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COAL INDUSTRY SAFETY CONFERENCE

AUSTRALIAN MINING INDUSTRY COUNCIL

NATIONAL MINING INDUSTRY
SAFETY EXCELLENCE AWARD

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Background

The health and safety performance of the Australian mining industry, measured in statistical terms, has improved over recent years. However, the absolute level of traumatic injuries and fatalities remains unacceptably high.

Statistics published for the Australian mining industry by AMIC⁽¹⁾ this year shows a 60% improvement in Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate from 81 in 1986/87 to 33 in 1992/93. In the same period the fatality rate decreased by 40% but, as an industry, mining remains at a fatality rate four times higher than the rate for all Australian industry.

A comparison of the health and safety performance of the USA and Australian mining industries shows that the LTIFR for coal in Australia is double that of the USA, whereas the mineral sector is at about the same LTIFR as the USA counterpart.

Against this background the Occupational Health and Safety Committee of AMIC is endeavouring to provide as much safety resource and advisory assistance as possible to the Australian mining industry on a broad front. The Committee's charter includes strategies and actions regarding Policy Formulation and Government Representation, Community Representation, Resource Industry Support and support for State/Territory Health and Safety initiatives. Within the above context the AMIC Occupational Health and Safety Committee is implementing the "National Mining Industry Excellence Award for Health and Safety" in 1994/95.

The decision to undertake this project was based on the firm belief that safety management will be enhanced by identifying best health and safety practices in the Australian mining industry and sharing these with as many AMIC and Chamber of Mines member companies as possible.

The process used for the Australian Quality Awards forms the main reference for the National Mining Industry Health and Safety Excellence Award.

Purpose

The purpose of the Award is to:

- support Australian mining companies and their State mining industry bodies in their efforts to continuously improve health and safety at the enterprise level; and

- recognise enterprises with outstanding OHS management systems and results and in so doing promote the mining industry's commitment to improving OHS performance nationally.

This Award is designed to be supportive of and complementary to existing State level OHS Awards and differs primarily in its comprehensive approach and its focus on excellence, as assessed against national competition.

Objectives

Encourage continual improvement in OHS in the mining industry by:

- providing comprehensive, non-prescriptive criteria for self assessment of OHS management systems by mining enterprises
- providing, for Award applicants, a peer assessment of OHS management systems against the criteria
- disseminating knowledge of best practice and the availability of benchmark companies within the industry
- rewarding best practice/excellence/improvement based on comparisons of performance and practices of Award applicants
- promoting the industry's commitment to improved OHS performance

Eligibility

The Award is open to all member companies of AMIC and the State/Territory Chamber of Mines. Two Awards will be presented:

1. For larger enterprises or operating locations where employee numbers exceed 150.
2. For medium to small locations where employee numbers are less than 150.

Applications will be received from any operating location which is controlled by a senior manager with clear site accountability for health and safety. Within the larger company members of AMIC and the Chambers this will most likely result in multiple submissions. Applications are envisaged from separate mines (with or without treatment plants) refineries or processing operations (if they are covered by the appropriate State Mines Regulation Act) and possibly ore storage and shipping terminals.

No distinction is being drawn in the first Award between coal and other minerals, or between underground and surface operations. Any inherent differences likely to affect the outcome of the evaluation process will need to be taken into consideration.

With this being the inaugural Award, the Committee decided against including exploration activities. These could be included in a future Award.

For those operations run using contractors, the application should be framed as if the contractors employees are part of the normal operational workforce.

Award Process and Structure

At the time of writing, details of the Award application guidelines and assessment criteria have not been finalised. The process currently in use by the Australian Quality Awards Foundation is being used as the basis of the approach to the National Mining Industry Safety Excellence Award. The following description of the proposed methodology is therefore largely extracted from the Australian Quality Awards - Assessment Criteria and Application Guidelines 1994. ⁽²⁾

The principal strategy envisioned is to encourage organisations (or operating locations) to use the Awards criteria and process for organisational improvement in health and safety management. The assessment criteria are designed for both external evaluation and self assessment. They are more appropriately designed for external evaluation.

