



Mining Accident News No.1214

19 to 30 June 2012

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Tuesday 19 June 2012

Botswana: Fatalities at Gem Diamonds' Ghaghoo mine results in production delay

Extract from www.diamondintelligence.com

Gem Diamonds reports that two contractors have died in an accident after ground collapsed at the face of a tunnel at its wholly owned Ghaghoo mine project in Botswana.

The miner says that while a full assessment of the likely impact upon the project timeline and overall project costs is on-going, early

indications are that the adverse ground conditions encountered, together with this fatal incident, will result in a delay of Ghaghoo's initial diamond production until the first half of 2014. Ghaghoo production was scheduled to commence in 2013 at an initial rate of 100,000 carats per annum, rising steadily to a peak steady state production of 780,000 carats per annum, according to the high-value diamond miner.

"The Company again extends its condolences to the families of the two deceased and commits itself to continuing to strive for the highest safety standards for its employees and contractors at all of its operations," Gem Diamonds Chief Executive Officer Clifford Elphick said in a statement.

The incident has been fully investigated, and Botswana's Department of Mines has given permission for the project to continue. Further and additional safety precautions have been put in place.

The company, which also owns the Ellendale mine in Australia and the Letšeng mine in Lesotho, says that its Ghaghoo project is presently on budget having spent some US\$31 million of the project's overall US\$85 million budget. The impact upon the tunnel portion of the project costs is still under assessment.

9 sentenced for fatal coal mine accident in Shanxi 2 years ago

Extract from www.steelguru.com

Xinhua reported that 9 executives have received sentences from three to four years for a deadly coal mine accident occurred two years ago in Shanxi Province, north China.

The People's court of Xiangning County last Thursday ruled that the nine people were liable for a fatal flood in Wangjialing Coal mine in March, 2010.

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
Issue 14 of 2012

Mr Jiang Shijie got the sentence of four years, while the rest eight got three years, according to local media reports.

In the accident, 38 miners were killed and 115 were rescued from the flooded Wangjialing coal mine.

The nine sentenced neglected signs of flooding and failed to take proper measures before the Wangjialing Coal Mine was flooded on March 28, said the court verdict.

Quote of the week



"Many would be cowards if they had courage enough."

Thomas Fuller, English churchman (1608-1661)

Wednesday 20 June 2012

S.Africa: Mine deaths higher than 2011– Solidarity

Extract from moneyweb.co.za

Fatal accidents on platinum mines have increased.

The total number of deaths as a result of mine accidents during the first five months of the year came to 48, presumably because of a 29% increase in deaths on platinum mines, reports

trade union Solidarity. According to Department of Mineral Resources statistics, around 10 miners died every month between January and May this year on South African mines.

Advocate Paul Mardon, head of Solidarity's Occupational Health and Safety Division, says 46 miners had died during the corresponding period in 2011. "While it is good news that the number of mine deaths on gold and coal mines dropped by 32% and 14% respectively during the first five months of the year, it is disturbing that the number of deaths on platinum mines has increased by 29% during this period," said Mardon.

More than 75% of the fatal accidents reported in the first five months of 2012 occurred in North West Province, Gauteng and Limpopo. "In North West, 13 miners have already died this year, while 11 and 10 fatal accidents have been recorded in Gauteng and Limpopo respectively," Mardon explained.

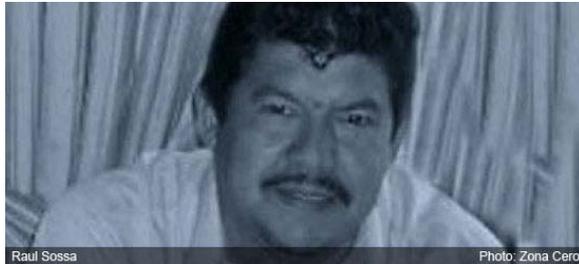
Ground falls have contributed to 29% of the past five months' mining fatalities. "General accidents, which among others include falling objects and gas explosions, contributed to 11 (23%) deaths."

Solidarity reports that the department also revealed the reasons for the section 54 orders in terms of which the mining inspectorate temporarily halts activities at a mine following a mining fatality or accident, that were issued in May. "According to this information, insufficient underground support mechanisms, machinery and general safety constitute the main reasons for such stoppages," said Mardon. Solidarity emphasises that the interests of both employers and employees should be taken into account when a section 54 order is issued.

