

Australian Minerals Industry Safety & Health

SAFETY SURVEY REPORT

FOR 1 JULY 2002 –
31 MARCH 2003

SUMMARY

- Four (4) fatalities were recorded in the third quarter of the 2002-2003 reporting year. In the same period last reporting year, there were no fatalities.
- All four fatalities occurred at metalliferous mines. Three occurred in WA and one in Queensland.
- The number of fatalities for the first nine months totals nine – two more than for the whole of the previous reporting year.
- The indicative total industry LTIFR for the first nine months of the year is estimated at six which is the same as that reported last quarter but lower than the rate of eight for the same quarter last year.
- The Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR) shows little change from last quarter at 38.1.

SAFETY NEWS

2003 MINEX SAFETY AND HEALTH EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The first of two evaluator training workshops was held in early June and evaluators are now desktop assessing their allocated sites. The second training workshop will be held in early July and site visits will follow shortly afterwards. The evaluation team reports are forwarded to the judging panel comprising industry CEOs for judging on 4 September.

The MINEX Awards presentation dinner is scheduled for Monday 13 October and is being held in association with the Minesafe International Conference in Perth. The national safety and health innovation awards will also be presented on that evening.

MINEX 2004

The MINEX Awards process is celebrating its 10th year in 2004 and applications from mine sites nationwide – large and small – will be keenly sought. A record number of applicants in 2004 would underscore the industry's commitment to its vision of an Australian minerals industry free of fatalities, injuries and diseases and commitment to excellence, identifying and sharing best practice and fostering continuous improvement.

With the end of the financial year approaching, potential sites might like to consider budgeting now for their MINEX participation in 2004.

RECENT MCA SAFETY AND HEALTH PUBLICATIONS

As part of the MCA leadership strategy, rapid and effective information sharing across the industry is crucial to learning and continuous improvement beyond current best practice. The following publications have recently been released:

- Safety and Health Performance Report 2001-02
www.minerals.org.au/downloads/pdf/200102_sh_perfrpt.pdf
- Pasminco Century Mine MINEX Awards case study
www.minerals.org.au/downloads/pdf/minex_century_minecasestudy.pdf

JET ENGINE USED TO SUCCESSFULLY FIGHT WEST VIRGINIA MINE FIRE

A modified jet engine has been used to successfully fight a mine fire near Fairview, WV, that had been burning for nearly two months and caused 300 mine employees to be idled. Although the mine is not yet back in production, some 125 employees have been called back to perform general labor and mechanical work underground to rehabilitate the mine.

Positioned at the mouth of one of the mineshafts at CONSOL Energy's Loveridge Mine, the engine was used to blow water vapor and inert gases into the mine to smother the fire by creating an inert environment underground. This was the first time the technique has been used in the United States.

*“The state
of mind
where we are
constantly
aware of the
possibility
of injury
and act
accordingly
at all times.”*

Minerals Council
of Australia
Safety Awareness



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The US Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Institutes of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) provided a portion of the costs to test the innovative fire suppression system. By displacing oxygen in the mine with inert exhaust gases, the technique shaved months off the conventional method of sealing a mine and letting the fire burn itself out, DOE said.

“As the Department of Energy continues its broad support of clean coal technologies, I never envisioned that we’d be using a

jet engine to put out a mine fire,” Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said. “But this achievement shows that we can make use of non-traditional techniques, as well as our more formal research programs, to provide a cleaner environment through the clean coal program.”

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DESCRIPTION OF MINERALS INDUSTRY FATALITIES (1 January – 31 March 2003)

The four fatalities which occurred during the third quarter were as follows:

Western Australia – UNDERGROUND METALLIFEROUS

On 15 January 2003, Mr Philip Strauss, an employee of Monodelphous – a contractor at Western Metals’ Kapok mine – suffered a fatal accident. Mr Strauss received severe head injuries after the loader he was driving rolled into the wall of the mine’s decline.

