

Mine Fire Safety Unit Draft Structure and Work plan

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Introduction and organisational context

About DEDJTR

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) was formed on 1 January 2015, bringing together functions from the Departments of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure; State Development, Business and Innovation; and Environment and Primary Industries.

The DEDJTR Ministers are:

- **Jacinta Allan**, Minister for Public Transport and Employment (Lead Minister)
- **Jaala Pulford**, Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development
- **Lily D'Ambrosio**, Minister for Industry and Energy & Earth Resources
- **Luke Donnellan**, Minister for Roads and Road Safety and Ports
- **John Eren**, Minister for Tourism and Major Events
- **Martin Foley**, Minister for Creative Industries
- **Adem Somyurek**, Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
- **Natalie Hutchins**, Minister for Industrial Relations
- **Steve Herbert**, Minister for Training and Skills (international education)

The DEDJTR Secretary is **Richard Bolt**.

Earth Resource Regulation

Branch structure

Earth Resources Regulation (ERR) sits within the Agriculture, Energy and Resources Group of DEDJTR. The Agriculture, Energy and Resources Group supports Victoria's food and fibre sector to maintain access to and grow new markets, responds to fire, flood and biosecurity emergencies, administers effective risk based regulation and provides efficient, reliable and safe energy services.

Luke Wilson is the lead Deputy Secretary of the Agriculture, Energy and Resources Group. The Group includes three sub-groups responsible for distinct DEDJTR priority areas, each led by Deputy Secretaries. They are:

- James Flintoft - Deputy Secretary of the Agriculture function.
- James Florent - Deputy Secretary of the Regulation and Compliance function.
- Sandra Denis - Deputy Secretary of the Energy and Resources function.

Ross McGowan is the Executive Director of Earth Resources Regulation. Earth Resources Regulation Branch oversees the mineral, petroleum, greenhouse gas geological storage, extractive and geothermal industries in Victoria. The branch shares responsibility with Energy Safe Victoria in oversight of the pipeline industry.

Figure 1 – Earth Resources Regulation structure

To be updated

The branch has six principal teams:

- Earth Resources Operations
- Earth Resources Tenements
- Technical Services
- Sustainable Development
- Hazelwood Inquiry
- Mine Fire Safety Unit

Mine Fire Safety Unit

Overview

The Board of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry 2014 provided its report to Government on 2 September 2014 and made a recommendation that requires the State to '*Acquire the expertise necessary to monitor and enforce compliance with fire risk measures adopted by the Victorian coal mining industry*'.

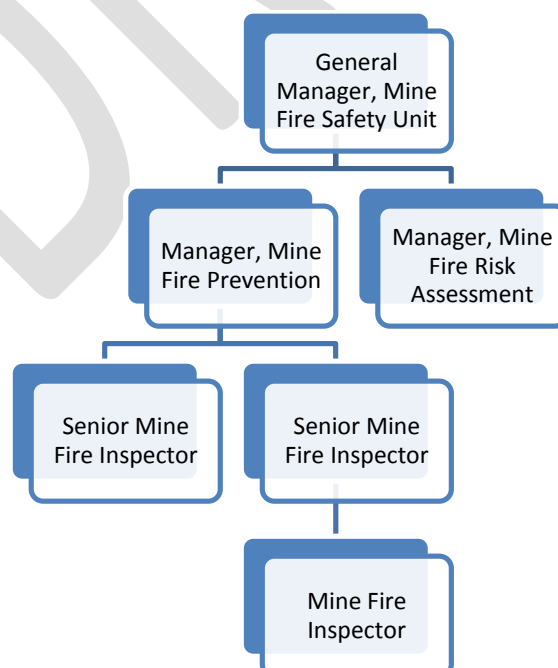
To deliver on this recommendation, the Mine Fire Safety Unit within ERR was created.

The MFSU has been established as a specialist unit within ERR to develop and implement policies and processes for the prevention, mitigation and suppression of fire in Victoria's coal mine sites.

Structure

The MFSU is comprised of 6 mine fire experts, based primarily in Traralgon (with one mine fire inspector in Ballarat).

The team structure is as follows:



Work program

The MFSU will have four key areas of responsibility –



1. Internal Review

The MFSU will undertake a program of work to improve DEDJTR processes and policies currently in place for the management of fire and other risks at earth resources sites in Victoria.

The MFSU will:

- a. Develop and implement a professional development program within the MFSU that builds on existing skills and expertise within the group and ensures required training is undertaken to ensure the MFSU has the appropriate Authorised Officer qualifications;
- b. undertake a desktop assessment of international and national best practice approaches for the prevention, mitigation and suppression of fire in earth resources industry sites;
- c. conduct an internal review and risk assessment in relation to Victoria's current management of fire prevention, mitigation and suppression in Victoria's coal sites;
- d. develop and implement a program of reforms to improve ERR's approach to the prevention, mitigation and suppression of fire and other risks in Victoria's coal mines; and
- e. share and apply the learnings from the program of reforms more generally to compliance and enforcement activities within ERR and DEDJTR.

2. External review and compliance

The MFSU will develop and undertake a program of work to improve the processes undertaken to prevent, mitigate and suppress fires in Victoria's mines and other earth resource sites.

