



Mining Accident News No.0928

1 to 13 September 2009

In this issue

USA: Miner Hospitalized after Rock Fall.....	1
WA: Investigation into fatal accident	1
WA: Mine safety reforms announced.....	2
S.Africa plans tougher safety obligations to improve 'unacceptable' mine death rate.....	2
Quote of the week	3
Daylight saving 'causes more accidents'	4
All seven trapped miners confirmed dead in China coal mine flooding	5
S.Africa: AngloGold mineworker dies after fall of ground accident.....	5
USA: Mining Accident Hurts One	5
China: Pingdingshan mine blast kills 35, 44 missing	6
SA: Fatal mine fall probed.....	6
This week in mining accident history	6
13 trapped in gold mine fire in central China	8
13 officials, managers arrested or sacked after two mine accidents killed 56 in central China...	8
Two workers trapped in Zonguldak, Turkey mine collapse	9
UK: Truck driver recalls fatal mining accident..	9
Qld: Miner's death prompts action	10
Qld: Telling next of kin	11
Seven die in mining car accident in E China...	12
Mining dictionary	12

Wednesday 2 September 2009

USA: Miner Hospitalized after Rock Fall

Extract from WSAZ-TV, USA

NICHOLAS COUNTY, W.Va. -- A miner is in the hospital after a rock fell from the roof of a local mine.

The accident happened Wednesday at the White Buck Mine in Nicholas County.

Jama Jarrett, Mine Safety Communications Director, tells WSAZ.com the miner was flown to the hospital with two broken bones in his neck.

The name of the miner hasn't been released yet.

A mine safety inspector has been called to the scene to investigate.

WA: Investigation into fatal accident

Extract from ABC News, Aus

The Department of Mines and Petroleum says it will leave no stone unturned as it investigates a fatal industrial accident in the South West.

A 50 year-old foreman, who was a contractor from Trans Pacific Industrial Solutions, died after falling down a shaft at Alcoa's Wagerup refinery about 6:00 am this morning. (AWST)

The Department and Police are investigating the incident.

The department's Director of Mines Safety, Simon Ridge says the man's death is tragic news for everyone in the mining industry.

He says the department will work with the company and Police to piece together the cause of the accident.

"We will get to the bottom of it, and why, and hope that we can prevent future events of this nature," he said.

"Our current performance cannot be tolerated, we all need to work to ensure these things don't happen."

He says it is the 6th mining death in WA this year and it is a worrying trend.

Thursday 3 September 2009

WA: Mine safety reforms announced

This is a media release issued by Western Australian Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore

Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore today announced major changes to mine safety in Western Australia.

Mr Moore said the State Government would overhaul the safety system designed to protect workers in WA's mining industry in order to improve a system that was clearly not working to the State Government's expectations.

"The recent spike in mine site-related fatalities is unacceptable and has contributed to the need for urgent action," he said.

After considering submissions from the Department of Mines and Petroleum, the Government has decided to implement a new regulatory framework for resources safety, incorporating key recommendations from the Kenner Report.

"This is a major shake-up of mine safety in the State," the Minister said. Key components of the plan, which was approved by State Cabinet on Monday and gained final funding approval from Treasury today, include:

- Significant additional resources for the Resources Safety Division of the DMP, including more money to increase compliance activities by DMP inspectors
- An industry cost recovery model the details of which will be discussed with industry. New South Wales and Queensland are States which have already adopted cost recovery models

- A new approach to safety management based on evidence and risk, and focused on reducing the likelihood of a serious incident.

The introduction of a cost recovery regime will provide the funding necessary for an appropriately resourced safety regulator.

In the first six months of operation, next year, it is anticipated that additional funding of \$7.95million will be available.

State Cabinet has also approved up to an extra 37 full time staff positions available in the same six-month period with up to an additional 35 full time positions in the 12 months following.

Mr Moore envisaged it would take about two years, with the co-operation of industry, to make the necessary legislative and regulatory changes and to establish the inspectorate.

