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Sent: Tuesday, 22 November 2016 6:43 AM
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Subject: Black Lung Enquiry Submission

21/11/2016

Ian Nicholas

Submission to Black Lung Enquiry
Parliamentary Committee to examine black lung
The Queensland Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines
The Honourable Antony Lynham

Mining companies are about making money. They like to be seen to be doing the right thing. They operate on the Harvard School Business model which uses the Machiavellian principle “the end justifies the means”.

Non Compliance That I Know About

1. Environmental

New Guinea river pollution documentary ABC

2. Norich Park Mine

After cyclone Joy, their pits filled with water. They throw their pipes over the wall and their water ended up in Rolf Creek.

There was no more rain so the contaminated water was not washed away. Historically the creek was less than 5 parts per million sulphate, they sent it up to electrical conductivity of 2400.

The Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act, said “not to significantly change”.

Safe Work Environment (Failure to provide)

Nixon’s employee John Baker, ran into a float because of dust. Because the road did not have enough water on it to suppress dust for the operation of the float.

I will stand corrected, but I believe the finding of his death was “accidental”.

Administrative

Failure to keep a complete list of licensed electrical workers.

All electrical workers, working for contractors were not on their list.

Toolbox Meetings

There is a tendency of information to come down from the company, but a resistance to go from the floor to the company.

Toolbox meeting are often held in an environment so noisy that you cannot hear speakers. Therefore making the meeting ineffective.

SAP

Sap is designed to dissipate information from accidents and incidents. For example, no names of people involved in the accident or incident are to be entered.

I have seen some incredible incomprehensible stupid things. On a dragline shutdown, first up in the morning, we are shown a safety film. A boiler maker blows himself up, he is blasted through bulk heads and takes two weeks to die. So we know what happened.

Oxy propane has no scent in the bottles, joins in hoses, gear is left in and not taken out for a meal breaks.

Boilermaker strikes his gas lighter for light to see where he is going after the meal break and bang! We saw this video at 7am. At 10am we had a team leave the Oxy propane gear in while we had a meal break.

This pre amble you may not believe is relevant, but it provides a window into the mining environment. Depending on where you fit into this you will have a different perspective.

The only reason we have Black Lung is because we are allowing people to breath in contaminated air. We know the level of contaminates, and the exposure time that will cause the problem. We allow the mines to monitor their air. WHY?

Mines monitor their air on down days?

It is a role of government to monitor and police compliance. The minister is responsible.

If we do not have people from the department in the mines physically checking particulate levels, then we are being let down.

One of the truest statements is “safety depends on you”. If you are not prepared to stand up and say stop, this is no good or not safe the problem will continue.

People are influenced by financial, family, leadership, team player etc. I have refused to test lights that are not fit for purpose.

I have refused to work on a boom, because we did not have the required working at heights safety equipment.

The unions have been very important in promoting safety and a safe work environment.

My experience has been that they have not been ‘over the top.’

My last 7 years has been looking after Komatsu 930E electric drive trucks and WA1200 Wheel Loaders at Blackwater’s BMA mine.

I left February last year.

I am concerned for the operators of the coal loaders. For clean air they rely on the integrity of machines air conditioning system. I am also the concerned for the field service workers performing service/ breakdown work in the pit. At times it is very dusty, also with coal dust present.

Thank you for your time.

Yours Faithfully

I W Nicholas

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