

NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council Annual Report

2024–2025

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Introduction

The NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council (MSAC) is a tripartite forum comprised of employers, unions, and government representatives with an independent chair. It was established to foster a mining industry with safety as a core value, and to advise the Minister on strategic health and safety issues in the mining and extractives industries.

MSAC is established under section 60 of the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013*. Membership is specified in the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2022*.

MSAC is a collaborative partnership that integrates the views of all stakeholders while working towards common goals to:

- strengthen relationships and build trust
- agree on priority work health and safety issues and actions to address them
- gather, analyse, evaluate, and communicate information on work health and safety.

This MSAC annual report covers activities between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025.

Functions of MSAC

The functions of MSAC are detailed in the Act and the Regulation. MSAC's functions under section 61 of the Act are:

- to advise the responsible Minister on any policy matter relating to work health and safety in mines
- any other advisory function relating to work health and safety in mines as prescribed by the Regulations.

The functions as prescribed under section 164 of the Regulation are to:

- advise the Minister on any matter, other than a policy matter, relating to work health and safety in mines that is referred to it by the Minister
- advise the Minister on any other matter, other than a policy matter, relating to work health and safety in mines that it considers relevant.

More information on MSAC

For comprehensive information on MSAC and its activities visit the webpage:

resources.nsw.gov.au/resources-regulator/our-role/other-functions/mine-safety-advisory-council

Contact MSAC

NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council
c/- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
PO Box 344, Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310
Email: rr.secretariat@dpird.nsw.gov.au

Membership

The members of MSAC during the 2024–25 financial year were:

Name	Nominee	Appointed under (Regulation section)
Hon. George Souris	Independent Chairperson	164(1)(d) and (2)
Mr Ian Cribb	NSW Minerals Council (Coal sector)	164(1)(a)(i)
Mr James Collings	Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia	164(1)(a)(iii)
Mr Robin Williams	Mining and Energy Union	164(1)(b)(i)
Mr Graeme Osborne	Mining and Energy Union	164(1)(b)(i)
Mr Robert Timbs	Mining and Energy Union	164(1)(b)(i)
Mr Peter Day	NSW Resources Regulator, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	164(1)(c)
Mr Anthony Margetts	NSW Resources Regulator, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	164(1)(c)
Ms Julie Armour	Independent member	164(1)(d)
Prof. Deborah Yates	Independent member	164(1)(d)
Mr Ron Cowdrey	Australian Workers Union NSW Branch	164(1)(b)(ii)
Ms Kylie Harris	NSW Minerals Council (Metalliferous)	164(1)(a)(ii)

The Secretary of MSAC is appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development under section 164(3) of the Regulation. The MSAC Secretary for the reporting period was Tony Linnane, Executive Director, Strategy Performance and Industry Development. The department provides Secretariat support.

Meetings

The council met on 4 occasions during the reporting period:

- 9 September 2024
- 18 March 2025
- 5 December 2024
- 5 June 2025

Attendance at MSAC meetings during the reporting period is detailed below:

Member	Position	Present	Comment
Hon. George Souris	Chairperson	1/1	Term ended on 22 October 2024
Mr Ian Cribb	Member	4/4	
Ms Julie Armour	Member	0/1	Term commenced on 5 May 2025
Prof. Deborah Yates	Member	1/1	Term commenced on 5 May 2025
Mr Graeme Osborne	Member	1/2	Resigned on 16 December 2024
Mr Robert Timbs	Member	2/2	Term commenced on 16 December 2024
Mr James Collings	Member	3/3	Term ceased on 22 May 2025
Mr Peter Day	Member	3/3	Term ceased on 22 May 2025
Mr Anthony Margetts	Member	1/1	Term commenced on 6 June 2025
Mr Robin Williams	Member	4/4	
Ms Kylie Harris	Member	4/4	
Mr Ron Cowdrey	Member	2/4	a delegate attended the 3 rd meeting in his place

MSAC meetings were also attended by invited observers from Coal Services; NSW Minerals Council; Cement, Concrete and Aggregates Australia; and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

MSAC activities and focus during 2024–25

The NSW Mine Safety Advisory Council Strategic Plan to 2026 lists 3 priority focus areas and 18 strategies for improving work, health and safety for the NSW mining industry:

1. Health.
2. Fatal incidents, serious injuries and illnesses.
3. Emerging trends.

MSAC oversees the implementation of actions underpinning these focus areas and provides the Minister, industry and the community with regular updates on its progress.

Activities of MSAC during the reporting period against the 3 priority focus areas and strategies are detailed below.

Focus on health

The health of workers in the NSW mining industry continues to be a major focus for MSAC.

The re-emergence of coal worker pneumoconiosis and silicosis in the NSW and Queensland mining industries continues to drive a focus on the framework in place for managing occupational lung disease.

Coal mine worker health surveillance scheme review

MSAC continued to oversee the University of Illinois' independent quality assurance review of the Coal mine worker health surveillance scheme provided by Coal Services Health.

MSAC monitored implementation of all sixteen recommendations in the review report accepted by MSAC during the 2023-2024 reporting period. These recommendations are designed to improve, among other things, Coal Services' protocols for data collection, chest imaging and spirometry. At each meeting during the 2024–2025 reporting period, Coal Services provided quarterly implementation progress summaries to MSAC. Coal Services submitted a final report to MSAC in May 2025 showing it had fully implemented all recommendations to mark the review as complete.