Thursday 21 June 2012

President of Colombia's mining union dies in car crash

Extract from Colombia Reports



Raul Sossa, President of Sintramienergetica, Colombia's national trade union for mining and energy workers, died in a car accident Thursday, according to local media.

The 55-year-old Sossa was travelling in a company car with his bodyguard and a union activist, who were also killed in the fatal accident, when they collided with a transport truck in the municipality of La Loma in the northern department of Cesar. They were reportedly going to visit a mine belonging to U.S.-based coal mining company, Drummond.

Sossa, who chaired the union for the past five years and spent the last 18 consulting for Drummond, "was one of the most seasoned executives in the defense of workers' rights," according to a Sintramienergetica press release.

USA: West Virginia Mine Where 2010 Blast Killed 29 is Sealed

Extract from Associated Press

MONTCOAL, W.Va. - Alpha Natural Resources has completed sealing the West Virginia mine where an explosion killed 29 workers in 2010.

Alpha spokesman Ted Pile tells The Associated Press that crews put the final concrete seal in place at the Upper Big Branch mine on Wednesday. The seals are covered with fill dirt.

The mine hasn't operated since the explosion on April 5, 2010. It was the worst U.S. mine disaster in four decades.

Virginia-based Alpha acquired the mine in Montcoal last summer when it bought Massey Energy. Alpha announced earlier this year that it would seal the mine's portals, which are large tunnels used by miners to get underground.

Pile says Alpha will complete all activities at the mine within the next few weeks.

NZ: Methane scare closes Huntly mine

Extract from nzherald.co.nz

Solid Energy has temporarily suspended mining at Huntly East Mine after inspectors found an accumulation of methane in a recently-mined area of the underground mine.



The Huntly East Mine. Photo: Dean Purcell

The decision was made last night following a Prohibition Notice issued by the Department of Labour's (DoL) High Hazards Unit.

Solid Energy chief operating officer Barry Bragg said the company remains confident that its mines are operating safely.

He said the inspectors have asked for more information about the accumulation of methane and how the company are managing that methane.

Although coal extraction and development had been suspended, mine personnel are permitted to carry out maintenance and other work underground.

"We will provide the required information to the Department today and we will meet the inspectors again tomorrow," Mr Bragg said. "We are aware of no reason why the prohibition notice should not be lifted as soon as we have provided the information the Department is

seeking and expect to resume full mining activities shortly afterwards."

Last year a worker at Huntly East Mine described the mine as a "time bomb", when explosive levels of methane were detected in November.

At the time Mr Bragg said there had been higher than usual methane levels detected after miners struck a geological fault, but standard procedures were implemented.

This involved removing the workers from the mine and using an auxiliary fan to ventilate the mine.

This week in mining accident history

21 June 1983

McClure No.1 Mine

McClure, Virginia, USA

Underground coal mine

7 killed by mine explosion

At approximately 10: 15 p.m., June 21, 1983, an explosion occurred in the 2 Left entries of McClure No. 1 Mine of Clinchfield Coal Co., located at McClure, Virginia.

Ten miners were present in the 2 Left entries at the time of the explosion, eight in the face area and two in the track entry. Seven died as a result of the explosion. Three miners at the faces survived the explosion and were rescued.

MSHA investigators concluded that the primary cause of the explosion was the failure of mine management to maintain sufficient volume and velocity of air in the No. 2 and No. 3 entries of 2 Left to dilute, render harmless, and carry away the methane gas being liberated in those entries.

About nine hours before the explosion, the No. 40 crosscut of 2 left was cut through into the longwall setup entries. A failure to install ventilation controls to separate the air split ventilating the setup entries from the air split ventilating the 2 Left entries materially affected

the movement of air in No. 2 and No. 3 entries of 2 Left.

The volume and velocity of air became inadequate to dilute and to carry away flammable and explosive gases that were liberated in the area. The failure to maintain the airflow in its proper volume and direction in the setup entries, the 2 Left face area, and outby in the No. 2 and No. 3 entries of 2 Left, allowed an accumulation of an explosive methane-air mixture in the No. 2 and No. 3 entries of 2 Left. These changes in ventilation remained uncorrected for about 9 hours.

The explosive atmosphere was ignited by electrical arcing created by one of six possible sources:

1. Interruption of the belt control circuit.
2. A ground fault in the trailing cable for the conveyor belt feeder.
3. Interruption of the dinner hole light circuit.
4. Normal operation of the nonpermissible personnel carrier.
5. Automatic operation of one of the circuit breakers in the section power center.
6. A fault in the cable plug for the continuous mining machine trailing cable.