"I urge the Opposition and the union movement, to support the State Government's plan to fix the problem," he said. "I strongly believe that when this new system is in place, WA will have a world's best practice regulatory framework.

"It will take time to achieve, but with the co-operation of industry and workers, we can set in place a robust, flexible and effective system that will enhance safety in this vital sector of the State's workforce," he said.

S.Africa plans tougher safety obligations to improve 'unacceptable' mine death rate

Extract from miningweekly.com

PERTH - Australian resource companies have been encouraged to continue investment in South Africa's mining sector, but Mineral Resources Minister Susan Shabangu said that profit from mining in the country could not continue at the expense of safety.

She said that South Africa was introducing tougher obligations on the sector to cut the "unacceptably" high death rate in the country's mining sector.

The mine death toll for 2009 is approaching 120, with an average of more than 14 mineworkers dying each month, during the first eight months of the year.

Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the African Downunder conference, in Perth, Shabangu said that her department was looking to amend the Mine Health and Safety Act and that it would improve on its inspectorate.

Two amendments to the legislation have been suggested, the first of which was a change in how inspectorates do company audits, while the second amendment would hold companies and individuals liable for deaths.

This amendment was currently being discussed with stakeholders, and was likely to be implemented before the end of this year, she said.

The Mineral Resources department would also look to improving the investigation process after an accident or fatality has occurred at a mine. She said that it might establish satellite offices in closer proximity to mining areas, in order to respond more quickly when an accident has occurred.

It might also have to look at employing its own pathologist to complete an investigation in cases where a fatality occurred, Shabangu said, explaining that the department often relied on pathologists employed by the State, or by the responsible company, which could weaken its case when it comes to prosecuting the guilty party.

The Mineral Resources department's legal resources would also be strengthened in an effort to acclimatise its own employees to the correct procedures and ensure that guilty parties were prosecuted and held responsible when an accident or fatality occurred.

"These are the areas that we as the administration have decided to improve on as far as health and safety are concerned."

Shabangu said that the South African government did not plan for these amendments

to be a deterrent to ongoing investment in the country's mineral wealth.

"Australian investors should see this safety drive as an enhancement of their investment and part of recognising that South Africa is now a destination that cares for its employees in exploration and mine production."

SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Trade union Solidarity said this week that if the current trend of mining fatalities continued in the next four months, South Africa could reach its lowest level of deaths.

So far, a total of 117 mineworkers had died in accidents this year, while 168 mineworkers had died in 2008 and 221 in 2007.

Solidarity head of occupational health and safety Paul Mardon said that the lower fatality rate was due to several factors, such as employers displaying awareness of the seriousness of safety, and threats that companies and individuals could be held criminally liable for deaths.

Solidarity emphasised that if the drop in mining fatalities were to continue in the next few years, South Africa could compete with US and Australian mines in terms of mining safety by about 2013.

"However, this is a significant challenge for South Africa, because the country has some of the deepest, and therefore also the most dangerous mines in the world."

Quote of the week



"The computer can't tell you the emotional story. It can give you the exact mathematical design, but what's missing is the eyebrows."

Frank Zappa (American Muso 1940-1993)

Friday 4 September 2009

Daylight saving 'causes more accidents'

Extract from ABC Science, Aus

Workers get less sleep and are more likely to have accidents the Monday after switching to daylight saving time, US researchers report.

Christopher Barnes and David Wagner of Michigan State University report their study of the impact of daylight saving in the September issue of *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

"On Mondays directly following the switch to Daylight Saving Time - in which one hour is lost - workers sustain more workplace injuries and injuries of greater severity," the researchers write.



Experts agree we need to ensure we get enough sleep during the leap into daylight saving (Source: iStockphoto)

Barnes and Wagner looked at the records of mining injuries between 1983 and 2006, and compared the accident rate on different days before and after a switch to daylight saving.