National Dust Disease Taskforce

The National Dust Disease Taskforce was established in July 2019 to develop a nationally consistent approach to the prevention, early identification, control, and management of occupational dust diseases in Australia.

MSAC was provided an update on the taskforce at each meeting. Key taskforce developments in the 2024–25 reporting period included the Commonwealth and States endorsing the Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-2030 developed by the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency. The Silica National Strategic Plan outlines a nationwide approach to preventing workplace exposure to respirable crystalline silica and addressing the re-emergence of silicosis and other silica-related diseases. The plan's implementation seeks to ensure no new cases of accelerated silicosis by 2033, in line with the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy.

Industry Safety and Health Representatives

MSAC considered the merits of extending the Industry Safety and Health Representatives model in coal mines to metalliferous mines. This proposal stemmed from a recommendation by the 2023 parliamentary inquiry into the Current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc on human health, land, air and water quality in New South Wales. The NSW Government supported the recommendation and commissioned MSAC to advise on this matter. MSAC industry and union representatives have consulted their members and MSAC will finalise its position on this matter during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

Musculoskeletal disorders

MSAC strategic plan to 2026 includes a proposed project to identify actions to reduce the incidence of musculoskeletal disorders in the mining industry. This project has not yet commenced.

Monitoring health and safety

MSAC received quarterly updates from Coal Services on health surveillance in the coal sector. This includes an ongoing update on airborne dust, periodic medical compliance and workers compensation claims and injury trends. MSAC also received quarterly updates from the Resources Regulator on health and safety performance in the NSW mining sector, including safety incident notifications, compliance activities and outcomes.

Focus on fatal incidents, serious injuries, and illness

Fatalities and serious injuries and illnesses are key measures which are the focus of health and safety performance in the NSW mining industry. While they are lag indicators, fatality and serious injury and illness data are indicative of the effectiveness of the implementation of critical risk controls.

MSAC monitored all major incidents, incident statistics, and inquiries by reviewing quarterly trend data on serious injuries and illnesses provided by the Resources Regulator. It considered the Regulator's analysis and continued to track these trends each quarter. Based on this monitoring, MSAC provided advice on potential future WHS improvement initiatives aimed at reducing the occurrence of such incidents.

MSAC previously resolved to do a follow-up survey on safety reporting culture following the low response rate to the previous survey conducted in 2021. MSAC has reviewed similar surveys such as the Queensland survey and will consider applying similar methodology to a survey with the goal of promoting greater participation giving a broader data capture and greater insights into safety reporting. The project is planned to commence later in 2025, with MSAC briefed on next steps, project deliverables and timeframes.

Focus on emerging trends

MSAC monitored and considered relevant information to anticipate emerging (or reoccurring) issues and provided the opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss solutions or research going forward.

Strategies and technologies to promote vehicle interactions and collision awareness

MSAC received quarterly updates from the Resources Regulator on the development of a new technical reference guide, Roads or other vehicle operating areas principal hazard management plan for surface and open cut mining operations. The technical reference guide was developed in collaboration with MSAC employer and employee representatives via the tripartite Adverse Vehicle Interactions Advisory Committee (AVIAC) led by the Resources Regulator. The AVIAC was tasked with advancing knowledge of vehicle collision avoidance systems and collaboratively developing a strategic approach to the implementation of collision avoidance approaches.

Diesel particulate matter

MSAC was informed about Safe Work Australia's proposal to transition the workplace exposure standard for airborne contaminants to a workplace exposure limit for airborne contaminants which will come into effect in December 2026. The transition will include new exposure thresholds for several airborne contaminants that will be given effect via the parent Work Health and Safety laws in NSW. This includes a new time-weighted average limit of 0.01mg/m³ for diesel particulate matter (DPM). MSAC considered the overall regulatory impact of the proposed exposure limit for DPM and the industry's ability to comply with the proposed level. MSAC endorsed a Resources Regulator [position paper](#) proposing not to apply the workplace exposure limit for DPM to all coal mines and underground metalliferous mines and, instead, consider adopting a more practicable exposure limit through the WHS (MPS) laws.

Work health and safety laws

MSAC provided advice on possible future changes to safety Regulations for mining and petroleum industries including considering:

- new requirements for managing respirable crystalline silica exposure for workers (including a silica worker register)
- the Resources Regulator position paper regarding preventing worker exposure to respirable crystalline silica
- an amendment to the Regulation imposing maintenance of competence requirements on interstate workers relying on automatic mutual recognition
- the statutory remake of the Mine and Petroleum Site Safety (Cost Recovery) Regulation 2019 scheduled to commence on 1 September 2025
- proposed amendments to the WHS Regulations which will protect workers from silicosis. Worker health screening and monitoring has occurred with MSAC monitoring results.

MSAC monitors Safe Work Australia strategies such as the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2033 agreed by all Australian governments.

The Work Health and Safety Amendment (Industrial Manslaughter) Bill 2024, which MSAC reviewed for its potential industry impacts, came into effect in June 2024.