

MINING, WINDER DRIVERS' TRAINING

783. Hon. J.F. GRILL to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What training and experience is required for winder drivers operating on underground mines in Western Australia?
- (2) Is there a move within the Ministry or the Department for Mines to change or amend the regulations to adopt different to lesser training standards?
- (3) What training standards and experience are proposed to be adopted?
- (4) For what reason is a change being contemplated?
- (5) Are safety factors being taken into account in respect to any changes to the regulations and, if so, which factors?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The training and experience required for winder drivers operating on underground mines in Western Australia is prescribed in Part 2 Division 3, Subdivision C of the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995. The specific regulations on training and experience are:

- 2.26 Classes of winding engine driver's certificates
- 2.27 Winding engine driver's certificate - Class 1
- 2.28 Winding engine driver's certificate - Class II

For an extract of these regulations see paper No 462.

- (2) The State Mining Engineer has drawn to the attention of the Mines Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board (MOSHAB) and its Standing Committee that it is appropriate to consider moving to a nationally accredited competency based system for winding engine drivers, rather than have this one category of plant operator remain prescribed in the regulations. The move to national competencies is taking place in the mining industry, as with most other industry sectors, across Australia.

Discussion has taken place between the Queensland and New South Wales regulatory authorities on this issue, and the matter was considered at the Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines in October 2000. As the Mutual Recognition of Goods and Services legislation allows a person registered in an occupation in Australia to practice in any State, it is desirable to develop a nationally accredited competency based system to a uniform high standard.

It is proposed to amend the regulations to accommodate this, but only after the national system has been established, and agreement has been reached with all parties as is the practice with all legislative changes. There will be no reduction in standards, and the competency based system will provide assurance that all operating capacities and skills are developed.

- (3) When a national framework is developed for consideration by each State jurisdiction, the training standards and experience requirements from Western Australia's perspective will be established through MOSHAB.
- (4) The reasons for the change are outlined in the answer to Question (2).
- (5) The primary purpose of any changes made to regulations is to improve the safety outcomes for the persons employed to work in the industry. A competency based system will provide assurance that drivers have the full range of skills and capacities to deal with all winding operation functions, rather than simply undertaking a specified number of hours as presently required under the regulations. A further benefit of the nationally accredited competency system is that persons certified in other States, who under mutual recognition must be registered and allowed to drive winders in Western Australia, will be trained to the same standard. The process of change will be subject to the consultation mechanisms afforded by MOSHAB.