

Mining Industry Advisory Committee

COMMUNIQUE

A summary of the 8 April 2020

Mining Industry Advisory Committee meeting

1. Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia (CCAA) MIAC membership request outcome

The Chair provided an update on the outcome of a request to the Minister from the CCAA for his consideration for the peak body to have permanent representation on MIAC. As MIAC appointments were approved in August 2018 and are for a period of three years, this request could not be progressed.

To provide CCAA with the opportunity to represent their industry's views to MIAC, the Minister extended an invitation to CCAA to attend a MIAC meeting as a nonvoting guest for a fixed term until 31 December 2020. During this period CCAA will be invited to attend one meeting (proposed for June).

2. COVID-19 response and action plans

DMIRS has been communicating with industry and has been consistent in its messaging that DMIRS is not the lead agency. DMIRS communications have made it clear that people need to refer to the Department of Health, need to follow directions from Police Commissioner and the best place is the wa.gov.au website to seek information about border control and other community expectations. MIAC and COSH has also been receiving these communications.

DMIRS is using the Safety Regulation System (SRS) to disseminate messages to registered managers, underground managers, quarry managers (and all alternates) in the WA mining industry. Following industry feedback, Principal Employers were added to the distribution list. As a result, over 2,500 mine managers across industry now receive the communications.

In its correspondence, DMIRS asked operations to consider the broader impacts of COVID-19 to their workforce and resources. This included the implications if some of the workforce is in 14-day isolation, and ensuring fatigue management plans were in place to mitigate the risks associated with an increased workload on the residual workforce. In addition, sites were asked to consider what measures were in place if there was reduced access to vital equipment, such as gloves and respiratory devices, and to ensure operations had enough supplies to over this period – without comprising safety.

DMIRS' had received positive examples from industry demonstrating how sites are managing suspected COVID-19 cases. Although there has been no confirmed cases have

tested their infectious disease management plans. In one case an individual was flown out by the RFDS, in another an individual was flown out as the single passenger on a charter flight, while another person was driven to the local hospital.

The Chair said DMIRS is conducting its business, but not in the business as usual manner.

Due to the imposed travel restrictions, a specific risk assessment plan has been developed to determine if and when an inspector should be mobilised. DMIRS' Mines Inspectors are contacting sites directly if complaints or enquiries are received, and to ensure infectious disease management plans are being followed. Information received about non-compliance is followed up immediately.

In lieu of proactive inspections, DMIRS is contacting registered managers directly and following up on what specific measures have been put in place to manage issues such as rostering and fatigue. This work commenced last week, and DMIRS is working through the industry contacts and will remain in contact with registered managers to ensure they are aware of the rules in place and that they have developed mitigation plans to manage the risks.

Unions WA highlighted concerns raised about operators not consulting widely with staff, the heightened impact on workers health and mental health of constantly changing roster patterns. A safety alert about roster changes and impact on health and mental health had been issued by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (*NOPSEMA*). He highlighted an example where contractor workers were given very little time to decide if they agreed with a change to their roster.

The Chair advised that DMIRS is identifying sites which need to be contacted immediately and responses to the list of questions being asked, which include questions about rostering and fatigue, are being recorded. Both physical health and mental health was at the forefront of DMIRS consideration and that a strategy is being developed to best manage and deploy DMIRS' two mental health and well-being mines inspectors. A tool on the DMIRS website around rosters is also available. The Chair agreed to provide MIAC with information on the Mines Safety Directorate's COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing response strategy.

3. Dissemination of information to contractors

The Chair opened discussion to members about suggestions and opportunities to improve dissemination of information to contractors within the WA mining industry. The Chair suggested a small working group be established to develop a communication strategy in relation to broader distribution of the resources safety news alerts. CME, AMEC and the Executive Officer agreed to work with the Chair to develop a strategy.

4. Revised Workplace Exposure Standards (WES) for Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) and Respirable Coal Dust (RCD)

The Chair sought feedback from the MIAC regarding endorsement of the revised WES for RCS and for RCD for the WA mining industry. All MIAC members were in support.

The Chair moved that the recommendation that the Mining Industry Advisory Committee:

- endorse implementation of the revised workplace exposure standards for respirable crystalline silica and respirable coal dust; and
- recommend to the Minister, as provided for under Regulation 9.2 of the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995, to use his authority to adopt the revised WES for RCS and RCD.

5. Brady Review – report recommendations applicability to WA mining industry

The Chair sought feedback from MIAC regarding the applicability of the recommendations from the *Review of all fatal accidents in Queensland mines and quarries from 2000 to 2019 – report* (Brady Review) to the WA mining industry. The Chair suggested allocating an Inspector to conduct a comparative study in relation to the correlation of recommendations made in the report to Western Australian mines. MIAC members agreed with this suggestion and the inspector will provide feedback at the June meeting.

6. Mines Safety Directorate: Upcoming events 2020

The Chair advised that all events and sponsorships had been postponed due to COVID-19 and the restrictions placed on social distancing. The Chair advised that the DMIRS Safety Regulation Group is continuing to meet regularly to ensure that events are reinstated as soon as possible.

7. Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation

The Chair advised that it is anticipated the finalised consultation reports for the general, mining and petroleum regulations will be sent to the Minister's office in late- April 2020. After the report is with the Minister's office work will commence to share the submissions received (subject to their confidentiality request) on the DMIRS website.

8. Mental Health Strategies Working Group (MHSWG)

The Chair advised due to the restrictions on social distancing following the COVID-19 pandemic any proposed MHSWG meetings have been postponed. Any work related to finalising the Jacobs Report recommendations progress update and the mentally healthy webpages and resources will be communicated to the working group via email.

9. Nano Diesel Particulate Matter Working Group (nDPMWG)

The Chair provided an update on the nDPMWG. She advised that the Minister had approved the implementation of a WES for Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM) for the WA mining industry. Work was now underway within DMIRS' to amend the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations (WA) 1995. With regard to future nDPMWG meetings, in line with the State Government directive concerning COVID-19 and social distancing, any proposed meetings have been postponed.

10. Significant incident reports

Three Mines Safety Bulletins and two Significant Incident Reports have been published since the February 2020 MIAC meeting. The Chair advised the significant incident report relating to the fatal incident in January was still to be published pending investigations.

[MSB No. 173: Inspection and maintenance of handrails](#) - 214 Kb

[MSB No. 172: High pressure compressor systems on drill rigs - fire and explosion hazard](#) - 99 Kb

[MSB No. 171: Pit wall failure management](#) - 300 Kb

[SIR No. 280: Bulldozer operator crushed between ladder and handrail – significant injuries](#) - 367 Kb

[SIR No. 279: Paste wall failure](#) - 159 Kb

11. Towards 2020 Commitments

The Chair provided an update on the Towards 2020 Commitment, advising that since the last MIAC meeting, the human and organisational factors (HOF) online hub had gone live. These webpages are designed to increase industry's awareness of HOF, and its role in establishing and maintaining safe systems of work. The webpages will be advertised to industry via ThinkSafe magazine, web article, resources safety news alert and during site inspections. The Chair sought feedback from MIAC members, requesting feedback be provided to the Executive Officer by 22 April 2020.

[Human and organisational factors online hub](#)

12. Next meeting: 10 June 2020

For further information on the Mining Industry Advisory Committee, please refer to the MIAC page on the DMIRS website:

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

Christina Folley – Acting Chair