018
- 2 meetings in 2019
- 1 teleconference meeting in 2020.

At the 29 July 2020 teleconference meeting, members discussed the future of the MHSWG.

MHSWG members agreed that mental health and wellbeing encompasses workers in all industries, not only the resources sector. While DMIRS will continue to progress the remaining outstanding Jacobs Report recommendations, worker mental health and wellbeing is a significant issue that should be moved to groups with greater influence and the ability to coordinate larger interventions such as MIAC and the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health (COSH). Members concluded the broader issue of mental health in the workplace should become standing items on the MIAC and COSH meeting agendas.

Members agreed with the Chairperson's proposal to end tenure of the MHSWG following submission of a close out report to MIAC.

Deliverables

Since its inception in 2016, the MHSWG has been instrumental in providing input on a number of initiatives.

Mentally healthy workplaces for fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers in the resources and construction sectors – Code of practice

The MHSWG provided input and feedback during the drafting of this code of practice, providing guidance on creating and maintaining a mentally healthy workplace through:

- providing an environment that promotes good health and wellbeing
- the application of a risk management process to avoid or minimise harm from psychosocial hazards and risk factors and develop a mentally healthy workplace
- developing response strategies (intervention) for workers when there are concerns regarding work-related stress or exposure to psychosocial hazards and risk factors
- providing an environment that supports recovery.

The code of practice applies to workplaces in Western Australia that utilise fly-in fly-out (FIFO) work arrangements, including:

- resources operations (minerals and petroleum sectors) that are engaged in activities such as exploration, construction, mining or processing, or support such activities (e.g. drilling contractors, facilities management)
- construction work not related to resources operations.

http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Documents/Safety/MSH_MHW_FIFO_COP.pdf

Mentally healthy workplaces online hub

The mentally healthy workplaces online hub brings together videos, podcasts, information sheets and checklists for both workers and management to use.

The MHSWG provided input and feedback during the development of this important online resource.

[Mentally healthy workplaces online hub](#)

Mentally healthy workplaces audit tool and technical guide

The audit tool and associated technical guide assist duty holders in meeting their workplace safety and health legal obligations as outlined in the FIFO code of practice.

The MHSWG provided input and feedback during the development of this audit tool and technical guide.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/publications/mentally-healthy-workplaces-audit-tool-and-technical-guide>

Conclusion

The MHSWG has prepared this report in fulfilment of the requirements of its role under its Terms of Reference. The report outlines the MHSWG's achievements in identifying and progressing projects that support good practice for positive mental health and wellbeing in the resources sector workplace since April 2016.

Factors that precipitated the establishment of the MHSWG were identified and discussed in terms of their relevance to current activities and any potential future role.

The MHSWG's initial term of operation ended 30 July 2018. A number of activities remained incomplete, resulting in the MHSWG being extended to 30 June 2020.

This close out report of the MHSWG concludes actions of the sub-committee of MIAC.

A number of recommendations from the Jacobs Report remain unfulfilled and further work is required. For some recommendations work is ongoing, while other recommendations fall within the jurisdiction of other departments.

Discussions are underway as to which statutory committee either COSH or MIAC, will include the remaining Jacobs Report recommendations within their agenda.

Recommendations

That MIAC:

- a) considers the MHSWG's close out report on achievements prepared pursuant to Terms of Reference
- b) considers outstanding activities to be undertaken by MIAC or COSH
- c) endorses terminating the MHSWG.

APPENDIX A: Jacobs Report recommendations status

The Jacobs Report has been the framework around which work of the MHSWG has focused. The following table presents each report recommendation and its current status that has been achieved.

