

Coal Competence Board

2008 Annual Report

The Coal Competence Board was established in 2006, following the introduction of the *Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002* and the *Coal Mine Health and Safety Regulation 2006*. The Board is subject to the control and direction of the NSW Minister for Mineral Resources.

The Board made its first annual report on the activities of the Board to the end of 2007. This report covers the first full calendar year of activities to December 2008.

The Board met bi-monthly throughout 2008. A planning workshop was held in December 2007 to identify priorities for Board activities in 2008 and beyond. As a result, three working groups were established to progress the priorities identified by the Board for action.

The functions of the Board (s 134 CMHSA) are:

- (a) to oversee the development of competence standards for persons performing functions at coal operations that may impact on health and safety,
- (b) to undertake initial and ongoing assessments of the competence of persons performing functions at coal operations,
- (c) to advise the Minister on matters related to the competence required of persons to perform functions at coal operations

Board membership:

In addition to the Chairman, two employer representatives, nominees of the NSW Minerals Council, two employee representatives, nominees of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), two independent people with expertise in the development and assessment of competence in the coal industry, and two representatives of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) are appointed to the Coal Competence Board. All the present appointments are for a term to 30 June 2009.

Mr John Maitland, Chairman
Mr John McKendry, Independent and Board Deputy Chairman
Mr Dave Mellows, NSW Minerals Council
Mr Steve Bracken, NSW Minerals Council
Mr Ian Murray, CFMEU
Mr Keith Shaw, CFMEU
Mr Bob Gibbons, Independent
Mr Rob Regan, NSW DPI
Mr Rod Morrison, NSW DPI

Activities and achievements for 2008 were:

- Continuation of the established examination process for specified functions in NSW coal mines
- The Board met with and continues to work closely with the Examination Boards to review the examination processes
- A combined meeting of the Coal Competence Board and the Queensland Board of Examiners to discuss the potential for common standards and processes
- Consulted with key stakeholders – NSW Minerals Council, CFMEU, SkillsDMC the national industry skills council for drilling, mining, quarrying and civil infrastructure industries, NSW Mining Industry Skills Association, about key issues relating to competence, competence standards and assessment
- Training for Check Inspectors commenced following endorsement of the training package by the Minister for Mineral Resources in July 2008. Courses were conducted at Wollongong and Lithgow Mines Rescue Stations for check inspectors located in the southern and western districts
- Project commencement in the key areas of competence standards, the introduction of a system for the maintenance of competence and mining industry endorsement of Registered Training Organisations

Chairman's participation at key industry events:

- NSW Minerals Industry Occupational Health and Safety Conference 12-14 May 2008
- SkillsDMC the national industry skills council for drilling, mining, quarrying and civil infrastructure industries Annual Conference 20 August 2008
- NSW Check Inspectors Conference 2 September 2008
- NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council CEO Culture Change Summit 28 November 2008

Identified priorities for the Board in 2009 are to:

- Establish competence standards for identified classifications of work within the mining industry. Competencies and standards have not been previously identified for most categories of work.
- Work has commenced on the identification of any gaps between industry roles and the assessment process for statutory Certificates of Competence.
- Review the statutory examination rules.
- Develop and implement a system for the maintenance of competence – this identified need has a very high priority. At present, there is no systematic approach for the maintenance of competence within the mining industry.

- Establish a system for mining industry endorsement of Registered Training Organisations who are identified as delivering training to the standard required by the Coal Competence Board.
- Continue to engage in co-operative working arrangements with SkillsDMC and NSW Mining Industry Skills Association (MISA).
- Obtain VETAB accreditation for a combined Check Inspector/OHS Consultation Training Package.

The Coal Competence Board is working to ensure that all of the parties involved in the delivery of competence, training and assessment for the NSW coal industry are well positioned to work effectively together without any duplication of effort. In this way the available systems will be maximised. The Board's goal is to harness the diverse parties working in the area of competence for people in the coal industry and to identify common ground to enable an improved competence system to be developed and delivered.

At the beginning of 2009, the Coal Competence Board has established co-operative working arrangements with key organisations and industry stakeholders and has made very good progress. The result will be the increased competence of people to work safely in the New South Wales coal industry, therefore improving the health and safety of persons working in the NSW coal industry.

Minister, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the work of the Coal Competence Board and its plans for 2009, if you wish.

JOHN MAITLAND
Chairman
Coal Competence Board
February 2009