Conditions and practices that contributed to the explosion include:

1. Failure to follow the approved ventilation plan and maintain the separation between the air current ventilating the setup entries and the air current ventilating the 2 Left entries after the two sets of entries were connected at the No. 40 crosscut of 2 Left.
2. Failure to fully recognize potential consequences of neglecting to maintain separation between the air current ventilating the setup entries and the air current ventilating the 2 Left entries.
3. Failure to properly evaluate the effects of the open connection at No. 40 crosscut on ventilation of 2 Left entries.

4. Failure to ensure that procedures for maintaining separation between air currents ventilating two sets of entries were established, fully understood, and followed by persons responsible for carrying them out when the sets of entries were connected.
5. Failure to ensure that adequate preshift and on-shift examinations were made in the 2 Left entries during the day shift and evening shift on June 21, 1983.
6. Failure to train certified persons in the proper procedures for conducting preshift examinations of conveyor belt and conveyor belt entries when making belt examinations.

Source: *Historical Summary of Mine Disasters in the United States - Volume I*

Friday 22 June 2012

S.Africa: Worker killed in mine accident

Extract from www.iol.co.za

A mine worker was killed in a rockfall at the Moab Khotsonq Mine near Orkney in the North West, AngloGold Ashanti Limited said on Friday.

"...(He) was struck by a fall of ground at 1.45pm (on Thursday)," it said in a statement.

"He was immediately evacuated to hospital, but passed away..."

All drilling and blasting operations at the mine were suspended on Thursday night.

An inspection of the accident scene was expected to be carried out shortly.

USA: West Virginia Governor Signs Coal Mining Safety Bill

Extract from www.healthcareglobal.com

PRESS RELEASE - Safer coal mining operations in West Virginia have been a renewed priority for many lawmakers since the Upper Big Branch explosion two years ago. That includes House Speaker Rick Thompson, whose

father long ago died in a coal mining roof fall accident.

A new coal mining safety bill sponsored by Speaker Thompson passed both chambers by narrow margins this session, and was signed by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin in March. A range of new measures will take effect in June, including:

- Establishment of an anonymous mining safety tip line
- Increases in fines and penalties for coal mine safety violations
- Stronger testing standards for rock dusting and methane
- Criminal penalties for providing advance notice of mine inspections
- Pre-employment drug testing and random follow-ups

One particularly important provision allows a trapped or fatally injured miner's closest family member to designate a representative to attend briefings and hearings and convey critical information back to loved ones in the event of future mining disasters.

Legislative measures aimed at preventing the injuries and fatalities that result from mine disasters are always welcome. Coal mining accidents have affected generations of West Virginians, yet for every perceived improvement another collapse, explosion or machinery accident brings tragedy to a family, often including the loss of a breadwinner.

One of the benefits of stronger laws may only be realized when an injured miner or surviving family members need to prove coal company negligence in a personal injury or wrongful death lawsuit. By holding coal companies to safety standards, mining accident lawyers fight back against the hard calculus that drives profits and leads to injuries and death.

Saturday 23 June 2012

NZ miners call for Australian standards

Extract from ninemsn.com.au

Workers at an underground coal mine in New Zealand want safety regulations used in Queensland applied to New Zealand mines.

The regulations include worker-elected check inspectors. The call from workers came after a gas build-up at state-owned Solid Energy's Huntly East mine.

Solid Energy said on Friday that there was no safety risk from the accumulation of methane that had been detected on Wednesday by Department of Labour inspectors.

Solid Energy suspended development and coal extraction at the mine in accordance with a prohibition notice from the department on Wednesday evening. That notice was lifted at lunchtime on Friday and replaced with a notice on extraction only.

This allowed underground crews to resume work preparing coal blocks for mining.

Solid Energy has said it expects to resume extraction at Huntly East shortly.

"The company remains confident that its mines are operating safely," said chief operating officer Barry Bragg.

The EPMU, the union which represents miners, said 120 workers at a meeting on Friday called for a system of worker-elected check inspectors, which is a key part of Queensland's mining regulations.

The Queensland regulations are considered the international best practice in mine safety, the union says.

"Solid Energy can't credibly claim it supports lifting New Zealand's sorry mine safety regulations to international standards while it refuses to allow check inspectors and lobbies against law changes to make them compulsory,"

EPMU assistant national secretary Ged O'Connell said.