Recommendation	Responsible	Status
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That the Department of Mines and Petroleum should establish and keep an annual count of the number of FIFO and DIDO (non-resident) workers within the resources industry in Western Australia.</p>	<p>DMIRS with input from AMEC/CME</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>These reporting requirements will be considered in the development of the new Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Department of Mines and Petroleum should establish and keep an annual count of the number of resource workers employed on construction versus production in the resources industry, and the proportion working on FIFO work arrangements.</p>	<p>DMIRS with input from AMEC/CME</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>These reporting requirements will be considered in the development of the new Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>That the Attorney General provide funding to the Coroner's Court of Western Australia to develop and implement a searchable database for recording and monitoring trends in reportable deaths in Western Australia.</p>	<p>Coroner's Court of Western Australia</p>	<p>With Coroner's Court</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Minister for Mental Health funds the Mental Health Commission to commission independent research into the mental health impacts of fly-in, fly-out work arrangements on workers and their families. Such research should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of different sites across the state, with different mining systems (i.e. underground, open cut etc.) • both construction and production workers • a representative sample of workers in terms of occupational role (i.e. not biased towards professionals) • workers on a range of roster compressions • a large (over 1,000) sample size • many different companies, including contractors • data gathering to include the impact on families • a longitudinal focus. 	<p>Mental Health Commission</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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Recommendation	Responsible	Status
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Committee calls on resource companies, and the industry's peak bodies, to acknowledge and respond to the demographic information available about the resources FIFO workforce, mental illness, and suicide risk. Ignoring the confluence of these factors places the lives of workers and their wellbeing at risk.</p>	<p>All MHSWG members DMIRS</p>	Completed
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Companies and industry peak bodies must acknowledge that, regardless of contested demographic risk factors for heightened rates of mental illness and suicide, their workforce is vulnerable to suicide. Suicide is therefore a workplace hazard.</p>	<p>All MHSWG members DMIRS</p>	Completed
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that clause 19(4) of the national WHS Model Act, dealing with duty of care at accommodation facilities, be included in the Western Australia Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill, to ensure that a FIFO worker occupying or residing in FIFO accommodation is not exposed to risks to health and safety, including mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>State Government</p>	With Parliament
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that a clause be included in the new Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill that requires the mine manager to report to the Department of Mines and Petroleum all attempted suicides and suicides at any location at a mine, including within the accommodation facilities whether on- or off-tenement, regardless of the imputed motivation.</p>	<p>State Government</p>	With Parliament
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that the Department of Mines and Petroleum policy requires that every death notification received by the department is fully investigated, regardless of initial indications suggesting a suicide may not be related to work.</p>	<p>DMIRS</p>	Completed
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that a clause be included in the new Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill that requires the mine manager to report to the Department of Mines and Petroleum any death, by any cause, which happens in any part of the mine site (including the accommodation camp), whether the worker is on- or off-shift.</p>	<p>State Government</p>	With Parliament

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Recommendation	Responsible	Status
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and the Department of Mines and Petroleum, in partnership with the Mental Health Commission, negotiate a Code of Practice with industry and other stakeholders that addresses FIFO work arrangements and their impact on employees' mental health.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements addresses the issue of rosters, with the aim of encouraging even-time rosters, and rosters that support mental health and wellbeing such as two weeks on, one week off, or the 8 days on, 6 days off roster. Rosters of greater compression than this can result in fatigue and pose significant risks to workers' mental health and wellbeing, and should be reduced.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements includes an explicit acknowledgement of the impact of fatigue on mental health, and controls for managing its consequences and impact.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements includes a provision for the development of workplace cultures that are supportive of good mental health and wellbeing.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures improved anti-bullying procedures are included in the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements, and that greater capacity be given to DMP to pursue and prosecute bullying claims.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>The Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements emphasises the importance of providing high quality, reliable and accessible communications technology in FIFO accommodation villages.</p>	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes a provision requiring that Active Lifestyle Coordinators (or their equivalents) at FIFO sites receive training in mental health. 	DMIRS and MHSWG	Completed

