

Ari Motus' resignation prompts sector reflection

Georgia Quirke-Luping - Fri, 08 Feb 2019

Ariadna Motus is stepping down from her role as the manager of the New Zealand Mining Board of Examiners at the end of February.

Having held the position for four and a half years, Motus says she is looking for a change of pace, working part time until she travels to Ukraine to visit her family.

Motus was initially brought on by WorkSafe to coordinate the establishment of the BoE, immediately following the Royal Commission into the Pike River Coal Mine tragedy.

It was recommended at the time the regulator should have a greater role in the setting and assessment of competencies. Through this process, certificates of competency and continuing professional development systems were established for the mining and quarrying sectors.

Now at the end of her WorkSafe tenure, Motus is encouraging the industry to "reflect on the last four years. There has been a lot of change, and this can be difficult especially in a short time".

Not plain sailing

"I quickly learnt that a tighter system and clearer processes needed to be in place," said Motus in an interview with *Inside Resources*.

She recalls that working alongside legislative timelines meant there was "very little wiggle room. That was one of the biggest challenges. We had firm deadlines that, quite simply, could not be pushed."

Motus accepts that [the new systems presented challenges](#) for the mining and quarrying sectors, specifically, when the oral examinations became a CoC requirement.

Results published at the end of 2016 support her view, with only 36 per cent of B-grade applicants passing the exams.

"There were some disparities between the competency rates," she says.

"However, WorkSafe and the Board could not simply lower the standards – because it was a matter of safety. These are safety critical roles with statutory responsibilities.

"Instead, the challenge was to find ways of bringing applicants, companies and organisations on board to see why we were doing it, and understand what was required.

"Nothing is perfect right away – Rome wasn't built in a day."

Motus says she has "a lot of admiration for the extractives industry", particularly in light of the sector health and safety initiatives – such as the Institute of Quarrying NZ launching webinars, and the MinEx workshops.

MinEx view

News of Motus' resignation has been cause for reflection, says MinEx chief executive Wayne Scott.

"Health and safety performance has improved significantly in the past four years. We don't often reflect on that fact."

In the past Scott has been open about the sector-wide difficulties with CPD, noting [in a recent article](#) that his suggestions for improving health and safety "have fallen on deaf ears".

However, this week he told *Inside Resources* that sometimes it is important to reflect on how much has been achieved, "The sector has experienced difficulties with some aspects of a new CoC system and has often seen bureaucrats as the problem, rather than the legislative guidelines they are trying to administer.

"We have all learnt lessons from a process that was delivered in a short time."

With this in mind, Scott says the BoE is being receptive to recent suggestions and concerns, noting that he "is confident the sector can now work with them to improve the system".