Western Australia – OPEN-CUT METALLIFEROUS

On 27 January 2003, Ms Galia Rivka Bercovich, an employee at Barrick of Australia’s Lawlers mine, was engaged in ore spotting at the Fairyland open pit. She was positioned on the berm above the location where the excavator was working and guiding the digging process when the face immediately above her failed and a substantial fall of ground took place. The fall covered the area where she was believed to have been standing.

Queensland – UNDERGROUND METALLIFEROUS

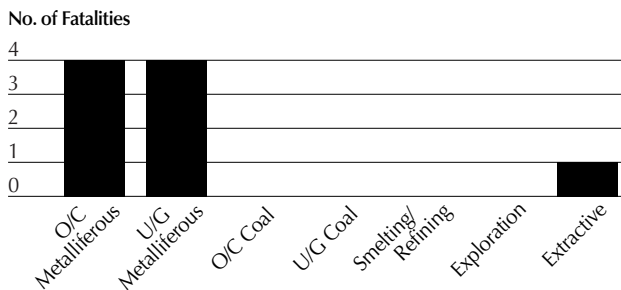
On 7 March 2003, Mr Lindsay Pope a 38-year-old miner employed by Newmont Australia at Pajingo mine was fatally injured when he was struck by a pressurised polyethylene service pipe while working underground.

Western Australia – OPEN-CUT METALLIFEROUS

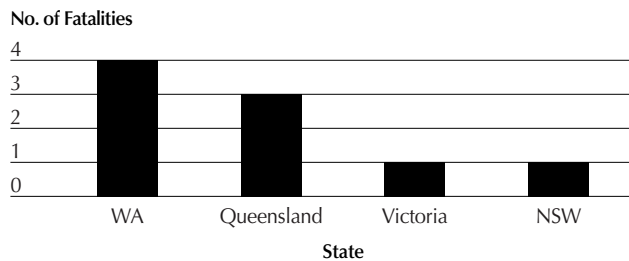
On or around 20 March 2003, a prospector was found dead near the surface workshop at a small underground mining operation in the northern goldfields region. At the time his body was located, he had apparently been dead for some time. He had suffered a significant injury to the head. It appears likely that the death was as a result of an industrial accident. It is conjectured that he may have been struck by a wheel or tyre parts or by tyre inflation apparatus during the inflation of a tyre some distance away from where he was found.

FATALITY STATISTICS

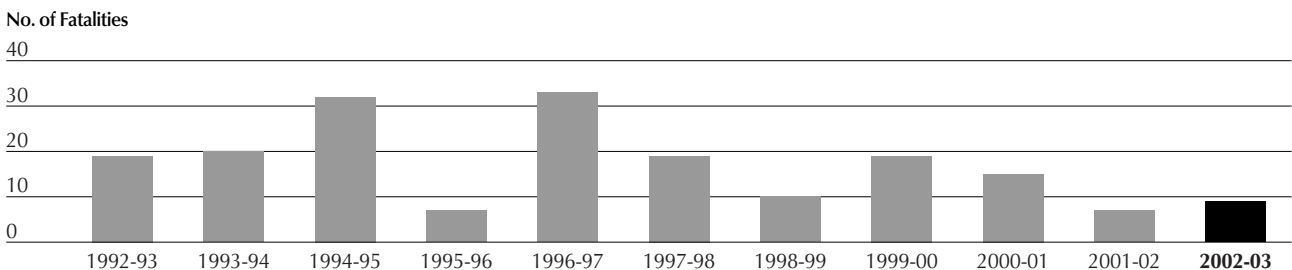
Fatalities by sector 1 July 2002 – 31 March 2003



