

Proposals to improve mine safety out for public discussion

Written by Andrew Cripps



Brisbane 11 September 2013. Queensland's world-leading safety and health regime for mine workers will be made even more effective through proposed reforms to the state's mining safety and health laws.

Natural Resources and Mines Minister Andrew Cripps today released for industry consultation the Queensland Mine Safety Framework Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) which outlines options to amend Queensland's mine safety and health legislation.

"Ensuring Queensland mine workers return home safely after each shift is of paramount importance to the Newman Government and to my Department," Mr Cripps said.

"Queensland is recognised internationally for its excellent mine safety record, however no system is perfect, and I believe these proposals will ensure our mine sites are even safer for employees.

"The State Government, Unions and resources companies have worked cooperatively for many years to improve mine safety and these reforms are another step in that ongoing process.

"It's time that Queensland's mining community looked at the legislation we now have, understand where we've come from, and determine whether we have the best system to protect Queensland mineworkers."

Mr Cripps said proposed reforms included:

- an increase in the number of coal industry safety and health representatives from three to four;
- clarification of the role of industry safety and health representatives;
- the requirement for all mines to have a single safety and health management system that covers both company employees and contractors;
- key safety positions at mine sites to become statutory roles with a Board of Examiners competency certificate required;
- improved stone dusting and water barrier requirements for underground coal operations to further minimise the risk of fire or explosion, and
- standardising the management of fatigue, drugs, alcohol and fitness for work across both the quarry and coal sector.

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Mr Cripps said he was pleased these proposals addressed the safety of increasing numbers of contract workers in Queensland mines.

“Recent data suggests contractors are more likely to be injured on our mine sites, sometimes fatally, which is why these proposals will clarify that everyone, contractor or mine employee, is required to operate under a single safety and health management system on site,” he said.

“We are also proposing to increase the number of coal industry safety and health representatives from three to four and clarify the important role that union safety and health representatives play in the mining industry.”

The Regulatory Impact Statement was developed following consideration of 28 submissions received in response to a 2012 consultation paper circulated to the mining industry about the review of Queensland’s mine safety and health laws.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines will host a series of forums in Queensland mining communities beginning on 16 September 2013 to discuss the proposed reforms with managers and employees of coal and metalliferous mining operations.

Industry stakeholders have 60 days to lodge submissions about the issues outlined in the Queensland Mine Safety Framework Regulatory Impact Statement.

The Regulatory Impact Statement and how to make a submission is available at: www.dnrm.qld.gov.au or www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au