



Jim Torlach
State Mining Engineer

With the release of this first issue of a bulletin on safety in mines, titled "MINESAFE", it is appropriate to make some brief prefatory comment on the Mining Engineering Division and its role, and on the intended purpose and future of this publication.

The restructure of the Mining Engineering Division and its Mines Inspectorate, which was initiated three years ago, has been completed and the Division is now well resourced to provide an appropriate level of service to the industry and to those who work in it.

The additional resources and expertise which have resulted from the restructure have enabled the Division to undertake a considerable range of initiatives for the promotion of health and safety in the mining industry. Some of these will be referred to in this and succeeding issues of MINESAFE.

A brief resume of the Divisional and Inspectorate structure is included as a loose leaf in this Bulletin. A brochure is being prepared in the form of a more comprehensive guide to the Division and its functions and this will be both distributed and available in future on request. It is intended that this be updated yearly or twice yearly according to need.

The purpose of this and future issues of the Bulletin, will be to provide updated information on safety matters, to notify of more exceptional hazards or incidents, to advise on future seminars, training programmes and other initiatives which people in the industry may wish to take part in; and to inform the industry generally on activities of and developments in the Inspectorate.

It is intended to commence this bulletin on a quarterly basis. I commend its contents to your attention and ask that you circulate it to others.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Torlach', written in a cursive style.

J Torlach

FOCUS

A succession of fatal accidents in Western Australian gold mines in the last four months has focussed public attention on the mining industry's safety record.

The Emu disaster on 13 June this year and five other fatal accidents since that date have emphasised the need for a greater commitment to safety from the gold mining industry, particularly in underground gold mines.

Recent events have shown what an unforgiving industry we work in. One mistake by a miner, operator, supervisor or manager can have very serious if not fatal consequences.

There is no doubt in my mind that the rapid increase in the number of gold mines has been a major contributing factor, not only because of the increased number of persons employed but also because of the relatively inexperienced management, supervision and workers in some operations. The same problem was experienced by iron ore and nickel producers when they were expanding rapidly in the 1970s.

It is vital that recent accident trends in gold mines be reversed, and very quickly.

Employers have a duty to provide competent staff. They have a duty to provide safe places of work. They have a duty to provide proper plant and equipment and they have a duty to provide a safe system of work.

Regional Mining Engineers have expressed concern to me recently about a number of items which they feel are not being given sufficient attention by some mining companies:

- . Induction and training of new employees
- . Supervision, particularly underground
- . Control and supervision of contractor's employees
- . The condition of mobile equipment, particularly contractors' equipment
- . Work practices, particularly underground.

It is all too easy to assume that concerns such as these apply only to other people's operations, but what is really required to achieve an overall improvement in safety performance is for each manager, supervisor and worker to critically appraise his or her own area of responsibility and make a commitment to removing all bad practices and changing poor attitudes. You may like to consider your own performance in the light of the following statements. How do you and your organisation measure up?

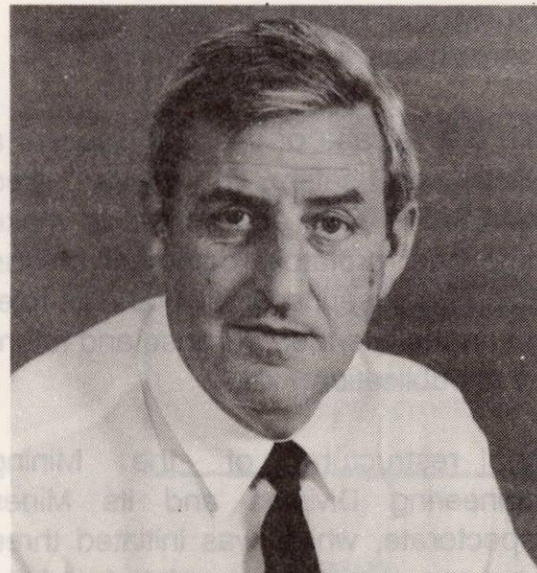
- . Persons must be inducted and trained properly. This is fundamental to any safety programme. Too many new starters are being thrown in at the "deep end".
- . Supervisors must not turn a "blind eye" to defective machinery or unsafe workplaces because of production pressures. If necessary the job must be stopped and things put right before it is allowed to re-start.

The Registered Manager is responsible for the safety of contractor's employees as well as company employees. More attention is required and systems put in place to ensure that contractors' vehicles and equipment are properly maintained. Too often inspectors are having to put trucks off the road and it can only be concluded that, in these cases, production is being given priority over safety.

In the year ended 30 June 1989, two persons were killed and 108 underground workers were injured by rockfalls. Their injuries included 22 fractures and 2 amputations, while two persons sustained multiple injuries. The general standard of barring down loose rock underground is simply not good enough. An underground manager was recently fined \$1,000 for not ensuring work places were properly scaled. Don't expect sympathetic treatment if the inspector finds your workplaces in a similar condition.

More than twelve months have passed since an underground worker was killed by falling down an ore or waste pass. However, this has been one of the most common types of fatal accident with nine deaths in the last ten years. Ore passes and other places where people can fall to their death must be properly guarded. If they are not, fix them now, before someone else learns this lesson the hard way.