Fatalities by State 1 July 2002 – 31 March 2003



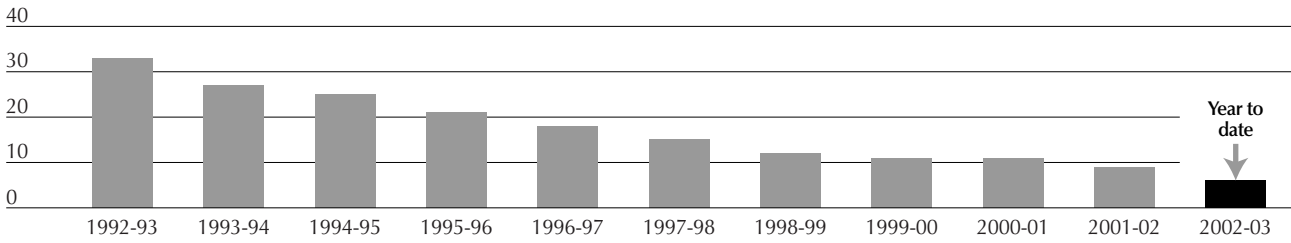
Fatalities 1992-93 – 31 December 2002



Includes exploration, smelting/refining and extractive

LOST TIME INJURY FREQUENCY RATE

Total Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate 1992-93 – 31 March 2003



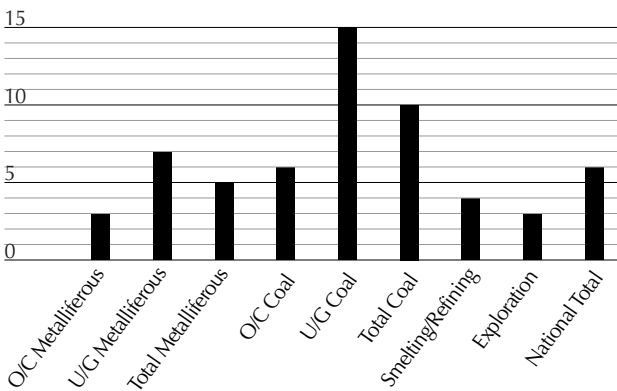
The indicative total industry Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) for the first nine months is estimated at six. This compares favourably with the LTIFR of eight for the same nine months of the previous year.

In comparison with last year's third quarterly Survey, all sectors have shown improvement except exploration which has remained stable. Significantly the LTIFR for underground coal has dropped to 15 this quarter, compared with a rate of 24 for the same period last year, and the underground metalliferous rate has improved from nine to seven.

As a result of these improvements in LTIFR, the total coal and total metalliferous rates for the first three quarters have improved to 10 (from 14 the previous year) and five (from six) respectively.

Recognising the limitations of the survey methodology, the MCA would not wish to draw any conclusions based on this LTIFR data alone.

LTIFR by Sector 1 July 2002 – 31 March 2003



MOST SEVERE INJURIES

Thirty-five severe injuries (31 for last quarter; 22 for the same period last year) were reported for the third quarter.

Survey responses indicated that there were three losses of body part (fingers, toes amputation); one loss of body function (eyesight in one eye); and 31 other severe damage which comprised:

- fractures (19),
- burns (5),
- crush injuries (1),
- others (6) – laceration, dislocation, electric shock, loss of dentures, twisted knee and welding flash to both eyes.

MEDICAL TREATMENT INJURIES

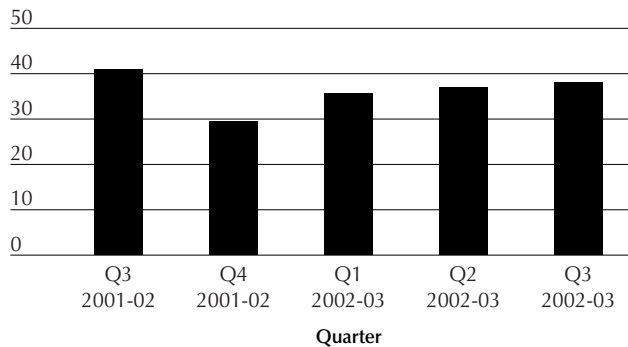
For the third quarter of the 2002-2003 reporting year, survey responses show a total of 1072 medical treatment injuries (791 in first quarter, 889 in the second quarter). For the same quarter last year, 761 were reported.