Solid Energy has taken over the Pike River Coal mine on the West Coast of the South Island where 29 workers died in an explosion.

In its submission to the royal commission on the Pike River disaster in April Solid Energy advocated New Zealand aligning its mine safety framework with that of Queensland.

But it opposed a mandatory role for worker-appointed check inspectors.

Mining had not yet started in the area under investigation at Huntly East.

Monday 25 June 2012

USA: Man killed in Pike county mine accident

Extract from courier-journal.com

A 33-year-old miner was killed Monday morning at a mine in Pike County.

Farley Sargent died at about 11:40 a.m. while laying track in the McCoy Elkhorn Coal Corp., Mine No. 23. The area of the mine he was working in experienced a "rib roll" — where the side, or sides, of a mine collapse inward, said Kentucky Department for Natural Resources spokeswoman Linda Potter.

"Any time something like that happens, you're in danger of a rock falling on you," she said. "A rib roll is pretty serious stuff."

Monday's accident was the second mining fatality in Kentucky in 2012. In March, a miner was killed while attempting to repair a mine canopy when it collapsed.

A message left for a representative of McCoy Elkhorn Coal was not returned.

The Kentucky Department of Natural Resources sent investigators to the mine to conduct a physical examination of the accident scene, Potter said. The mine will be closed while the investigation is ongoing, she said. Informal and

formal interviews will be conducted with mine personnel and an accident report will be released once the investigation is complete.

Investigators from the Mine Safety and Health Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Labor, have also been sent to the mine, said administration spokeswoman Amy Louviere. Investigations into fatal mine accidents is standard procedure, she said.

There have been nine fatal mining accidents nationwide so far in 2012, the Mine Safety and Health Administration said.

Tuesday 26 June 2012

VIC: Blaze damages mine equipment

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

A fire has caused significant damage to equipment at a mineral sands mine in north-west Victoria.

Authorities are so far unsure what started the fire on Sunday night, which burnt out a scraper at Iluka's mine site in Ouyen.

The Country Fire Authority's Trevor Mills says crews have yet to enter the area where the fire happened but he will talk to Iluka officials later this week to determine its cause.

"I will have discussions with them, just to ... get some information as to why the fire occurred," he said.

"I'm sure they will investigate that thoroughly but also for our own purposes to make sure that we approached everything the way we should have and the way we need to on these sites."

Canada: Accident at PotashCorp's Allan mine leaves one dead

Extract from The Vancouver Sun, Ca

A workplace accident has claimed the life of a 28-year-old man at PotashCorp's Allan mine east of Saskatoon.

The underground tragedy happened Monday around supper time, and mining operations at the site have been suspended while an investigation into its cause begins, company spokesman Bill Johnson said.

All Johnson could say early Tuesday was that the man was rendered unconscious and emergency efforts by the mine's rescue unit failed to resuscitate him.



A man died underground at the PotashCorp Allan potash mine, located about 40 kilometres east of Saskatoon on Tuesday.

"We don't have too many details on the accident to release at this point, other than to say that it is being investigated thoroughly, both by ourselves and by the mine safety unit as well," Johnson said.

"It's an incredibly sad day at Potash Corporation. There's absolutely nothing we place a higher priority on than the safety of every one of our employees, and it's our number one job to ensure that every employee who comes to work in the morning goes home safely at night. And when that doesn't happen, we all feel the loss."

UPDATE: The worker, Chris Reid of Saskatoon, had been with the company for about six months and was working as a backup operator, which placed him behind the massive boring equipment, said Ron St. Pierre, president of United Steelworkers Union Local 7689, which represents staff at the Allan mine.

"I was underground last night and we really don't know exactly what happened, why he would have been in the position that he was in," St. Pierre said, adding Reid was "a real good guy, really well-liked."

Reid's family was not ready to comment Tuesday, but authorized the union local to release his name.

Wednesday 27 June 2012

WA: Asbestos found at Pilbara mine sites from quarry

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

The Department of Mines and Petroleum is investigating asbestos contamination in the Pilbara.

Rio Tinto has confirmed brown asbestos was found last month at its West Angelas mine site.

The fibres were identified in material which was brought in from the Holcim quarry in Newman as landfill.

A Rio Tinto spokeswoman says exposure levels were below the occupational exposure limit and employees were immediately informed.

The Holcim quarry has voluntarily shut down its operations.

The department says an initial report on asbestos at West Angelas is due tomorrow.

The mining union says it has been conducting tests at BHP Billiton's Jumblebar mine site near Meekatharra.