They say there was a 5.7% increase in the number of injuries on these days and this translated to a 67.6% increase in days of work lost due to the injuries.

In another study, Barnes and Wagner looked at the impact of daylight saving on sleep. They found that between 2003 and 2006, workers reported having on average 40 minutes less sleep on Mondays directly following the switch to daylight saving.

The researchers suggest managers could counteract the impact of daylight saving on

accident risk by, for example, adjusting the starting time of employee shifts.

Unjustified

Dr Gregory Roach of the University of South Australia in Adelaide says Barnes and Wagner's conclusions are unjustified.

He says a close look at the raw data supplied in the paper shows that there is "absolutely no relationship" between daylight saving and accident rate or amount of sleep.

"My interpretation of their data - from what I can see - is that there actually is no significant relationship between switching on to daylight saving and work accidents [or amount of sleep]," says Roach of the university's Centre for Sleep Research.

But he says it is known from laboratory studies that the less sleep people get the more errors they are likely to make and the more accidents they are likely to have.

Roach says workers who are already getting a restricted amount of sleep should make sure they don't get less when there is a switch to daylight saving.

He says the aim should be to get one hour less awake time rather than one hour less sleep on the 23-hour day that follows a switch to daylight saving.

Results defended

But another Australian psychologist with experience in sleep and circadian rhythms says Barnes and Wagner's "multilevel modelling" is reliable.

Associate Professor Mark Stokes of Deakin University in Melbourne says it is well established that switching to daylight saving causes sleep disturbances.

"It's asking people to go to sleep an hour earlier simply because the clock has changed, but we know people don't do that," he says.

People lie in bed and get annoyed because they can't get to sleep, and this actually prevents them from sleeping well, says Stokes.

"I would think these [Barnes and Wagner's] results are fairly reasonable," he says.

Saturday 5 September 2009

All seven trapped miners confirmed dead in China coal mine flooding

Extract from Xinhua, China

NANCHANG, -- All the seven miners trapped underground after a coal mine was flooded 10 days ago in east China's Jiangxi province were confirmed dead, local authorities said Saturday.

The accident occurred at around 11:30 p.m. on Aug. 25 at the Hutangchong Coal Mine in Shangli County, when eight miners were working underground. Only one escaped.

Rescuers recovered two bodies two days after the accident, and the bodies of the other five miners were retrieved in the following days, a spokesman with the county government said Saturday.

The last two bodies were found Thursday night, he said.

Local authorities are handling compensation issues and further investigating the cause of the accident, he added.

All the seven miners were from Shangli's Dongyuan Town, where the mine is located. The mine has an annual output capacity of less than 30,000 tonnes, and was being renovated and enlarged.

Sunday 6 September 2009

S.Africa: AngloGold mineworker dies after fall of ground accident

Extract from Reuters, Africa

JOHANNESBURG - A mine worker died on Sunday after a fall of ground accident at

AngloGold Ashanti's Mponeng mine in South Africa, the company said.



A mine worker died on Sunday after a fall of ground accident at AngloGold Ashanti's Mponeng mine in South Africa, the company said. (Photo REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibeko)

AngloGold said in a statement that the 27-year old winch driver was injured in the accident on Saturday and died in hospital a day later.

South Africa, which has the world's deepest mines, has one of the highest rates of work-related mining deaths in the industrialised world. Last year 168 workers died in mines, down 24 percent from the previous year.

Monday 7 September 2009

USA: Mining Accident Hurts One

Extract from WDTV News, USA

A man is flown to the hospital after a mining accident in northern Marion County, Sunday.

The West Virginia Department of Commerce tells Five News that around 8:30, an employee for R.G. Johnson, the company contracted out to work at the Eastern Associated Federal Number Two Mine, was building a vertical shaft when a nail ricocheted and hit him in the back of the head.

The victim was flown to Ruby Memorial Hospital by Health-Net.

His condition is unknown at this time.

