

# Australian Minerals Industry Safety & Health

## SAFETY SURVEY REPORT

FOR 1 JULY 2002 –  
30 JUNE 2003

### SUMMARY

- Three (3) fatalities were recorded in the fourth quarter of the 2002-2003 reporting year. In the same period last reporting year, there were also three fatalities.
- Two of the three fatalities occurred at underground metalliferous mines in Tasmania. The third occurred in an open-cut metalliferous mine in WA.
- The number of fatalities for the 2002-03 reporting year totals 12 – five more than for the previous reporting year.
- The indicative total industry LTIFR for the year is estimated at six which is the same as that reported last quarter but lower than the annual rate of eight in the corresponding report last year.
- The Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR) shows a small improvement from last quarter's 38.1 to this quarter's 35.8.

### SAFETY NEWS

#### 2003 MINEX SAFETY AND HEALTH EXCELLENCE AWARDS

MINEX judging takes place on 4 September. This year's Judging Panel comprises Messrs Greig Gailey (Pasminco), Robert Logan (Roche Mining), John Dow (Newmont Australia), Colin Bloomfield (BHP Billiton) and Mitch Hooke (Minerals Council of Australia).

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. Conference programs and registration forms can be downloaded from [www.promaco.com.au/conference/2003/minesafe](http://www.promaco.com.au/conference/2003/minesafe)

#### NATIONAL MINERALS RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE

A revised version of the National Minerals Industry Risk Assessment Guideline is now available from the Minerals Industry Safety and Health Centre (MISHC) website. The MCA originally commissioned MISHC to develop a Risk Assessment Guideline with the aim of improving the quality of risk assessment in the

Australian minerals industry. The Guideline is publicly available as an online resource to help individuals design and undertake informal and formal risk assessments and can be accessed at [www.mishc.uq.edu.au](http://www.mishc.uq.edu.au)

The Guideline is outcome-based rather than prescriptive, and wherever possible makes use of lessons learned. It also highlights the critical importance of scope in risk assessment design. The MCA and MISHC are committed to regularly reviewing and updating the Guideline as appropriate, taking into account feedback from users.

#### NATIONAL ROCKFALL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

Rockfall is a major hazard in underground mining, with consequences ranging from insignificant to catastrophic (fatalities). The MCA has led the development of national rockfall management guidelines. With the assistance of the Australian Centre for Geomechanics, the Industry Guideline for Rockfall Risks Management – Metalliferous Mines is nearing completion and is expected to be launched in October. A similar guideline for the coal sector is also being progressed.

*“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



**MINERALS  
COUNCIL**

OF AUSTRALIA  
ACN 008 455 141  
ABN 21 191 309 229

[www.minerals.org.au](http://www.minerals.org.au)

**DESCRIPTION OF MINERALS INDUSTRY FATALITIES (1 April – 30 June 2003)**

There have been three fatalities during this fourth quarter.

*Tasmania* – UNDERGROUND METALLIFEROUS

On 21 April 2003, an employee of Barminco – a contractor at Copper Mines of Tasmania’s Mt Lyell mine – suffered a fatal accident. The 33-year-old man was repairing a piece of mobile equipment when he was struck on the head by a steel rod resulting in instant death.

*Tasmania* – UNDERGROUND METALLIFEROUS

On 5 May 2003, a Barminco employee working at Murchison United’s Renison Bell tin mine, was working in a five-man team when a rock fall occurred one kilometre underground.

*Western Australia* – OPEN-CUT METALLIFEROUS

A mine worker suffered fatal injuries at Rio Tinto’s Argyle diamond mine after a large haul truck was struck by another similar vehicle.

The WA Department of Industry and Resources website states that the operator suffered crush injuries when the cab of the truck he was driving was crushed by the rear of the tray of another truck which rolled backwards down a ramp at the bottom of the pit. The preliminary report may be found at <http://notesweb.mpr.wa.gov.au/exis/Exisonweb.nsf>

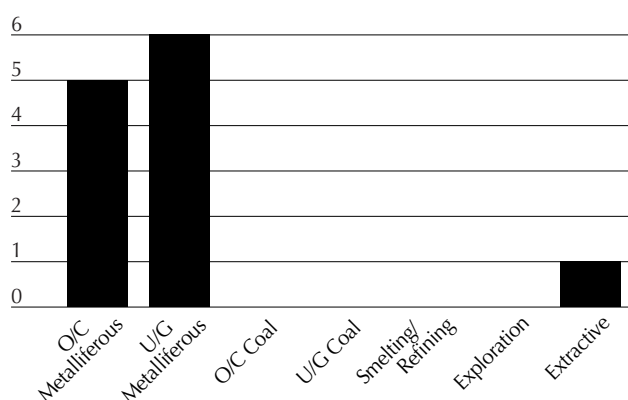
**MINERALS INDUSTRY-RELATED FATALITIES**

Two minerals industry related fatalities have been reported this quarter. One related to the transport of mineral products; the other was a contractor who received a fatal shock when a