It is essential that all the concerned parties - management, trades unions, employees and the inspectorate work together to make the mines safer and healthier in this State. The mining industry is committed to a zero incidence of injury but it will not just happen. Everyone has a responsibility to work towards this objective and make it happen.

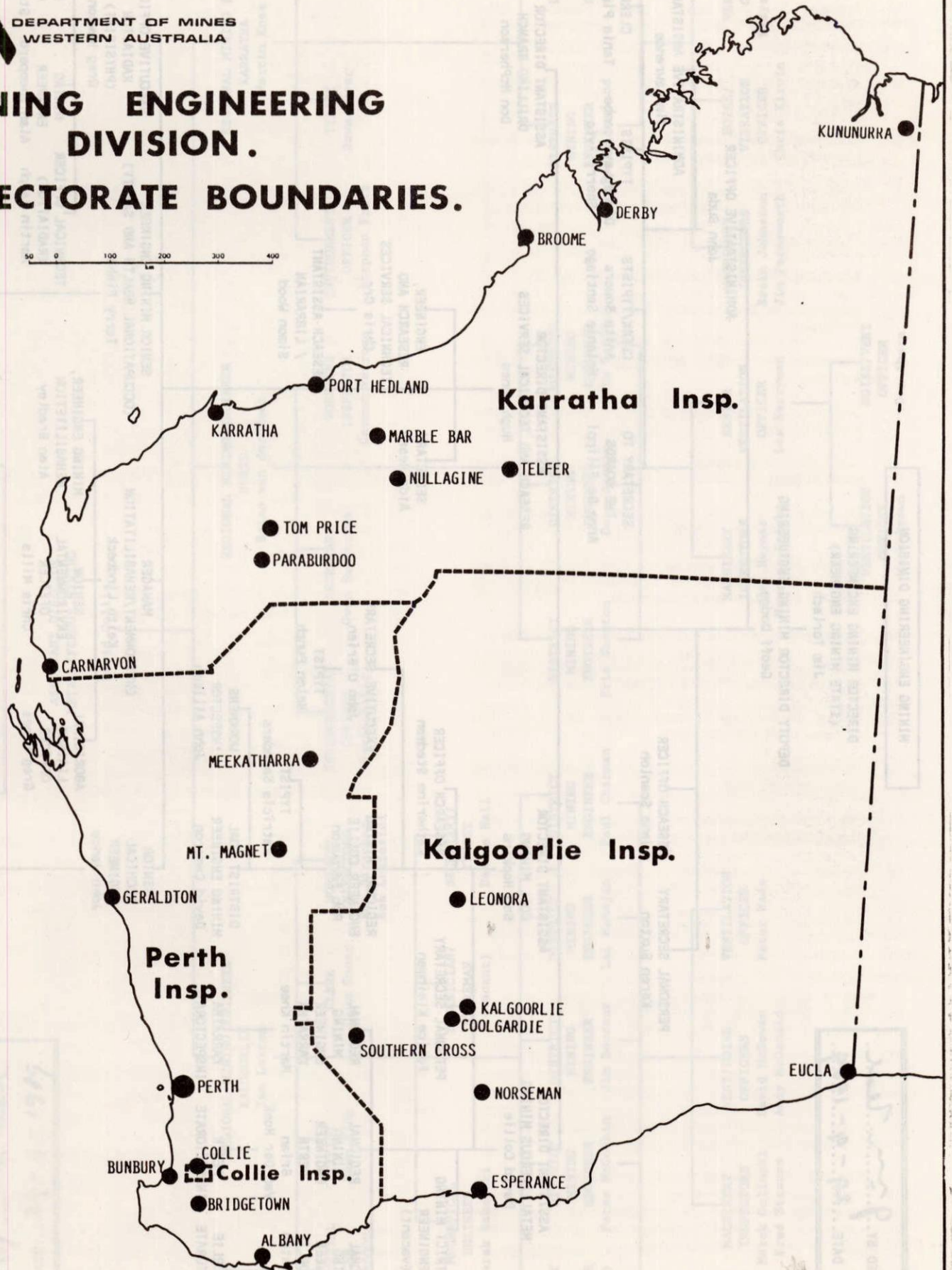
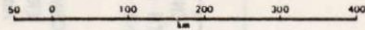


D Collie
Assistant Director
(Metalliferous)



DEPARTMENT OF MINES
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MINING ENGINEERING DIVISION. INSPECTORATE BOUNDARIES.



AUTHORISED BY *J. ...*
 DATE... 29... 9... 1989.