Tuesday 8 September 2009

China: Pingdingshan mine blast kills 35, 44 missing

Extract from The Daily Telegraph, Aus

AT least 35 people were killed and 44 others were trapped after a gas explosion at a coal mine in central China early today, the Government's work safety watchdog announced.

A total of 93 people were working in the mine in Pingdingshan city in Henan province when the blast took place in the early hours, the State Administration of Work Safety announced on its website.

Fourteen were able to escape, it said.

A spokesman for the work safety watchdog surnamed Cao said rescue efforts were ongoing, adding that an agency official had been dispatched to the scene to oversee the operation.

The official Xinhua news agency, quoting a spokesman for the city's Communist Party committee, said the Xinhua Number Four pit was undergoing renovations and had not yet been authorised by the city government to resume operations.

China has a dismal work safety record, with thousands of people dying every year in mines, factories and on construction sites.

The country's coal mines are among the most dangerous in the world, with safety standards often ignored in the quest for profits and the drive to meet surging demand for coal - the source of about 70 per cent of China's energy.

Official figures show that more than 3200 workers died in collieries last year, but independent labour groups say the actual figure could be much higher, as many accidents were covered up in order to avoid costly mine shutdowns.

Luo Lin, the chief of the State Administration of Work Safety, said officials would shut down

about 1000 small coal mines this year, in an attempt to improve management and safety.

Mr Luo said seven major coal mine accidents in China in August all occurred at small facilities.

More than 12,000 small coal mines have been shut down nationwide since 2005, according to Xinhua.

China's raw coal production rose 8.9 per cent year-on-year in the first seven months of 2009 to 1.61 billion tonnes, the agency reported.

SA: Fatal mine fall probed

Extract from ABC News, Aus

SafeWork SA is investigating a fatal fall by a worker at a mine at Mount Compass.

The maintenance fitter fell three metres at the Unimin Australia mine on Friday.

He died in the Flinders Medical Centre at the weekend.

The man fell through an opening in a platform he was working on.

This week in mining accident history

11 September 1878

Prince of Wales Mine, Abercarn, Monmouthshire, South Wales, UK

Underground Coal Mine

Fire-damp explosion, 268 killed

Source: www.welshcoalmines.co.uk

Organised coal mining operations began at Abercarn in 1836 by the Monmouthshire Iron and Coal Company (also known as the Victoria Company as their Ironworks at Ebbw Vale). They intended to sink six coal pits in the Abercarn district, but only two were completed; No. 1 and No. 6 or Cwmcarn pit (not to be confused with the Cwmcarn colliery) No.6 was a shallow pit at 63 yards to the Rock vein seam. The coal being taken by tramroad to the Monmouthshire canal at a point near Pontywaun Bridge

During the early 1840's the Abercarn colliery was taken over by Messrs. Allfrey of Newport, but later in the decade it was in the hands of the Abercarn and Gwithen Company. The chairman of this company was Sir Benjamin Hall M. P., after whom the famous Big Ben (the bell that chimes the clock at Westminster) was named. He was also the husband of Lady Llanover, a great promoter and lover of the Welsh language, a most unusual virtue for a member of the English aristocracy. Although in her later life her religious beliefs led her to purchase many of the public houses in the area, which she then converted to Temperance establishments.



Prince of Wales Abercarn

Darby Brown and Company were the owners by 1859.

The Ebbw Vale Co Ltd. took over the colliery in 1862 and they added another shaft (No 2 pit) to the rich Blackvein seam.

Shafts Nos.1 and 2, were 310 yards and 352 yards deep respectively.

