

Fatality

Incident date: 14 May 2017

Event: Fatality in underground metalliferous mine

Location: Perilya Southern Operations, Broken Hill NSW

Overview

A worker was found unconscious near a light vehicle in an underground section of the mine. The worker died despite the efforts of his co-workers and ambulance officers to resuscitate him.

Photograph 1: Underground storage drive showing location of light vehicle where the worker was found.



The mine

Perilya Broken Hill Limited operates three mines in Broken Hill. The Perilya Broken Hill operations cover 1,042 square kilometres of prospective terrain. This includes the mining leases, the Southern Operations, the North Mine, the Potosi project and other exploration areas.

The Perilya Broken Hill Southern Operations are located at Wentworth Road, Broken Hill in far western NSW. The Southern Operation is a large complex underground lead and zinc mine. Ore is mined using a longhole open stope method with variations developed for extraction of ore from an area of previously worked pillars. The southern mining operation employs about 318 workers and contracts around 90 workers.

The incident

The incident occurred at about 3.30 pm on 14 May 2017.

The worker, aged 55, was found lying on the ground near a light vehicle in a storage drive about 788 m underground. The drive is used for storage of mining consumables. The worker had been using the light vehicle prior to the incident for general mine duties and assisting other workers.

His co-workers and mine trained emergency response members administered first aid, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and also applied a defibrillator to the worker. CPR was continued during the evacuation to the surface.

The NSW Ambulance Service transported the worker to Broken Hill Base Hospital where further attempts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful.

The investigation

NSW Police and the NSW Ambulance Service responded to the incident.

The Resources Regulator also responded and has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident. The regulator is investigating whether the death was mining-related.

The mine operator is cooperating with the investigation.

An investigation report will be prepared for the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment and the NSW Coroner.

The cause of death is being considered by the NSW Coroner.

Safety observations

Health monitoring

Mine and petroleum site operators are reminded of their duty to monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace for the purpose of preventing illness or injury of workers in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW) and *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* (NSW) and regulations.

Mine operators should have effective health monitoring programs in place to ensure workers are healthy and fit to work in underground environments. Regular medical examinations should be undertaken by qualified medical practitioners.

Emergency plans

Mine and petroleum site operators must prepare, maintain and implement an emergency plan for the workplace.¹ An emergency plan must address all aspects of an emergency response. The operator must also ensure that an adequate number of persons, trained in the use of rescue equipment, are available to respond effectively to an emergency.²

The operator of a coal mine or an underground mine must consult, as far as is reasonably practicable, with the primary emergency services with responsibility for the area in which the mine is located, and in the case of a coal mine – any other emergency service organisation, including the NSW Mines Rescue Brigade established under the *Coal Industry Act 2001*, that may be required to participate in implementing the emergency plan. Mine operators are required to ensure that the emergency plan addresses any recommendation made by the emergency service organisations consulted, as required.

Further information

- [Health management overview](#)
- [Health management publications](#)
- [Emergency management team](#)
- [Emergency planning - fact sheet](#)

About this information release

The Resources Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a fatality in the mining industry. Investigations are ongoing and further information may be published as it becomes available.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning and Environment or the user's independent adviser. All photographs were taken by the Resources Regulator.

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- learn more about our work on major investigations and emergency response
- view our publications on other major investigations
- find your local mine safety office, where you can contact our team of mine safety inspectors.

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¹ *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (NSW) clause 43.

² *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014* (NSW) clause 88(2)(iv).