Self assessment of health and safety management is to be encouraged by organisations whether using this format or other approaches such as self audit.

The assessment process for the National Health and Safety Award will be a broader approach than a conventional health safety audit but will obviously not attempt to fully replicate the holistic approach in the Quality Awards.

The criteria will address both the processes put in place to produce the required results and the results themselves. Assessment within the criteria will be based on performance against the dimensions of process - approach, deployment/integration and improvement as well as the dimensions of results/outcomes.

These dimensions are matched with each Item in the Categories described later to form a matrix. Performance is aligned with the appropriate level of attainment on the matrix for each of the dimensions of "approach, deployment/integration, results/outcomes and improvement".

Defining Best Practice

World class companies in health and safety management are proving that a strategic, systematic and committed approach is required to achieve the desired results. There are no easy ways towards excellence in health and safety, nor are there any successful long-term "ad hoc" measures.

As in other management strategies success in health and safety is about values, standards, processes and people. While many safety hazards can, and should, be engineered out of the workplace, the focus is always on the people and processes.

World class companies set extremely challenging goals and put in place improvement and control measures to achieve and sustain the required performance. When health and safety results, measured statistically, are, in fact, world class the programmes must continue to prevent the unexpected traumatic injury and also to maintain the culture around excellence.

In the Safety Excellence Award the Categories, mentioned later, are designed to encompass best practice in health and safety management. They have been partly adapted from the Quality Award Categories with others added on the AMIC Occupational Health and Safety Committee's understanding of best practice.

These Categories and the associated Items will be enhanced in future Awards, if necessary, based on feedback from this Award.

Assessment Criteria

The criteria will be arranged in Categories, Items and Areas to Address. Each category will describe a major component of a best health and safety management practice model.

To produce a numerical score to the evaluation, each of the Items in the Categories carries a maximum potential points rating. These (yet to be decided for the Health and Safety Award) are to allow for the "weighting" considered appropriate for each Item.

Assessment occurs at the Item level. Each Item consists of a detailed review of the practices that could be expected to be in place to achieve the intent of the Category.

The Areas to Address consist of a description of how the intent of the Item might be achieved.

In the assessment process, response to each Item consists of a description of performance against each of the dimensions. All Items do not necessarily require the same level of emphasis on all dimensions.

The organisation or location under assessment has the freedom to provide the most appropriate responses but the use of trend data is recommended wherever possible.

The Categories and Items selected for the National Mining Industry Safety Excellence Award are as follows:

Category 1 - Leadership

This category is concerned with the role of leadership and the way that policy principles are becoming a way of life in the organisation

Items

- role of senior executive
- safety and health policy
- leadership initiatives
- resource allocation

Category 2 - Safety and Health Management

This category is concerned with the way in which the organisation implements occupational health and safety policy and the organisations involvement in the process

Items

- policy implementation
- goals and objectives
- safety planning and control
- management involvement and accountability
- safety and health organisation structure
- compliance with legislation

Category 3 - People

This category is concerned with the extent to which people at all levels are involved in achieving improved safety performance

Items

- pre-employment checks
- medical assessments
- training
- motivation
- communication
- involvement and accountability
- behaviour

Category 4 - Health and Hygiene

This category is concerned with the assessment and control of health, hygiene and employee welfare

Items

- identification of hazards
- hygiene and health hazard exposures
- medical and first aid program
- rehabilitation program
- employee assistance program

Category 5 - Information and Analysis

This category is concerned with the way the organisation uses data throughout its operations

Items

- accident and incidents reporting system
- data analysis of accidents
- formulating action plans based on safety performance data

Category 6 - Safety Processes

This category is concerned with the processes by which the organisation ensures safety standards are maintained

Items

- induction of new employees
- isolation procedures
- emergency procedures
- accident/incident investigation
- work-practice controls (method, training, enforcement, audit)
- design and construction
- supply/suppliers
- risk assessment