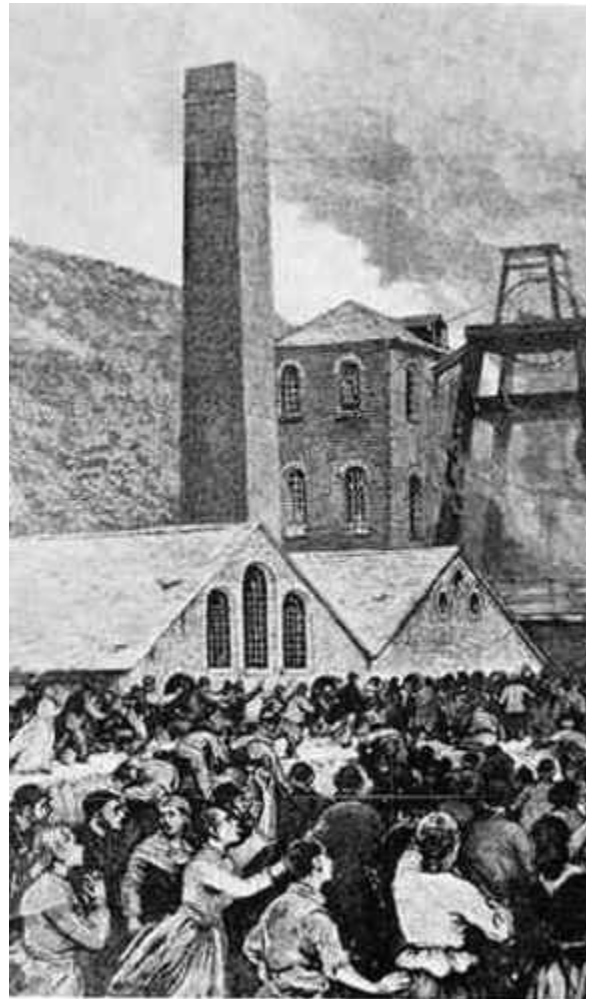
On February 8th 1867, in a twelve-hour day the colliers raised 1,369 tons of coal, after which the men were cheered on their way home and later treated with "home brewed" at the drill hall.

An explosion in 1872 killed one man and badly injured several others.

Three men were killed here in another explosion in 1876.

A new shaft was sunk in 1877 some distance away at Cwmcarn to help with ventilation. This

shaft was later to become part of the Cwmcarn colliery.



The scene at the time of the explosion

On the morning of September the 11th, 1878, there were 325 men and boys working underground when a massive explosion ripped through the workings, 268 of them perished in the worst colliery disaster recorded in Gwent.

Because of the ensuing raging underground fires and with the fear of further explosions, the two rescue teams, one of who had descended the Cwmcarn shaft were ordered back to the surface. The colliery manager along with government mines inspectors made the unenviable decision to flood the mine with waters from the nearby Monmouthshire Canal. It took two months and 35 million gallons of water before the engineers were satisfied that the fires had been extinguished. The water then had to be pumped out before the grim task of removing the bodies could begin. Not all the bodies were

recovered many were left entombed. One skeleton was uncovered some 27 years later complete with working clothes and boots.

A first class gold Albert Medal was presented to John Harris for saving lives in this disaster. He went down the pit with a rescue team but having descended to a depth of 295 yards, the cage became stuck in the damaged shaft. Harris bravely climbed out of the cage and slid down one of the guide-ropes, remaining at the bottom for many hours until he knew that all those still alive had been rescued. Two gold and seven bronze medals were awarded for bravery after this explosion, which was considered to be Gwent's worst.

Wednesday 9 September 2009

13 trapped in gold mine fire in central China

Extract from China Daily

ZHENGZHOU: A fire broke out Wednesday morning in a gold mine in Sanmenxia City, central China's Henan Province, trapping 13 mine workers and rescuers, according to rescuers.

The fire has not been brought under control, according to the city's coal mine industry bureau.

The bureau has sent another 25 professional coal mine rescue workers to the scene, after seven of eight rescuers, who had been sent earlier, were trapped under the mine by the fire.

Lei Jianguo, director of the bureau, said a sudden cave-in triggered an electric cable to catch fire at 5:00 am Wednesday, when 13 miners were working under the mine. Only six of them managed to escape.