The CFMEU's safety officer Steve McCann says he has spent three days investigating asbestos contamination at the site, after calls from several concerned workers.

The union says Jumblebar has also sourced material from the Holcim quarry.



Photo: Rio Tinto's has confirmed brown asbestos was found at its West Angelas mine site (Diane Bain: ABC)

Mr McCann says he is concerned that workers at the BHP site could suffer exposure whilst the investigations continue there.

"The mine itself has been made aware; their position on the subject was until they receive confirmation from further testing, they were going to continue to use this," he said.

"Now that borders on negligence as far as I'm concerned.

"Even the risk of contamination or exposure to the workers on that site, they should at least stop production until such time as they have confirmation that the material they're using is safe."

The Department of Mines and Petroleum has called a meeting with the union, the quarry, Worksafe WA, Rio Tinto and BHP to discuss potential health impacts.

USA: 19-Year-Old Injured in Mining Accident

Extract from www.wsaz.com/news

WAYNE COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) -- A 19-year-old miner was injured in an accident at a Wayne County mine late Wednesday night.

Leslie Fitzwater with the West Virginia Department of Commerce tells WSAZ.com the man was a roof bolter and that he was struck with drill steel.

The accident happened at the Rockspring Development Camp Creek #1 Mine Ben Haley Portal just after 11p.m. The mine is near East Lynn on Route 37.

Fitzwater says the bolter was a black hat with 10 months of experience.

He was taken to a Huntington hospital. His name and condition have not been released.

Thursday 28 June 2012

USA: Family Sues Consol Over Miner's Death

Extract from The Intelligencer Wheeling News-Register

Daughter files wrongful death claim in Shoemaker accident

WHEELING - The daughter of a Shadyside man who died last year after having his leg torn off in an accident at Marshall County's Shoemaker Mine is suing Consol Energy for his wrongful death.

Charles McIntire died Oct. 17 at the mine when a ditch-digging machine surged forward and ran over him. The 62-year-old Shadyside resident had nearly 10 years of mining experience and almost six years at the Marshall County mine near Benwood.

The complaint - filed by McIntire's daughter, Gene Ann Marie Blythe - "sustained extreme pain and suffering, both physical and mental" before his death. The document asserts that Consol failed to conduct a safety inspection, failed to provide required equipment, failed to properly maintain the equipment it did provide and failed to properly identify the safety functions on equipment.

The case was originally filed in Marshall County Circuit Court, but has since been moved to U.S. District Court in Wheeling. In addition to Consol, the suit lists McIntire's supervisor, Joseph Ontko, by name as a defendant in the case.

McIntire, who worked as a timber man and laborer, was part of a crew assigned to clean up debris that had fallen near a main hauling line on the day of his death, the complaint notes. Crew members realized the rocks were too large for the equipment they were using, so they decided to use a ditch digger. Ontko wanted McIntire to operate the ditch digger.

The lawsuit notes McIntire told Ontko his training on the machine may have expired. Ontko then "inadequately and negligently" provided about

25 minutes of refresher training to McIntire, the complaint states.

U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration spokeswoman Amy Louviere said last year that McIntire was bridging at a nip connection for his machine. A nip is the device at the end of the trailing cable of a mining machine.

Louviere said McIntire exited the machine to hook up the nip. It seems the machine struck him when it re-energized, amputating his leg. The area where the accident occurred is called the "jump," an area where there is a 50-foot break in the trolley wire, where regular vehicles can cross the mine track.

Louviere said McIntire tried to use a jumper cable to move the loading machine. The machine failed to coast through a gap in the trolley wire. McIntire reportedly dismounted to connect the jumper cable to the trolley wire to move the machine through the gap.

McIntire then placed one end of the nip on the energized trolley wire and one end on the harp of the machine's trolley pole. An eyewitness said when he placed the nip on the harp, the machine suddenly moved forward, running over McIntire.

"As he lay underneath the ditch digger with his leg amputated, Charles McIntire was conscious and experienced significant pain and suffering," the complaint states, noting the victim suffered catastrophic injuries.

The complaint further asserts Ontko observed McIntire taking the actions that led to his death "and permitted Charles McIntire to continue working in the manner which he did, thereby exposing Charles McIntire to unsafe working conditions."

Blythe seeks compensation for McIntire's pain and suffering, medical bills, funeral expenses and lost wages and earning capacity but does not identify a specific dollar amount.

