

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 879

asked on Friday, 16 June 2023

MR J MARTIN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR RESOURCES (HON S STEWART)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on how Resources Safety and Health Queensland is prioritising health risks across the resources sector?

ANSWER:

Resources Safety and Health Queensland (RSHQ) continues to strengthen its position as a data-driven, risk-based regulator working to eliminate serious harm in the resources sector. The re-identification of mine dust lung disease in the Queensland mining industry demonstrated that, in addition to serious safety risks, preventing disease and other health harms must also be a focus for the industry and the regulator.

RSHQ is adopting a risk-based approach to ensure occupational health risks are effectively managed across the resources industry for coal, mineral mines and quarries, and the petroleum and gas sectors.

In conjunction with experts including the University of Queensland, RSHQ completed an initial baseline review of resource industry occupational health risks. Using information obtained in the baseline review, stakeholder consultation and other available data, RSHQ has completed a risk-based assessment to identify priority areas for action.

The assessment found that, while all health risks are important to manage, risks associated with psychosocial hazards, including workplace sexual harassment, have been identified as a priority for RSHQ.

Options to clarify industry's obligations for managing psychosocial hazards, including amendments to Queensland's resources safety and health legislation are being considered. RSHQ is conducting stakeholder consultation regarding the potential changes.

RSHQ has enhanced its capability to regulate for workplace sexual harassment, including:

- dedicated RSHQ staff with additional training to appropriately respond with a victim-centric and trauma-informed approach, to receive complaints and investigate incidents.
- a fit-for-purpose framework for receiving and responding to complaints and reports of sexual harassment, including enhanced data and analysis, and a dedicated telephone number and reporting process where complaints of sexual harassment can be made confidentially or anonymously to RSHQ.

- additional online information and resources for resource industry operators and workers about preventing and responding to sexual harassment, and how workers can seek support and advice.
- establishment of an interagency working group consisting of members from the Office of Industrial Relations, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Queensland Human Rights Commission.

RSHQ is engaging experts to assist in the development of a guideline specifically for the resources industry in Queensland on managing the risks of workplace sexual harassment.

RSHQ will also be increasing its proactive regulatory activity through audits and inspections to ensure operators are effectively managing the risks of psychosocial hazards as part of their responsibilities for regulating workplace safety and health.