13 officials, managers arrested or sacked after two mine accidents killed 56 in central China

Extract from www.chinaview.cn

ZHENGZHOU, - A total of 13 officials and mine managers were arrested, sacked or suspended

from their posts after two mine accidents on Tuesday killed 56, trapped another 36 and injured 14 in central China's Henan Province, local authorities said Wednesday night.

The death toll from the coal mine gas explosion in Pingdingshan City rose to 43 with 36 still missing, said a spokesman with the Henan Provincial Bureau of Work Safety.

The deadly gas blast took place around 1 a.m. Tuesday in the Xinhua No. 4 pit in Xinhua District. A total of 93 people were working in the pit when the accident happened, 14 of whom managed to escape.

The legal representative of the mine Li Xinjun, vice head Hou Min and Deng Qun, are in criminal custody.

Qi Tongyan, deputy head of Xinhua District of Pingdingshan City, and Zhang Xizhi, a coal industry administration official of the city, were dismissed from their posts Tuesday afternoon, about 10 hours after the deadly gas blast.

Another eight officials and mine managers were punished after 13 workers were choked to death in a fire at a gold mine owned by Jinyuan Mining Co., in Sanmenxia City. The bodies have been retrieved and sent to a funeral home Wednesday.

A cave-in cut off electric wires and triggered the fire at about 9 p.m. Tuesday. At the time of the fire 12 miners were working underground, and six fled to safety. The mine sent eight rescuers down the pit, but seven were trapped by the fire.

Hou Lejian, deputy mayor of Lingbao City under the administration of Sanmenxia, Li Zanpeng, a city government official, had their posts suspended. The mine managers Liu Shulin, Jin Jianping and Li Zongyan were dismissed, said the Communist Party of China Sanmenxia Committee.

The officials with the city's gold mine and work safety administrations were also dismissed. Police have detained the working team head, the committee said.

Thursday 10 September 2009

Two workers trapped in Zonguldak, Turkey mine collapse

Extract from Today's Zaman, Turkey

Two workers were trapped in a collapsed coal mine in the northern province of Zonguldak yesterday.

Efforts are continuing to save the two workers, Ali Ziya Kysaboyun and Caner Albuzlu. Several other miners were rescued from the collapse. Ethem Azakođlu, an official from the General Mine Workers Union, said search-and-rescue efforts were being carried out by a team of 50 people.

Albuzlu's father, Ratif, said his son started working in the mine in January and frequently complained about harsh working conditions. "Once I told him to continue working when he told me that he did not want to work in the mine. I told him that earning money was never easy. I am very upset now. I hope he will be saved. I am hopeful," he remarked. Accidents are not uncommon in Turkish mines due to safety violations, outdated equipment and high concentrations of methane gas. A methane gas explosion in a Turkish coal mine in 2006 killed 17 miners. In Turkey's worst mining disaster, a gas explosion killed 270 workers near Zonguldak in 1992.

Friday 11 September 2009

UK: Truck driver recalls fatal mining accident

Extract from ayrshirepost.net, Scotland, UK

A DUMP truck driver found his workmate crushed to death in a horrific mining accident.

Tam Frame was the first man on the scene after dad-of-two Jim Griffin was crushed between two 35 tonne trucks at Pennyvenie open cast mine.

He relived his experience at a fatal accident inquiry into Jim's death this week.

The 40-year-old Drongan man suffered massive chest and internal injuries in January last year.

At Ayr Sheriff Court, Mr Frame said he arrived at the scene after another colleague, Jim Harvey, gave Jim a jump start.

Mr Frame, 66, also of Drongan, said: "Jim Harvey was sitting in his truck at that time and I stopped the truck.

"I went round the back to talk to him and I said 'what's happened, what's wrong?'. He said 'I don't ken, I don't ken'."

Mr Frame continued: "I couldn't see any sign of Mr Griffin at that time."

He said that he walked round the dumper and found Mr Griffin lying below the left hand side of Jim Harvey's truck, where the battery is.