TOTAL RECORDABLE INJURIES

The industry is working in a voluntary and proactive way to improve safety and health performance by reporting broader outcomes measures and in particular Total Recordable Injuries (TRIs) which include fatalities, lost time injuries, restricted work cases and medical treatment cases.

A total of 1664 TRIs have been reported this quarter which equates to an indicative TRIFR of 38.

Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR)



Companies may like to compare their TRIFR with this minerals industry indicative figure.

SAFETY MILESTONES

The Council recognises that, despite the continuation of fatalities and injuries in the industry, there are a number of safety success stories which provide significant opportunities for industry participants to benchmark their own operations and to exchange ideas and information on safety and health issues.

This report features Mt Whaleback, recipient of a Commendation at the 2002 MINEX Awards held in Terrigal, NSW last September.

BHP BILLITON

MT WHALEBACK

Type of Operation

Mt Whaleback is an open-cut iron ore mine with beneficiation plant. The operation employs over 900 personnel. Construction of Mt Whaleback commenced in 1967 and the first iron ore was railed to Port Hedland in 1969 and shipped to Japan. Mount Whaleback is BHP Billiton Iron Ore's primary ore body with an expected life extending to around 2030. The mine is a 5-kilometre long, 2 kilometre-wide open-cut pit. The MINEX submission addresses the Mt Whaleback iron ore body operation encompassing mine planning and mining activities through to processing and stockpiling for rail transport. In 2001, approximately 11 million tonnes of iron ore was extracted and processed through the beneficiation plant. The estimated size of the deposit totals 1.4 billion tonnes, with an estimated 750Mt remaining for production. The Mt Whaleback Brockman lump product can deliver iron content close to 70%, the highest percentage possible.

Location

Mt Whaleback is located in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, seven km west of Newman and 1,200 km north of Perth.

Safety and Health Contact

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Safety and Health Strengths

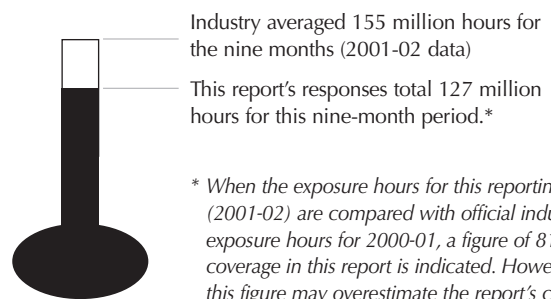
- The Iron Ore Road Map to Success is reviewed annually and includes specific business driver improvement initiatives that must be addressed for each site. There is a clear definable linkage between the Road Map to Success, the site's business plan, individual departmental business plans and individuals' performance indicators.
- Operational Excellence (Six Sigma) is fully deployed as a systematic tool to drive process improvement, using cross-site team involvement to effectively engage all levels of the workforce.
- Continuous improvement action plans are developed by crews and departments on a quarterly basis and reviewed fortnightly to monitor goals and objectives. Completion rates are continually monitored and tracked.
- The Safe Act Observation (SAO) process achieves the objectives of acknowledging good safety behaviour, immediate correction of unsafe practices, direct communication across traditional employee level boundaries and providing a measure for safety lead indicators.
- A comprehensive, proactive rehabilitation program is in place which provides for both work-related and non-work-related mental and physical health and injury management.

METHODOLOGY OF QUARTERLY SURVEY

The MCA would like to thank all reporting companies, State/Territory Minerals Councils/Chambers, Coal Services and the Australian Aluminium Council who supplied information for this report. Given the short timeframe within which the data has been collected and collated, the data incorporated is not necessarily reported on a consistent basis.

The MCA is also aware that, for some fatalities, the circumstances at the time of the fatal incident are unclear, so that a decision cannot be made immediately as to whether the death is a workplace related fatality or is due to natural causes. In these cases, the MCA is guided by the approach taken by the relevant State government authority. Any revisions in fatalities will be included in future reports as appropriate.

Report Coverage based on exposure hours



This document can be found on the Council's website: www.minerals.org.au/safety_health (click on *Publications*)

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