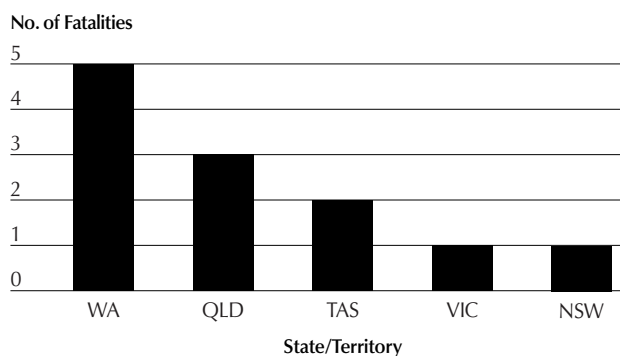
mobile crane and its load came into contact with a high voltage power line during demolition of a shed on a pastoral property owned by Newcrest.

**FATALITY STATISTICS**

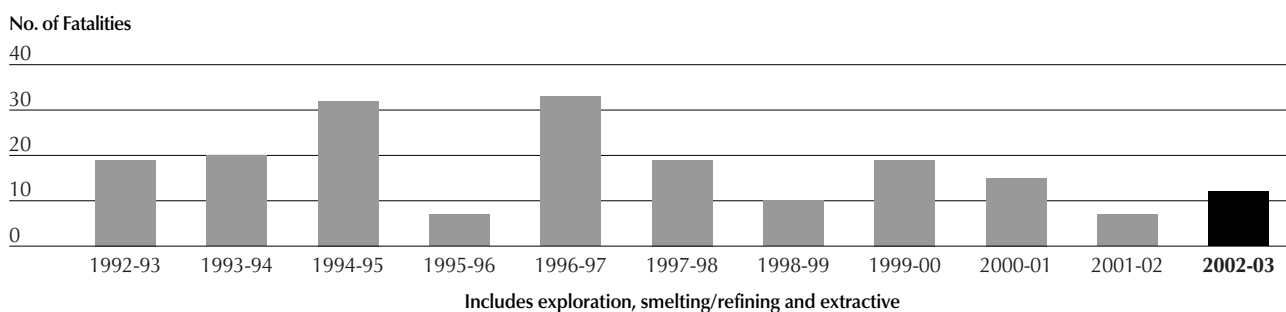
Fatalities by sector 1 July 2002 – 30 June 2003



2002-03 Fatalities by State

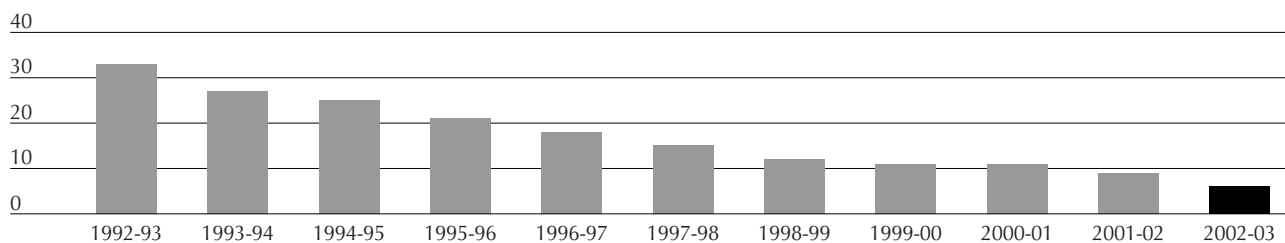


Fatalities 1992-93 – 30 June 2003



## LOST TIME INJURY FREQUENCY RATE

### Total Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate 1992-93 – 30 June 2003



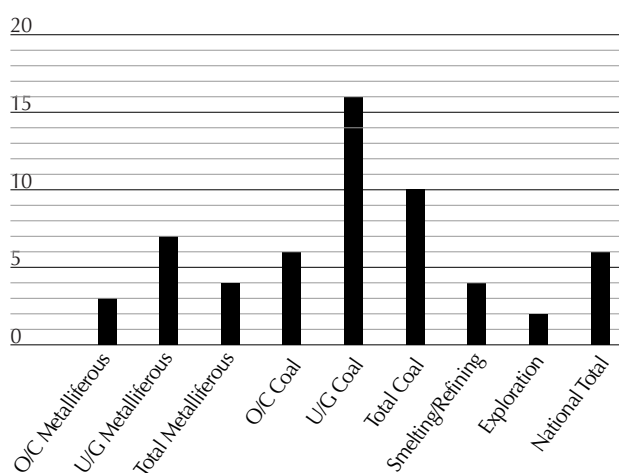
The indicative total industry Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) for 2002-03 is estimated at six. This compares favourably with the LTIFR of eight for the previous year.

In comparison with last year's *Safety Survey Report*, all sectors have shown improvement. Significantly the LTIFR for underground coal has dropped to 16 for the year, compared with a rate of 23 at the same time last year, and the underground metalliferous rate has improved from nine to seven.