Jim Griffin's truck was back eight or 12 feet further back.

Mr Frame added: "He was just like a bag of rags when I got to him. His eyes were staring and I felt for a pulse but couldn't feel any. He was lying on his side. His head was facing up the way."

The inquiry heard that the ambulance service received a 999 call from Pennyvenie at 12.52pm, but when paramedics arrived at the scene Mr Griffin was already dead.

One of the last men to see him alive was his colleague John Chalmers, 66, of Dalmellington.

He was driving his 35 tonne Volvo dumper truck on the haul road, between the coal site and the dumping point, where he saw Mr Griffin's broken down truck.

Shortly after he passed Mr Griffin, Mr Chalmers saw Mr Harvey making his way down.

Mr Chalmers said that he drove on for a mile before he heard Mr Harvey shouting over the radio.

Mr Chalmers continued: "He was shouting to the site office 'he's dead, he's dead'."

The men were employed by haulage contractor T French Ltd, who were subcontracted by Scottish Coal to haul loads at Pennyvenie.

Mr Chalmers told the court that when trucks were broken down the company was not paid by Scottish Coal for the time out of action.

Mr Chalmers said that it was common for drivers to carry out minor repairs themselves.

Qld: Miner's death prompts action

Extract from Daily Mercury, Mackay, Qld

MINERS, lawyers and the family of Jason Blee packed into courtroom number four yesterday to make sure his death was not in vain.



Jason Blee was crushed between a coal cart and a mine wall at the Moranbah North mine in April 2007. (ABC News)

When the inquest into his death started on June 22 last year, his family placed his hard hat in the corner, beside a photograph of Jason holding his newborn child, as a reminder that the Moranbah North miner was more than a statistic.

Now, more than two years after his death, Coroner Annette Hennessy has made recommendations which could change the mining industry nationally.

Jason Blee, a 33-year-old father, worked for Walter Mining as an underground miner and was in Anglo Coal's Moranbah North mine when he was pinned to a side wall by a shuttle car on April 9, 2007.

The coroner ruled that he died of a pelvic crush injury "as a result of an adverse incident which

occurred while miners were following approved safety procedures".

It was clear he was injured while trapped, but there were three movements of the shuttle car in a bid to free him and because of conflicting evidence from witnesses the precise movements of the shuttle car remain unknown.

There was no evidence that the shuttle car's design contributed to the incident.



CFMEU investigator Stephen Smyth at the closing of the inquest yesterday. He prepared a report on the fatality on behalf of all miners. Photo: Tony Martin

Jason Blee was not in a "no go" zone but was in a restricted area. He gave an appropriate command to the shuttle car driver to move out before he was pinned and the heading in which he was working was not excessively narrow.

"Management of Jason's injuries was appropriate and caring but the nature of the injury was such that there was no other possible outcome for him," Mrs Hennessy said.

A total of 18 recommendations were made - most importantly, that all parties involved in a fatality should combine to form a joint investigation panel, so they shared information, did not duplicate work, and that they be given 'privilege' against the use of sensitive information.

Jason's wife, Rachel, spoke about her husband at the inquest and said: "He loved life. He loved the ocean, loved to fish and water ski and go camping. He was so keen on V8 Supercars it wasn't funny."

Yesterday, after receiving condolences from everyone, she took Jason's mining helmet home.

Coroner's recommendations

Among the recommendations made by Coroner Annette Hennessy yesterday were:

