



Dave Harvey (left) and Joe Sanchez

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MINES INSPECTORS WELCOMED ABOARD

The Department of Mines and Petroleum recently completed its first program of intensive training and development of mines inspectors. Twenty-two of those who graduated were recruited in the past year under the Reform and Development at Resources Safety (RADARS) strategy.

The program, which ran over six months, covered a wide range of behavioural and technical competencies. Most courses were presented by consultants although Resources Safety staff members were involved in course development and presentation. For example, experienced inspectors contributed work examples, case studies and role playing exercises to ensure that the courses addressed the specific roles and activities of mines inspectors.

To graduate — and enable the attainment of nationally recognised qualifications at a later time — participants were required to successfully complete assessments both during and after the courses. Many participants commented on the challenges provided by these rigorous assessments. Course leaders were selected from current university lecturers, who are well conditioned to the scrutiny of assessment processes.

Joe Sanchez, a mechanical and structural engineer who joined the Department in January this year, said “Some topics, like ‘Stakeholder

Management’, ‘Dealing with Conflict’ and ‘Leading and Influencing Change’, were outside of my comfort zone but I am glad I pushed through the pain barrier to achieve the required competencies! Not only so I could meet the training requirements but also because I believe these skills will be important in my life as an inspector.”

Key outcomes of the RADARS strategy will be for Resources Safety to achieve a consistently high standard of regulatory services and be seen to be “adding value” to industry’s efforts to improve safety.

“The mines inspectors’ training program ensures we will have a uniform regulatory approach into the future”, said Andrew Martin, an electrical engineer who was recruited in January.

Dave Harvey, who has a mineral processing background, concurred and added, “The ‘Regulatory Compliance and Investigative Skills’ course combined with the ‘Record Book Entry and Notice Writing’ workshop gave us a sound foundation so that inspectors can maintain a consistent approach to the way we interact with stakeholders. It also highlighted to us the role of inspectors in compliance and enforcement capacities.”

The training and development program will continue for all new mines safety staff. A similar intensive program is being developed for petroleum safety inspectors, and another will be developed for dangerous goods officers. These new programs are expected to be rolled out during 2011 and 2012.