

Daniel O'Connor

14 November 2016

Dr. Jaqueline Dewar
Coal Workers CWP Inquiry
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
GEORGE STREET
BRISBANE QLD 4000.

Dear Dr. Dewar

RE: Black Lung Disease submission.

I, Dan O'Connor, as a past coal mine worker, statutory official, check inspector and Union executive, feel strongly responsible for the present situation for Black Lung Disease.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on my home phone number if you require any further help or information with regards to this inquiry.

I will be in Brisbane on 6th. and 7th. December 2016 and can be contacted to discuss my availability at that time.

Yours faithfully

D. O'Connor.

BLACK LUNG SUBMISSION

To eliminate the incidence of Black Lung Disease in underground coal mine workers.

SUBMISSION SUMMARY:

Using the 'Hierarchy of Controls' as a strict plan with disciplined and vigorous audits, the control of coal dust can be achieved.

JUSTIFICATION OF NEED:

Failure to act now to identify the hazards associated with Black Lung Disease and speedily implement the necessary controls which could risk the health of future coal miners.

DESIGN:

There are two main objectives that need attention.

- Ventilation (*improvement*)
- Coal Dust (*suppression*)

VENTILATION:

Coal mines can be carefully designed so as to maximise the flow of ventilation and the direct path of the coal dust to the returns.

Venturi fans can be fitted to the longwall shearer and development mines to purge the work areas of dust.

- **Concertina Vent Tubes** can be fitted to all Continuous Miners to immediately remove the dust and thereby harnessing the efficiency of the panel auxiliary fan.
- **Vent Tubes** designed, that clip firmly together and do not rely on rubbers that split and leak.
- **Regulators.** More informed use of regulators.
- **Monitors.** Anemometers (*that are employed to measure the ventilation supply*) could be situated at the intake entrance of all worksites and set to alarm if there is a failure or reduction in the vent flow.
- **Picks** could be redesigned to reduce dust when cutting.
- **Sprays.** Improvements in the placement and design maybe possible. These play a big part in controlling dust.
- **Design and engineering** should be an ongoing process under organized scrutiny.

Monitoring of coal dust and careful study of monitoring results. Storage of monitoring results records and action taken in regards to monitoring results.

Dust sampling can be employed using 'dust samples' in intake airways.

COAL DUST SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT:

The following lists are initiatives and maintenance that are employed in an underground coal mine to eliminate or control coal dust.

Mine design and development attention should be given to the mine plan/design to avoid any areas that would be difficult to adequately ventilate. All drivage (tunnels) should be clean cut and supported to avoid spall and the resulting dust make.

Housekeeping. All spoil and stowage to be removed out of the mine.

Roadways should be graded, salted and kept watered.

Regulators strictly controlled and attention paid to maximising the ventilation available between Production and Development Districts.

Picks should be regularly inspected and changed as per the maintenance schedule.

Sprays also to be inspected and maintained as per the schedule.

Auxiliary Fans to be inspected and kept clear of rubbish e.g. butterfly plates, washers, rags and the odd hard hat.

Vent tubes to be kept in good order and a specially designed mesh screen at the entrance to the 'slider' or concertina tube to avoid any objects being conveyed to the fan.

ADMINISTRATION:

Management to implement controls, inspections, monitoring and record keeping in exclusive relationship to coal dust levels.

This is a most important consideration in the process of the elimination of Black Lung Disease.

The SOP's (standard operating practices and **Workplace Health and Safety Plan**), the **Principal Hazard Management Plan** should include all these practices directly in relationship to coal dust management and suppression.

P.P.E. (Personal Protection Equipment) is usually last on the 'hierarchy of controls', but in the case of protection of the wearer against airborne coal dust. It is very important. It should be a mandatory requirement when working at the face, in returns and other dusty areas which are identified in the **Principal Hazard Management Plan**.

Protection equipment will include dust masks and air filtered hard hats.

There is an opportunity to improve here the P.P.E. that is available at the present time.

TRAINING:

The weekly 'safety talks' should include precise information on the dust monitoring results.

Discussion on the issue of dust levels and onsite requirements should be encouraged.

This would include dust suppression maintenance in regards to work carried out and work still required to be completed.

Here again, **it cannot be emphasized enough** that all the workforce should be well informed and their involvement **encouraged** and **recorded**.

All personnel that work in an underground coal mine are responsible for their working conditions and therefore the amount of coal dust present in the available air supply.

This includes the **Manager** on his 'weekly' or the **Machine-man** at the face.
This is made **clear** and should be to all miners, and coal mine workers.

Attitudes must also change and attention given to the workplace environment in regards to coal dust.

Coal dust is a poor relation in the hazards associated with coal mining; in comparison to strata and gas control but should a heating or explosion or Black Lung Disease occur then dust is identified as a major ingredient.

Signed:

Date: 14 November 2016

BRIEF WORK HISTORY:

1969 Mount Isa Mine Queensland

Hilton Mine

1982 South Blackwater

Laleham No. 1

Ballamoo

1996 Central Colliery

2006 Oaky Creek Colliery

2009 Moranbah North Colliery