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Recommendation	Responsible	Status
<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires the minimisation of motelling accommodation practices, and where possible, its abolition. The Code of Practice should also include measures to reduce the negative impacts of the practice of motelling. 	DMIRS	Completed
<p>Recommendation 19</p> <p>That the Drug and Alcohol Office initiates an inquiry into possible harmful drinking habits and alcohol consumption of FIFO workers, and the impact on their mental health.</p>	DOH and MHSWG	Completed
<p>Recommendation 20</p> <p>Industry should assess whether all of the controls applied to workers in the FIFO accommodation facilities are necessary in terms of health and safety. The level of appropriate control in the accommodation facilities should be addressed in the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements.</p>	DMIRS and MHSWG	Completed
<p>Recommendation 21</p> <p>That the Mental Health Commission, in conjunction with industry and non-government organisations, develop a training program for managers and supervisors in the resources industry to address mental health issues, including suicide prevention and managing mental health problems amongst colleagues and workers.</p>	MHSWG	Completed
<p>Recommendation 22</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include a requirement for training in mental health literacy for FIFO workers, their families and other resource workers. 	MHSWG	Completed
<p>Recommendation 23</p> <p>A peer-based support program such as Mates in Construction should be implemented at all FIFO sites, for both construction and production workers.</p>	MHSWG/CME	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 24</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include a requirement for consistent procedures for mental health evacuations across industry, to be developed in partnership with the Mental Health Commission and the Mental Health Law Centre. 	MHSWG	Completed

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Recommendation	Responsible	Status
<p>Recommendation 25</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensures the Code of Practice on FIFO work arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes a provision requiring companies to have well developed policies in place to manage a suicide or suicide attempt within their workforce. <p>The Mental Health Commission should be consulted in the development of such policies.</p>	MHSWG	Completed
<p>Recommendation 26</p> <p>That the Mental Health Commission (Drug and Alcohol Office) conduct further research into the use of illicit drugs by FIFO workers, particularly the use of short-acting illicit and new synthetic substances, and the impact on mental health.</p>	Mental Health Commission	Completed
<p>Recommendation 27</p> <p>Where possible, FIFO workers should be encouraged and enabled to engage with the local host community.</p>	DMIRS and MHSWG	Ongoing *
<p>Recommendation 28</p> <p>Mining companies should engage with local host communities to ensure that the placement of accommodation facilities brings benefits to local communities, as well as benefits to the mental health of workers.</p>	DMIRS and MHSWG	Ongoing *
<p>Recommendation 29</p> <p>That the Department of State Development investigate mechanisms to encourage resource companies to invest in providing workers the opportunity to reside in local communities in order to improve mental health.</p>	JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation will progress the recommendation on consultation with relevant stakeholders.
<p>Recommendation 30</p> <p>The Department of State Development should develop a strategic plan for the decision making process for the placement of FIFO accommodation camps, which must include consideration of workers' mental health and access to local communities. Such a plan should include a community impact assessment.</p>	JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation will progress the recommendation on consultation with relevant stakeholders.

* the [Mentally healthy workplaces online hub](#) is being updated with information relevant to this recommendation. Once the update has been made, these two recommendations will be 'completed'. They are therefore not included in the following table.

APPENDIX B: Action register

Some recommendations are yet to be fulfilled and further action is required. The following table suggests possible action to be undertaken and the responsible party.

Recommendation	Comment	Owner	Action
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That the Department of Mines and Petroleum should establish and keep an annual count of the number of FIFO and DIDO (non-resident) workers within the resources industry in Western Australia.</p>	<p>WHS Resources Regs initially drafted aligned with the National Mines Safety Framework, which did not include the requirement for industry to submit this information to DMIRS.</p> <p>These reporting requirements will be considered in the development of the new Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.</p> <p>Scoping work is underway within DMIRS to determine how this count can be collated.</p>	DMIRS with input from AMEC/CME	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Possibly require RIS/PIA.</p> <p>Review intent of recommendation to determine purpose of data.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Department of Mines and Petroleum should establish and keep an annual count of the number of resource workers employed on construction versus production in the resources industry, and the proportion working on FIFO work arrangements.</p>	<p>WHS Resources Regs initially drafted aligned with the National Mines Safety Framework, which did not include the requirement for industry to submit this information to DMIRS.</p> <p>These reporting requirements will be considered in the development of the new WHS legislation.</p> <p>Scoping work is underway within DMIRS to determine how this count can be collated.</p>	DMIRS with input from AMEC/CME	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Possibly require RIS/PIA.</p> <p>Review intent of recommendation to determine purpose of data.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>That the Attorney General provide funding to the Coroner's Court of Western Australia to develop and implement a searchable database for recording and monitoring trends in reportable deaths in Western Australia</p>	<p>Not applicable to DMIRS or MIAC</p> <p>1/07/20 – Mines Safety is conducting a BAU project to increase reporting of psychosocial injuries and potential injuries.</p>	Coroner's Court of Western Australia – DMIRS to follow-up	DMIRS to follow-up with Attorney General

