

3 October 2019

## Investigation into crash at Wilpinjong mine finalised

The NSW Resources Regulator has finalised its causal investigation into a heavy vehicle collision involving semi-automated machinery at Wilpinjong coal mine near Mudgee earlier this year. The investigation was undertaken in conjunction with mine operators, equipment manufacturers and worker representatives and identified several safety improvements.

Resources Regulator Chief Inspector of Mines Garvin Burns said a bulldozer operating in a semi-autonomous mode collided with an excavator during operations at the mine on 27 May 2019, shunting the excavator and leaving the driver trapped. The excavator driver was rescued and was not injured.

“The incident was of particular interest as the trialling and utilisation of autonomous and remote-controlled equipment is increasing in mines throughout NSW. As a result, a causal investigation was immediately launched into the matter to provide a better understanding of the causal factors that contributed to the collision and allow us to pass on quick learnings to industry,” Mr Burns said.

“The investigation identified a number of contributing factors to the incident, such as a compromised bund and absent windrow, poor sight lines, and a breakdown in communications.

“However, of even more importance, the investigation and subsequent actions by the operator identified a number of key engineering and technology controls that have since been implemented to prevent reoccurrence. These include the installation of a proximity awareness and autonomous stop system on all machinery and portable units for staff working in the area, installation of a regional aerial camera and increased separation between machinery.

“Any mine operator using or considering the use of autonomous machinery should review the full investigation report to see if any of the learnings can be applied to their operations”.

A video and report on the outcomes of the investigation have been released and are available [here](#)