AUSTRALIA’S MINING HEALTH AND SAFETY SYSTEMS

Australia’s mining industry is renowned for the development of best practice health and safety solutions that support high levels of productivity. The health of mine workers and safe mining operations are protected by a world-leading regulatory and policy framework, with industry and government working together to achieve ‘zero harm’—an industry free of fatalities, injuries and disease.

Benefits of a focus on health and safety include meeting legal requirements, minimising the business costs associated with injuries and illness, and maximising productivity.

AUSTRALIA’S ROBUST POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Australian Government sets national policy including fiscal, monetary and taxation policy, foreign investment guidelines, immigration, competition policy, trade and customs, company law, international agreements and native title (laws covering the land rights of Indigenous Australians).

The Australian States and Territories manage and allocate mineral and petroleum property rights, have primary responsibility for land administration, regulate operations (including environmental and occupational health and safety) and collect royalties on the minerals produced.

The Australian and the State and Territory Governments work together across the minerals and petroleum sectors to:

- look for ways to remove or reduce impediments to industry competitiveness
- reduce commercial risk in exploration by generating and disseminating geoscientific information at reasonable cost
- provide a regulatory framework for exploration, development, project approval, safety and environmental assessment.

MINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

While each State and Territory has its own legislation, all adopt a general duty of care, which requires the operator of a mine to ensure the health and safety of workers and other persons is not at risk as a result of activities at the mine.

In addition, the legislation is based on a risk management approach. This approach requires the ongoing identification, mitigation and monitoring of all risks present at a mining operation to ensure hazards are eliminated or suitable controls are put in place to minimise risks to the health and safety of workers.

Risk management approaches and controls are documented in site-specific safety management systems, which are auditable documents that address site safety and health procedures and responsibilities.

The overall risk management approach aims to identify the outcomes that mine sites must achieve, rather than a set of prescriptive rules that must be followed. It recognises that no two workplaces are the same and that hazards will vary from mine to mine, as will the controls used to eliminate or manage the risks posed by those hazards.

In order to be effective, this approach requires ongoing consultation with mine workers, as those carrying out the day-to-day work at the mine site are best placed to identify hazards and the most appropriate methods for addressing them.

The aim of mine safety regulation in Australia is ‘zero harm’: to make the industry injury and fatality-free. The Minerals Council of Australia believes:

- all fatalities, injuries and diseases are preventable
- no task is so important that it cannot be done safely
- all hazards can be identified and their risks managed
- everyone has a personal responsibility for the safety and health of themselves and others
- safety and health performance can always be improved.
AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL MINE SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Background

The National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF) is an initiative of the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (MCMPR). The NMSF aims for a nationally consistent occupational health and safety (OHS) regime in the Australian mining industry.

This includes consistent legislative principles along with a consistent approach to the interpretation, implementation and application of that legislation. The Framework consists of seven strategies focused on areas where consistency across jurisdictions would be most beneficial. The strategies are:

- **Nationally consistent legislative framework** to protect the safety and health of mine employees and persons who may be affected by mining operations. The legislative framework incorporates the principles adopted in the International Labour Organisations’ Convention 176: Safety and Health in Mines.

- **Competency support** to encourage and promote continuous skills development and consistent levels of competency nationwide, for both the regulator and the industry.

- **Compliance support** to develop a national approach to providing advisory information for duty holders to assist them in achieving compliance, while recognising the varying needs of individual operations.

- **A nationally coordinated protocol on enforcement** to develop a nationally consistent and transparent approach to enforcement that provides clear and consistent standards for duty holders, and supports equitable outcomes from governments’ contribution to safety and health in the mining industry.

- **Consistent and reliable data collection and analysis** to develop a national mining industry data set, and facilitate consistent collection and analysis of data across jurisdictions.

- **Effective consultation mechanisms** to establish an effective national approach to consultation with stakeholders and between jurisdictions on safety and health in the mining industry, at both the workplace and State/Territory levels.

- **A collaborative approach to research** to establish appropriate mechanisms for governments to foster effective research into occupational safety and health in the mining industry.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following are some of the government bodies involved in Australian mine safety regulation.

Contact your local Austrade representative about connecting and partnering with the Australian mining industry.

- NSW Trade and Investment [resources.nsw.gov.au](http://resources.nsw.gov.au)
- Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines [mines.industry.qld.gov.au](http://mines.industry.qld.gov.au)
- Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum [dmp.wa.gov.au](http://dmp.wa.gov.au)
- Northern Territory WorkSafe [worksafe.nt.gov.au](http://worksafe.nt.gov.au)

ABOUT AUSTRADE

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- develop international markets
- win productive foreign direct investment
- promote international education
- strengthen Australia’s tourism industry
- seek consular and passport services.

[austrade.gov.au](http://austrade.gov.au)

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