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Recommendation	Comment	Owner	Action
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that clause 19(4) of the national WHS Model Act, dealing with duty of care at accommodation facilities, be included in the Western Australia Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill, to ensure that a FIFO worker occupying or residing in FIFO accommodation is not exposed to risks to health and safety, including mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Clause 19(4) from the national model WHS Act is included in the draft Work Health and Safety Bill.</p>	<p>State Government</p>	<p>With Parliament – Awaiting proclamation of WHS Act.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that a clause be included in the new Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill that requires the mine manager to report to the Department of Mines and Petroleum all attempted suicides and suicides at any location at a mine, including within the accommodation facilities whether on- or off tenement, regardless of the imputed motivation.</p>	<p>The new WHS legislation will require reporting of all deaths at a mine, including associated accommodation facilities.</p> <p>DMIRS will continue to use existing administrative procedures to make formal requests for information on non-work related deaths (which include suicides and attempted suicides).</p>	<p>State Government</p>	<p>With Parliament – Awaiting proclamation of WHS Act.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>That the Minister for Mines and Petroleum ensure that a clause be included in the new Work Health and Safety (Resources) Bill that requires the mine manager to report to the Department of Mines and Petroleum any death, by any cause, which happens in any part of the mine site (including the accommodation camp), whether the worker is on- or off-shift.</p>	<p>The new WHS legislation will require reporting of all deaths at a mine, including associated accommodation facilities.</p> <p>DMIRS will continue to use existing administrative procedures to make formal requests for information on non-work related deaths (which include suicides and attempted suicides).</p>	<p>State Government</p>	<p>With Parliament – Awaiting proclamation of WHS Act.</p>

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Recommendation	Comment	Owner	Action
<p>Recommendation 23</p> <p>A peer-based support program such as Mates in Construction should be implemented at all FIFO sites, for both construction and production workers.</p>	<p>Recommendation applies to industry.</p> <p>Note: Mates in Mining (MIM) is being developed, based on and under the auspices of Mates in Construction.</p> <p>MIM has undergone an extensive period of piloting the program to ensure it is appropriate to the mining culture. The MIM project is now in its establishment phase and is currently being conducted in a number of mines nationally.</p>	<p>CME</p>	<p>CME is arranging a survey of membership on topic.</p> <p>Survey results to gauge what has been done within industry (3-6 months away).</p>
<p>Recommendation 29</p> <p>That the Department of State Development investigate mechanisms to encourage resource companies to invest in providing workers the opportunity to reside in local communities in order to improve mental health.</p>	<p>Recommendation applies to Department of State Development (now Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation).</p> <p>Seek status update.</p> <p>6/7/2020 – Supported – The Department of State Development (DSD) will progress the above recommendation on consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>JTSI – DMIRS to follow-up</p>	<p>JTSI notes the decision on whether workers reside in local communities is multi-faceted.</p> <p>JTSI to progress recommendation on consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p>
<p>Recommendation 30</p> <p>The Department of State Development should develop a strategic plan for the decision making process for the placement of FIFO accommodation camps, which must include consideration of workers’ mental health and access to local communities. Such a plan should include a community impact assessment.</p>	<p>Recommendation applies to Department of State Development (now Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation).</p> <p>Seek status update.</p> <p>6/7/2020 – Noted – DSD will work with relevant stakeholders to ensure that decision making for the placement of FIFO accommodation camps considers amongst other things, workers’ mental health and access to local communities.</p>	<p>JTSI – DMIRS to follow-up</p>	<p>JTSI notes the decision for the placement of FIFO accommodation camps, workers’ mental health and access to local communities is one of a number of factors taken into consideration.</p> <p>JTSI to progress recommendation on consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p>