- Mining companies and police should review the issue of notification of next of kin.
- Minister for Mines and Energy Geoff Wilson should consider tripartite investigations for all serious mining accidents, with each party given privilege so possibly-detrimental information can not be used against them in any jurisdiction other than an inquest.
- Alcohol and drug testing should be done on all people associated with an incident and results should be provided to police.
- All underground mines should review interactions between pedestrians and moving machinery and should also review the use of "no go" zones.
- Each underground mine must be equipped with airbags to lift or push heavy equipment off trapped people.
- A working party should be formed to meet with shuttle car designers to consider improvements to shuttle cars.
- The Department of Mines and Energy should liaise with all emergency services to familiarise all emergency providers with the workings of mines and the terminologies used by miners, possibly as part of an induction course.
- Consideration should be given to establishing an across-the-industry recognised system of competency for miners' qualifications.
- Minister Geoff Wilson should give consideration to requiring all mines to provide details of all their Occupational Health and Safety systems and the mines should update them annually.
- Standards of risk assessment should be reviewed.
- The Department of Mines and Energy should make a SIMTARS (Safety in Mines Testing And Research Station)

reconstruction of the Jason Blee fatality and provide it to the mining industry as a training and education aid.

- Future autopsies should be done by a forensic pathologist who has access to advanced equipment and all autopsies should at least include photographs and x-rays.

Editor Note Coroner's findings available at:

<http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/BleeJGE20090910.pdf>

Qld: Telling next of kin

Extract from Daily Mercury, Mackay, Qld

RACHEL Blee's concerns about how she learnt of her husband's death in a tragic mining accident could lead to changes in how relatives are notified of fatalities.

Jason Blee, a 33-year-old father of four, was operating a continuous miner at the Moranbah North underground mine when he was pinned against the left wall by a shuttle car and died later of his injuries.



Rachel Blee told the inquest she was concerned about the delay in receiving notification of her husband's death and the way in which the notification was handled.

Photo: Tony Martin

During the inquest there was strong criticism that the way in which Mrs Blee was told of her husband's death was unsatisfactory.

The inquest heard that:

- At 10.10am, Jason Blee was pinned.
- At 10.30am, the mine's communication room knew the victim was Jason Blee.
- At 11.53am, Jason Blee died.
- At 12.14pm, Moranbah police asked Mackay police to notify next of kin but the

only available Northern Beaches unit was dealing with a disqualified driver.

- At 1.58pm, police notified Mrs Blee.
- At 2.30pm, a mining company representative arrived at her home to confirm the fatality.

The police officers who told Mrs Blee did not have special training

Mrs Blee testified at the inquest that she had no-one to support her and she had to tell her husband's parents about the death.

Of concern, was that Mrs Blee received a text message asking her: "Are you okay" just before police arrived at her home.

Mrs Blee thought that if she had been advised straight away of Jason's accident she could have gone to the mine to see him.

She checked phone calls made by the mine after the accident, and her number was missing. Notification should have been timelier and with more compassion, she said at the inquest.

Also, she received no financial counselling which was particularly needed because the family had just signed a contract to buy an investment property.

She did not get counselling until the next day.

One of Coroner Annette Hennessy's recommendations was that mining companies should work with police to devise a better and more efficient way of notifying the next of kin.

How to notify relatives

- Police should give priority to notifying next of kin, unless resources are tied up in a life-threatening emergency.
- Each mine should have a protocol in place for notifying next of kin.
- One official at each mine site should be responsible for notifications.
- The mine and that person should update contact details yearly.
- If a miner is injured and can give instructions about notifying anyone those instructions should be followed. But if the

miner is deceased the protocol should be followed.

- Any notifications by or on behalf of the employer should involve two people, one of them female. If police make the notification, the employer should provide additional support to the people being notified.

Seven die in mining car accident in E China

Extract from English People's Daily Online, China

Seven people were confirmed dead after a mining car accident Thursday afternoon at a colliery in east China's Jiangxi province, local government said Friday.

The accident occurred at around 6 p.m. Thursday when seven miners illegally entered a shaft in a mining car at the Chang'an Coal Mine in Tiandun Town in Shangrao county. The mining car freewheeled with its locking mechanism out of action, killing the seven onboard immediately, the county government said.

All the deceased were villagers from Tiandun town.

Investigations into the accident are under way.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

S

sill Timber beam set into the floor of a drive to hold apart the feet of the props where lateral pressure is applied to them.

- Ed.