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MinEx proposes new qualification framework

Cameron Massey - Tue, 22 Aug 2017

Operators in the mining and quarry sector would be better served by an outcomes-based qualification system, MinEx says.

The industry health and safety council is proposing an overhaul to the current Certificate of Competence regime and replacing it with a New Zealand Qualifications Authority framework.

In its submission to WorkSafe, chief executive officer Wayne Scott says the current CoC requirements, and those offered in the changes WorkSafe proposed in June, do not address the skills, knowledge and experience required for the safety critical roles defined in the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2016.

When matching the Act's requirements of a quarry manager to what was needed for a CoC, Scott noticed gaps in risk management, health and safety management, and workplace emergency plan training.

"I've added three units which are pretty fundamental under the Act and removed all the superfluous units. The current WorkSafe proposal misses the mark as well," Scott told *Inside Resources*.

New framework

Scott is hoping WorkSafe will adopt a new qualification framework prepared by Tai Poutini Polytechnic based off existing NZQA qualifications.

He says the level descriptors for the NZQA certificates and diploma better reflect the skills and knowledge required to successfully manage, supervise and operate in a quarry.

"The emphasis is on the outcomes for the applicant," Scott says.

"It's where it should have always been."

To develop and train people to a qualification and assess them to a certain level, Scott says it must first be established what skills and knowledge they would need to meet that level of qualification.

Recognised qualifications

In the long-term, MinEx's ideal regime for CoC's and quarry qualifications using the NZQA framework would see a B Grade quarry manager earn a NZQA Certificate in Quarrying and Mining (level 4). An A Grade quarry manager would gain a NZQA Diploma in Mining and Quarrying (level 5).

The proposed system would give the current CoC operator a NZQA Certificate in Mining and Quarrying (level 3) and a Manager of a Specified Quarry would earn a NZQA Certificate in Mining and Quarrying (level 5).

Scott says the oral exam for the qualifications should be done on site.

"This will facilitate the Board of Examiners panel assessing the suitability of the site within the risk-based framework and the suitability of the applicant in relation to managing safety at that site."

The group would like the panel of two or three examiners to include an Inspector of Mines who is familiar with the site, where possible.

To blast or not to blast

MinEx is proposing that A Grade and B Grade CoC's should be issued as either restricted – without blasting – or unrestricted – with blasting – conditions.

This would mean that applicants only complete unit standards applicable to their operations.

Those wanting to change from a restricted CoC to an unrestricted ticket would only need to complete the relevant additional unit standards and make an application to the Board of Examiners.

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