

20th December 2024

Arizona Hart
Principal Council Officer Committee Office
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Via email

Dear Arizona,

RE: Post-hearing response, Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists

We thank the committee for the opportunity to answer the following question on notice that was received at the hearing on 29 November 2024:

Question: The CHAIR: And with respect to quarrying, for example, obviously there are many quarries around the State. I don't have detailed knowledge, but often those quarries are quite small and there might be a limited number of workers on the site. Nevertheless, if there are exposure issues there which are consequential, it is important that that be attended to as well. Is anybody doing expert work, if we can use that phrase, on the matter with respect to quarrying and what we need to confront there?

Answer: We note the results of the Targeted Intervention Program for Respirable Dust in Quarry Operations by the NSW Resources Regulator in 2019¹. That program highlighted the following main issues in NSW quarries:

- Some operators believe that respiratory protection equipment (RPE) is the only control necessary. Operators do not understand that they are required to control workers' exposure.
- Risk assessments to identify the risks and controls for dust on sites were typically not completed, did not identify all activities that generated dust, had not been reviewed and/or controls were not detailed.
- Not all activities that generated dust were identified.
- The critical controls used by quarry operators to manage the risk of worker exposure to dust were common, such as sealed, air conditioned and/or air filtered pressurised cabins of mobile plant to isolate workers from exposure to dust and water sprays to suppress dust generation.
- Workers were not aware of the adverse health effects. They had not been trained in the methods to control dust and had not received RPE training.
- The induction process for workers lacked information, training and instruction on the risks to their health from exposure to dust and methods for controlling the hazard.
- The procedure for personal protective equipment (PPE) did not state the mandatory RPE required for tasks and areas of the mine where workers were at increased risk due to exposure to dust.

We are also aware of significant resources that are available such as the Dust disease toolkit² by Mines Department (NSW Resources) and guidance developed by Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia (CCAA)³.

¹<https://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/consolidated-report-tip-respirable-dust-in-quarry-operations.pdf>

²<https://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/resources-regulator/safety/health-and-safety-management/dust-diseases/dust-disease-toolkit>

³[https://www.ccaa.com.au/common/Uploaded%20files/CCAA/Industry%20Guidelines/CCAA Management of RCS in Quarries Guidelines July2021 Singles.pdf?ss360SearchTerm=silica](https://www.ccaa.com.au/common/Uploaded%20files/CCAA/Industry%20Guidelines/CCAA%20Management%20of%20RCS%20in%20Quarries%20Guidelines%20July2021%20Singles.pdf?ss360SearchTerm=silica)



Regards,

KATE COLE OAM

Chair, External Affairs Committee