The MFSU will:

- a. Inspect and audit coal mine compliance with their approved fire management plans;
- b. Review current fire management plans and assess the effectiveness of the plans in addressing:
 - i. The risk of fire (including internal and external risks);
 - ii. Potential for spread of fire; and
 - iii. Risk to neighbouring communities, infrastructure and environmental assets.
- c. Using DEDJTR's QRA tool, assist in developing a set of measures to mitigate against identified risks, including measures that ERR will undertake to address fire risk (e.g. additional compliance activities);
- d. develop and implement an annual framework for inspections of coal mines and other earth resources industry sites, to assess fire preparedness in each site, in liaison with Operations ERR and external agencies such as WorkSafe;
- e. contribute to ERR's assessment of risk based work plans, particularly in the assessment of fire risk; and
- f. monitor the performance of coal mines in relation to fire management, including annual reviews of the implementation of licence conditions (e.g. including requirements from the CFA).

3. Stakeholder engagement

The MFSU will lead efforts to improve DEDJTR's engagement with key stakeholders and community groups.

The MFSU will:

- a. liaise with the Community Engagement team to improve engagement with stakeholders and community groups with regards to fire management in mines and earth resources sites; and
- b. improve cross-government approaches to fire prevention, mitigation and suppression activities by leading ERR's contribution to a cross-government mine fire preparedness strategy.

4. Central coordination of response to fire in Victoria's coal mines

The MFSU will provide a central point of coordination for ERR's response to fire in Victoria's coal mines.

The MFSU will:

- a. develop protocols and procedures for responding and assessing fire preparedness by both operators and ERR;
- b. develop and implement policies and protocols to clarify roles and responsibilities for emergency response across government and relevant agencies;
- c. lead ERR's emergency response in the case of fire at Victorian mines and earth resource sites; and
- d. contribute to cross-governmental and industry coordination in the event of fire and other emergencies at mines and earth resource sites, consistent with the State's emergency response arrangements

Relationships

External relationships

The MFSU will work closely with other relevant regulators in implementing approaches to prevent, mitigate and suppress fire in mines and earth resources sites.

Critical to this relationship will be the development and implementation of policies and protocols to clarify roles and responsibilities for relevant agencies (see 4b above) and maintaining effective working relationships across relevant government agencies.

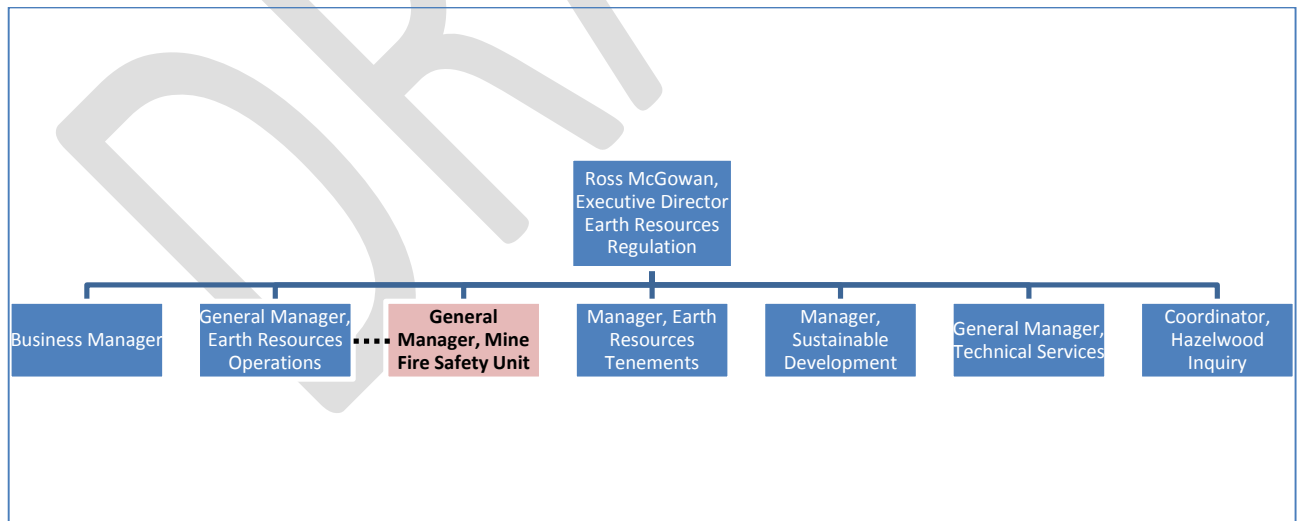
Key regulators that the MFSU will be responsible for working with are:

- WorkSafe
- Environment Protection Agency; and
- Country Fire Association.

Internal relationships

The MFSU will work closely with groups across ERR, particularly the Earth Resources Operations and Hazelwood Inquiry teams.

The General Manager, MFSU will be required to work closely with the General Manager, Earth Resources Operations and the Coordinator, Hazelwood Inquiry to coordinate the MFSU work plan with the Operations work plan where there is overlap.



The Senior Mine Fire Inspector will maintain a close working relationship with the Operations Manager to:

- coordinate the annual framework for inspections of coal mines;
- contribute to the assessment of fire management plans, risk based work plans and work variation applications;
- coordinate public engagement activities and responses to fire or other incidences; and
- provide input as required to the Hazelwood Inquiry.