Category 7 - Organisational (Location) Performance

Key Performance Objectives/Indicators

Items

- safety performance over past 5 years
- impact of safety performance and operating costs
- impact of safety performance on productivity

Evaluation and Judging Procedure

The evaluation team will consist of nine senior safety and/or line managers from within the Australian mining industry. The proposed approach is to train and use three evaluation teams each of three members. Team leaders have already been selected, and they are as follows:

Mr David Hall
Safety Adviser
Coal and Metals
Shell Australia Ltd

Mr John Sargaison
Health Safety and Training Officer
Queensland Mining Council

Mr Rob Dennis
Chief Mining Engineer
Western Mining Corporation

The evaluation teams will be trained by an experienced Australian Quality Award evaluator using mainly the case study approach.

Each applicant for the Award will be assessed by one of the teams. The applicant's detailed submission is assessed by the members of the evaluation team individually. The teams then meet and reach consensus on the applications and select those entries for whom a site visit is considered appropriate.

The site visits will verify the applicants statements and also determine additional facts where appropriate.

The evaluation teams will then prepare a final report, including recommendations, which is forwarded to a panel of judges for consideration. Members of the Executive Council of AMIC will be invited to act as the panel of judges.

The panel of judges together with the evaluation team leaders will finally determine the winners of the Awards and any commendations considered appropriate.

Note: Judges and members of the evaluation panel are not permitted to participate in the evaluation of an application if they have an interest in the organisation involved or in the outcome of the evaluation.

Proposed Timetable

A tentative schedule for the Award process is as follows:

Distribution of Applications and Guidelines	-	Mid to late September 1994
Return of Application to AMIC	-	late November 1994
Desktop evaluation and short listing of Applicants	-	February 1995
Site assessments	-	March 1995
Final evaluation by evaluation team and panel of judges	-	April 1995
Award notification and presentation at Minerals Industry Seminar Dinner	-	early May 1995

Award Night

The schedule as shown above is designed to culminate with the Awards (and Commendations) being presented at the Minerals Industry Seminar Dinner which is usually held in the first week of May each year. The guest speaker on the night is usually the Prime Minister and we plan that he present the Awards. This would raise the profile and image of health and safety management within the industry. It should also attract media coverage which will help to disburse the positive message contained in the Award process.

Feedback Report

As soon as possible after the presentation of the 1995 Awards a written report of the organisation or locations performance against each of the assessment criteria will be forwarded to each applicant.

Sharing Best Practices

The benefits to the winners of the Awards should be significant - particularly national recognition for health and safety performance and industry acclaim to the management and employees.

However it is also a requirement of the Award winners that they share their experiences and success with other Australian mining companies.

This sharing can take a number of forms:

- Feedback on their experience in applying for the Award.
- Providing the opportunity for benchmarking visits and/or study tours to their operations.
- Participating in seminars on health and safety.
- Permitting their management of health and safety to be written up in case studies, journals or video programmes.

A point of note is that Award winners (and other Applicants) will not be required to divulge any confidential information.

Another sharing of best practices will be through the evaluator's personal exposure to the assessment process and to site visits.

Summary

The AMIC Occupational Health and Safety Committee believes that this Award will in a very practical way improve health and safety management in the mining industry. Evidence today shows that, to obtain world class results, organisations have to focus on the "upstream" processes and people contributions. Challenging targets have to be set and a strong management commitment to succeed are essential ingredients.

Perhaps the most important aspects of health and safety management are measurement of performance and rates of improvement. The saying of "if you can't measure it you can't manage it" holds true here as in any other management process. Hence the concept of audit, whether externally evaluated or internally assessed, is of major significance in a health and safety programme. This Award will provide the opportunity for applicants to be assessed on current performance and be measured ultimately against best practice in the Australian mining industry.

References

1. Safety Performance of the Australian Mining Industry 1992/93:
Australian Mining Industry Council
Occupational Health and Safety Committee
January 1994
2. Australian Quality Awards 1994 - Assessment Criteria and Application
Guidelines : Australian Quality Awards Foundation