Saturday 30 June 2012

QLD: The mining death of Sean Scovell

Extract from Northern Star,

WHEN Stewart Bell answers his phone outside work hours, the news is almost always grim.

So, at 8pm on Tuesday, June 5, he was told that 21-year-old Bundaberg man Sean Scovell had been killed at a quarry south of Moranbah.

An hour earlier, Moranbah South Quarry workers from MCG Civil called 000 just moments after Mr Scovell's accident.

Police and other emergency services attended and began very early investigations.

The mines inspectorate - a team of government safety inspectors- were called next, arriving on site from Mackay within hours to interview witnesses and scour the area.



QLD Mine Safety Commissioner, Stewart Bell. Photo Lauren Reed

Before they hit the road, they call Mr Bell, the Queensland Commissioner for Mine Safety and

Health, a large cog in the machinery of government that begins to whirl and turn when a life is snuffed out in the mining industry.

"Nobody ever rings me after hours for good news," Mr Bell said in a phone interview from his Brisbane office.

"They're never calling me to tell me I've won the lotto.

"It makes me feel sick sometimes; I'm living in a constant state of unease.

"I'll notify my superior, the director-general, and we put out an email to all of our senior department staff so they know about it."

To use the same jargon as emergency services, Bundaberg man Sean Scovell perished after becoming "entangled" in a conveyor belt.

Mr Scovell heard a "screech" coming from somewhere inside the contraption and fetched a grease gun to fix it. As he crouched down beside the running belt, he was pulled between the wheels and the metal surrounds.

His death is the first fatality at a mine or quarry this financial year. He would have been the 430th person to die in the coal mining industry since 1882 - the 12th since 2000 - but his job at a quarry means he is counted under different statistics.

The telephone call to Mr Bell is one small piece of a complicated yet necessary string of protocols that guide the investigation of everything from the young man's state of mind - was he fatigued, did he have alcohol or drugs in his system - to safety precautions and mine management.

Ultimately, the Queensland Coroner decides what went wrong, who, if anyone, was to blame, and how a family could be protected from similar trauma.

Police and departmental investigations run in parallel.

"We have to get a very good picture of what happened. We have to check all the equipment," Mr Bell said.

"We have to look at (the company) records and safety procedures."

Most incidents were not new, he said, they were versions of previous incidents or fatalities being played out - he likened them to road crashes.

"It's the same people in motor cars on the highway as in these vehicles. And there are plenty of vehicles on these sites."

In coming months, investigators will interview witnesses - wherever they are across the country - before a final "nature and cause" report is delivered to the coroner.

The report also is considered by the Mines Inspectorate compliance committee on whether any action, including prosecution, should be taken.

The committee often will include the chief inspector of coal mines, a lawyer, chief inspector of mines, a government investigator and, potentially, an independent workplace safety expert.

The chief inspector acts as a chair and the committee recommends whether a person or company needs to be prosecuted. Mr Bell makes the decision on prosecution, but a yes would be rare.

He estimates that of 100 investigations, four might lead to a prosecution.

Even so, Queensland mines are considered the safest in the world.

The power of the department and union safety representatives to shut down a potential risk mine is a key ingredient to maintaining that safety record.

Mine firms also have incredibly detailed procedures of their own - closely governed by legislation - including clear paths for workers to report anything resembling a danger.

For Mr Bell, reading monthly listings of near-misses and injuries underlines what is at stake when tens of thousands depend on you.

"We are the biggest coal exporting province in the world and we have a very low fatality rate," Mr Bell said.

"But if we are killing people, and we are, then (our safety) is not adequate.

"I don't have any reason for complacency. We need everyone coming home every day of the week and we have not gotten there.

"We're working on that every day."

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

B

Black damp

An atmosphere depleted of oxygen by oxidation of coal and carbonaceous material, and containing variable mixtures of nitrogen and carbon dioxide.

a typical mixture is from 10 to 15% CO₂ with 85 to 90% N₂. Also formed by mine fires and explosion of fire damp or coal dust and hence forms part of the "after damp".

Term sometimes applied to CO₂ or to "strata gas", essentially CO₂ which may be accompanied by methane and a little nitrogen.

Essentially an extinctive atmosphere, hence the name "Black". Usually heavier than air. Can accumulate in unventilated mine workings whence it issues and may penetrate active workings when the barometer falls.

Forms part of the atmosphere produced in mine fires by distillation or burning coal. Strata gas has outburst and issued from mine strata including the floor.

-Ed