

INVESTIGATION INFORMATION RELEASE

DATE: June 2022

Two mine workers injured during pipe installation work

Incident date: 17 May 2022

Event: Two mine workers were seriously injured during pipe installation work

Location: Centennial Mandalong Mine

Overview

Two workers sustained serious injuries when high pressure air unexpectedly escaped from an airpipe in the vicinity of where they were working.

The mine

Centennial Mandalong Pty Limited is the operator of the Mandalong mine located near Morisset. The mine is an underground longwall thermal coal mine which provides coal to both the Vales Point and Eraring Power Stations. The mine produces up to 6 million tonnes of coal annually.

The incident

At approximately 11:00am on 17 May 2022, several workers were tasked to extend a water pipe located approximately 140 metres below the surface. The 6-inch water pipe ran parallel to the mine's other services including air and waste pump pipes.

Each of the service pipes were fitted with similar Victaulic master seal gate valves, installed in close proximity, and located outbye of the incident site. After isolating the water valve, workers fitted a reducer to a T-piece in order to run a 4-inch length of pipe along the cut through from the 100 panel to the 102 panel. After installing the fittings, a worker is reported to have walked a short distance outbye to re-energise the water pipe. Other workers remained in the vicinity of the installation work.

A short time later, high pressure air unexpectedly escaped from the air pipe in proximity to the two workers with its rate and volume causing the workers to be blown off their feet. Both workers were seriously injured, with one suffering spinal injuries.

Inspectors and investigators from the Resources Regulator were deployed to the mine on the afternoon of the incident and commenced an investigation.

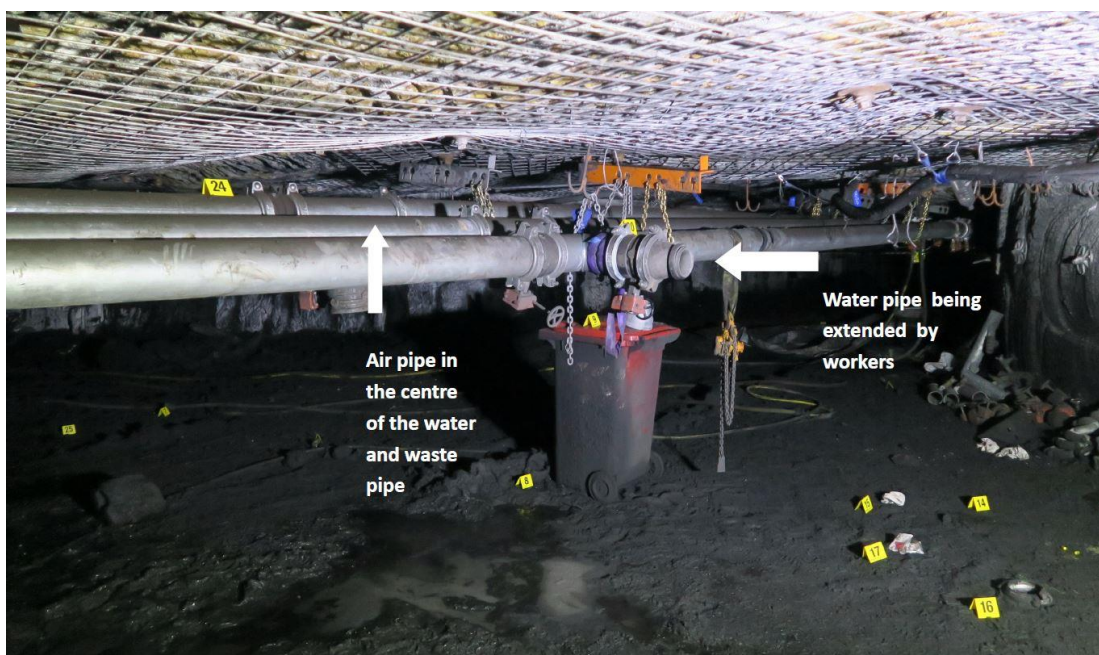
The investigation

The NSW Resources Regulator has commenced an investigation into the cause and circumstances of the incident which is in its preliminary stages. An examination of the scene, which included an inspection of pipes in the vicinity of the installation work, identified an uncapped T-piece in the air pipe. Several pieces of pipe work fittings, including clamps (couplings) and end caps, were located a short distance away and the investigation will explore whether or not these items are linked to the incident.

The investigation will consider, among other things:

- design, manufacture and supply of the pipe work and associated items
- installation and commissioning of pipe work
- human and organisational factors
- isolation procedures
- potential equipment failure.

Figure 1: Incident scene photograph taken by investigator



Safety Observations

Mine operators are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* and associated regulations.

Mine operators must ensure appropriate safety management systems are implemented, including a mechanical engineering control plan, that sets out control measures to manage risks associated with the unintended operation of plant (isolation), the commissioning and installation of plant.

Mine operators should:

- undertake appropriate work area and plant inspections to ensure the risks associated with the installation and commissioning of plant are managed
- ensure that plant is isolated correctly to prevent risk of injury to workers.

Workers are reminded that while at work they must:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and the safety of others
- comply with the mines reasonable work instructions, policies and procedures regarding the installation of plant, including isolation of plant that is not in use or still under construction.

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Code of Practice - Managing the risks of plant in the workplace](#)
- [Isolation issues identified at coal mines December 2018](#)
- [SafeWork NSW - Pressurised pipe incident 29 November 2019.](#)

About this information release

The Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident in the mining industry. Further information may be published as it becomes available.

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- learn more about our work on causal investigations and emergency response
- view our publications on other causal investigations.

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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