



MHSC
Mine Health and Safety Council

MHSC e-NEWS LETTER

June 2025 – Quarter 1

Every mine worker returning from work unharmed every day. Striving for zero harm in our lifetime.

2025 COAL SAFE Conference Celebrated



Chief inspector of mines Mr. David Msiza delivering a keynote address during the CAOL SAFE Conference held at Emperors Palace on the 08th May 2025.

“Zero harm in coal mining is possible to achieve, so long as the leadership is vigilant and careful against complacency and continues to care”, said Mr. Msiza in his opening remarks. Msiza indicated that, we have not yet arrived as sector, but the Department will continue to support the coal mining sector’s initiatives.

The Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources always feel at home within the coal sector, and we see the value in attending COAL SAFE every year, Msiza added. He commended and encouraged the coal mining sector on the drive of making sure that safety and sustainability remains

a hallmark sector.” The COAL SAFE conference provides a platform where industry players interrogate safety issues within the sector, with recent research results and statistics being shared for accurate understanding.

However, Mr. Msiza reminded delegates that the issues they were discussing are about human beings.

“When we talk about the numbers, please appreciate that they represent human beings with ambitions not only for themselves but for their families too. This is why we must keep believing that zero harm is important and achievable.”

Mr. Msiza referenced the mining disasters which happened at the Coalbrook coal mine of Clydesdale Colliery in the Free State on 21 January 1960 where 437 miners died, and the Vaal Reefs mine disaster on 10 May 1995 at the gold mining town of Orkney in North West where 104 miners were killed, and said the DMPR is committed to work with the mining industry to ensure that such mining disasters never happen again.

“The trends and experiences have demonstrated that over time we’ve put a lot of effort as the mining sector to make sure that we don’t have a repeat of such disasters.

One of the key things has been working with organised labour and business through the Mine Health and Safety Council and agreeing that it is not good enough for us to only focus on the technical measures of improving health and safety, but we must put more emphasis on other factors that will prevent us from achieving the goal of zero harm – the issues of culture and behaviour are very important for us to focus on.”



Some of the speakers, from left; Mr. Mike Teke of Seriti Resources and Dr. Tshepo Sedibe from DeBeers.

Msiza said another pertinent factor is the existence of lifestyle diseases, or non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes.

At one stage the coal sector used to report about 129 fatalities a year in NCDs. Although this figure has reduced to about six in current times and year on year the coal sector has had a 14% reduction between 2023 and 2024, the sector continues to maintain its focus on this.

The Chief inspector of mines also shared that the contribution to fatalities from transport, falls of ground and machinery accidents have been reduced. “Although we have seen minimal improvement in terms of the transport and the falls of ground accidents, there has been a significant improvement in machinery accidents.

Last year we didn’t have an incident involving machinery related accidents.” He added that one of the significant developments in the overall picture of accidents has been that there are no longer fatalities involving electricity and explosives. Mr. Msiza concluded by reaffirming the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources commitment to continue working with the coal mining sector towards achieving goal of Zero Harm.



Mr. George Hattingh, SACMA president 2025

When COAL SAFE was established in the early 2000s it was as a proactive response to the challenges faced by the coal mining industry at the time, “an industry grappling with high incident rates and a need for stronger collaboration,” said Mr. Hattingh, adding that the conference creates a platform and opportunity for honest reflection, shared learning and renewed resolve, and brings industry players together across operations, companies and disciplines to prioritise the health and safety of every individual working in the coal mining sector.

The theme for the 2025 event was “*Sustainably Delivering Today, Shaping Tomorrow*” for the coal mining industry in South Africa.

This theme carries a dual message about operational responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Although challenges faced by the industry today are not the same as they were two decades ago, said Hattingh. Advances in technology, evolving workforce expectations and broader environmental and social pressures are reshaping how the industry operates and how it is perceived. “New risks demand new thinking and even as we celebrate progress, we must avoid complacency.

There is a real need for the sector to commit to advancing innovation and technology as data and real-time monitoring save lives. There is also a need to commit to enhancing knowledge sharing across commodities as solutions do not belong to just one sector.

As a result, Mr. Hattingh said there is an overall need to commit to embedding a culture of safety, leadership and accountability. “As safety starts with the decisions that we make.

Reflecting on Exxaro’s CEO Safety Summit



Exxaro celebrating 31 consecutive fatality-free months, a significant milestone achieved.

On 11 April 2025, over 2,000 Exxaro employees and stakeholders came together to reflect on the organisation’s safety journey and officially launched a refreshed safety strategy: “*One Voice – Safety Always, All the Way.*”

This year’s CEO Safety Summit was proudly hosted by Leeuwpans Business Unit, whose long – standing safety legacy set the perfect tone for a summit grounded in care, leadership, and unity.

The MHSC’s CEO Mr. David Mamphitha delivered a message of support focusing on sustainable coal mining sector, health and safety strategies. He believes that safety in the sector can no longer be addressed in isolation, however it must be part of a broader approach to leadership, sustainability and operational excellence.



The MHSC’s CEO Mr. David Mamphitha at the Exxaro CEO Safety Summit

He encouraged Exxaro and the overall coal mining sector to aim for a time when we no longer speak of incidents, but instead celebrate a culture where safety is not just an obligation, but a fundamental part of our identity.