As a result of the improvements in LTIFR, the total coal and total metalliferous rates for the year have improved to 10 (from 13 the previous year) and four (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 – 30 June 2003



### MOST SEVERE INJURIES

Twenty-eight severe injuries (35 for last quarter; 20 for the same period last year) were reported for the fourth quarter.

Survey responses indicated that there were three losses of body part (fingertip and toe amputations, loss of lower right arm); no loss of body function; and 25 other severe damage which comprised:

- fractures (16),
- burns (5), and
- crush injuries (4),

In an effort to share learnings into such severe injuries, research was undertaken this quarter into identification of the likely causes of these injuries. Classification of this quarter's severe injuries is as follows:

Fall of Ground	2
Fire/explosion	—
Mobile equipment failure/damage	—
Fixed plant failure/damage	—
Impact by moving plant/equipment	12
Vehicle equipment incident	—
Electrical/electricity	—
Hazardous substances/fumes	1
Slips, trips, falls	6
Exposure to weather	—
Biological agencies	4

*Caveat:* these likely mechanisms should be taken as an indication only.

### MEDICAL TREATMENT INJURIES

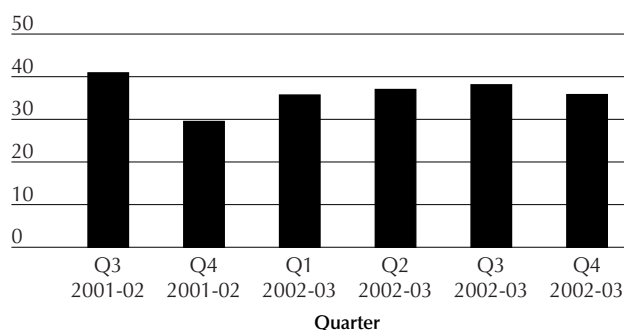
For the fourth quarter of the 2002-2003 reporting year, survey responses show a total of 924 medical treatment injuries (791 in first quarter, 889 in the second quarter, 1072 in the third quarter).

### 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 1536 TRIs (1664 last quarter) have been reported this quarter which equates to an indicative TRIFR of 35.8.

### 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 Thorley, recipient of a Commendation at the 2002 MINEX Awards held in Terrigal, NSW last September.

## COAL AND ALLIED (RIO TINTO)

### MT THORLEY OPERATIONS

#### Type of Operation

Mount Thorley Operation consists of a joint venture between Mount Thorley Operations (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Coal and Allied) and Pohang Iron and Steel of Korea. Rio Tinto Coal (NSW) Pty Ltd carries out the management of the mine.

Mount Thorley Operations is an open-cut coal mine which commenced overburden removal in 1981. The coal handling preparation plant commenced operation in 1985. It is a single open-cut operation with one drag line and two shovels with truck haulage and the coal handling preparation plant.

The operation has an output of 6.8 million tonnes with a clean coal budget of 4.3 million tonnes per annum. The product comprises 50% steaming and 50% coking coal, all of which is exported via the Newcastle ship loader. The mine operates with approximately 200 employees.

#### Location

Mt Thorley Operations are located in the Hunter Valley coalfields of NSW, approximately 14 kms west of Singleton.

#### Safety and Health Contact

Mr Bob Peake  
Specialist Training & OHS  
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#### Safety and Health Strengths

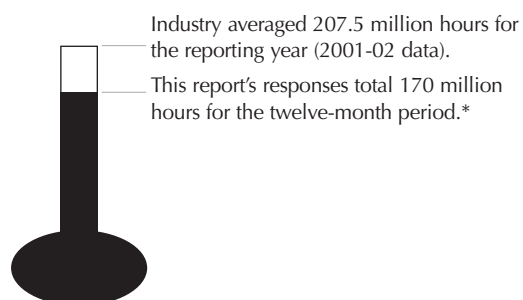
- Strong corporate leadership and commitment to occupational health and safety management, underpinned by an extensive safety management system and dedicated site safety personnel.
- Ergonomic assessment of all maintenance-related activities is undertaken and a process is in place to control identified issues. OH&S considerations are identified and are fundamental during the purchase process of new plant and equipment.
- A formal improvement process using process improvement teams has resulted in the implementation of a large number of initiatives.
- An organisational culture that encourages and facilitates employee involvement in the identification, assessment and implementation of controls for occupational health and safety issues.
- A workplace exchange program including international postings extends to employees at all levels of the organisation.

## 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



\* When the exposure hours for this reporting year (2002-03) are compared with official industry exposure hours for 2001-02, a figure of 82% coverage in this report is indicated. However, this figure may overestimate the report's coverage.

This document can be found on the MCA website: [www.minerals.org.au/safety\\_health](http://www.minerals.org.au/safety_health) (click on *Publications*)

#### Note to readers:

If you would like future issues of this quarterly document emailed directly to you (as a PDF document), please contact Del Da Costa at the Minerals Council of Australia on 02 6279 3644, fax 02 6279 3699 or by email [d.dacosta@minerals.org.au](mailto:d.dacosta@minerals.org.au)