

New chest X-ray imaging standards for coal miners and dual read tender awarded

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) has further progressed the [Monash Review](#) recommendations relating to the way coal mine workers' chest X-rays are taken and read.

These measures are the latest in a series of improvements in response to the Monash Review, including the introduction of a [register](#) of doctors and medical providers, and updated [standards](#) for spirometry (lung function) testing.

New X-ray imaging standards

New standards for [X-ray imaging](#) have been published to ensure high quality chest X-rays are being taken.

The Monash Review found 19 per cent of X-rays examined had technical defects that affected readability. This statistic has improved this year to 10 per cent, with less than 0.1 per cent of X-rays determined to be “unreadable”. These few have been retaken.

The new X-ray standards are based on the United States’ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Guideline and adapted for use in Australia. Developed in consultation with Australian and international experts, these new standards detail requirements for qualifications, imaging equipment and software, image acquisition and quality control systems to be used for taking chest X-rays for Queensland’s coal mine workers.

The standards also provide guidance on the technical quality grading of images under the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses](#).

X-ray imaging practices registered with DNRM will be formally notified of these standards and will need to adopt the enhanced requirements by the end of 2017.

Australian dual reader appointed

Earlier this year, a call for tenders was made for Australian-based radiology services to deliver independent dual-reading of coal mine worker chest X-rays by qualified B-reader radiologists.

Queensland company Lung Screen Australia (LSA) has been awarded the tender and will commence the service in early 2018. LSA is a new healthcare company that provides specialist lung diagnostic and management services to Australians at risk of developing lung diseases.

During the transition to Australian B-readers, X-rays will continue to be assessed by US-based B-readers through the University of Illinois at Chicago managed by Professor Robert Cohen MD. Further information about the transition will be advised later this year.

Contact

If you have any questions about this, or other elements of the response to coal workers’ pneumoconiosis, you can email cwpfeedback@dnrm.qld.gov.au or call (07) 3199 7967.

Kind Regards

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