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AUTHORISED BY *J. M. ...*
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PUBLICATIONS - MINING ENGINEERING DIVISION

1. Activities for the interim Mines Radiation Safety Committee (1983-1988): A report to the Ministers for Mines and Health.
2. Fatal and Lost Time Injuries in Western Australian Mines 1988.
3. Code of practice on radiation protection in the mining and milling of radioactive ores guideline.
4. Code of practice on radiation protection in the mining and processing of mineral sands (1982 Booklet Form).
5. Cyanide Handling Manual - 1989 June.
6. Fire Assay Laboratory Safety Seminars - June 88.
7. Guidelines for Environmental Management of Mining in Arid Areas.
8. Guidelines for mining project approval in Western Australia.
9. Guidelines for preparation of a Notice of Intent for heap leach projects.
10. Guidelines for preparation of a Notice of Intent for vat leach projects.
11. Guidelines for the Evaluation of Atmospheric Contaminants in the Mining Industry - (Booklet form).
12. Guidelines for the preparation of a "Notice of Intent (NOI)" and "Works Approval" application for new tailings dams or extensions to existing dams.
13. Guidelines for waste dump design and rehabilitation.
14. Metallurgical review of Western Australian mineral sands separation plants with a view to dust reduction.
15. Mining Engineering Division - Fatal and Lost Time Injuries - 1987, 1987/88, 1988.
16. Radiation Protection: The Western Australian Mineral Sands Industry 1989.
17. Report on conservation and rehabilitation in the mineral sands - Sands Mining Industry - (Booklet form).
18. Review of uncertainties in internal radiation dose assessment for inhaled thorium - 1989.
19. Ventilation Officers Course - (Bound Course Notes 1988 and 1989).

WHAT'S ON

The Research & Technical Services Branch of M.E.D. have conducted chemical safety seminars in various regional centres and minesites. Topics covered have included: hazardous materials, chemical and respiratory protective equipment and general handling, first-aid and precautionary measures associated with cyanide usage in the gold industry.

The seminars are intended mainly for hands-on operators, however, people from engineering trades, laboratory assistants and supervisory staff have all benefited considerably from these courses. A small surcharge will apply to cover administrative costs and course notes.

Interested companies should contact Mr B Vernon, Occupational Hygienist, of R&TS, on (09) 222 3542 for further information.

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Welcome to the first edition of MINESAFE - the bulletin of the Mining Engineering Division at the Department of Mines.

MINESAFE intends to provide a link between this division and Industry. We hope our readers will take advantage of this initiative as a means of expressing views, requesting information and generating discussion on issues that affect everyone in the mining industry.

Safety issues will feature strongly in our pages, but MINESAFE will also profile the different areas involved in providing services to the Mining Engineering Division.

In this issue we focus on the need for a commitment to safety in the Mining Industry.

Publication of MINESAFE is the responsibility of Catherine Stedman, Editor, Jane Scanlon and Simon Wood, a small but enthusiastic committee, who are looking forward to receiving your letters, contributions and support.

The MED is producing "Emergency Preparedness Guidelines" for the WA Mining Industry. The document will set up a framework of checklists to assess existing emergency preparedness within mining operations. It will also provide a ready reference to resources, systems and agencies available to assist and co-ordinate activities in the event of a significant emergency. The Guidelines will trigger awareness and preparedness within the industry and co-ordinate the expertise available.

In addition, to the guidelines, the Division is also producing a Directory which will explain the MED's structure and its role within the Industry. It will be a user's guide on the Division and its resources

CONGRATULATIONS to Mark Brown the winner of our "name the bulletin competition". MINESAFE was chosen by Judge Jim Torlach, from a long list of creative, interesting and sometimes unusual entries. Special mention goes to Alan Bradley who shows a remarkable talent for creating acronyms.

MAILBAG

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SEAT BELTS IN MINING VEHICLES

Workers in the mining industry "belt up" when driving private vehicles why then do we change our attitude at work and fail to use the seat belts which are provided on heavy mining equipment?

A haul truck ran into a Roadside windrow on a ramp at an iron ore mine. The cab was badly damaged and the operator sustained serious injuries, including fractured vertebrae. He was not wearing a seat belt as he felt that it impeded his freedom of movement.

On another mine, a haul truck driver lost control of his vehicle on a bend on a wet ramp. He ploughed over and through the roadside windrow and the truck fell onto the bench below, wrecking the cab. The driver unfastened his seatbelt and walked away uninjured.

The driver of a ute was killed when his vehicle collided with the side of an iron ore train on a highway level crossing. He was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown forward onto the steering wheel and through the windscreen. The passenger who was wearing a seat belt escaped with minor injuries.

The message is clear

WEAR YOUR BELT AND SAVE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM A LOT OF SUFFERING.

Martin Knee
Regional Mining Engineer
Karratha

ACCIDENT BRIEF

An exploration driller's off-sider was struck on the head by a large diameter compressed air hose which blew off a hose fitting. He received fatal head injuries, the cause of death being given as "cerebral destruction". The hose was held only by the hose fitting and there was no restraining chain or sling to prevent it from thrashing around should it become detached or should the coupling fail.

Recommendations:

1. That all personnel be made aware of the destructive capabilities of unrestrained "live" air hoses.
2. That an immediate check be made of all compressed equipment to determine the state of couplings and hoses and the strength of the attachments of the hoses to the couplings.
3. That restraining devices (chains, slings, proprietary special couplings, whip-checks) be installed on all large diameter or high pressure compressed air hoses to prevent them thrashing in the event of a hose or coupling failure.
4. That, where appropriate, consideration be given to the use of "air-break" valves in compressed air lines to shut off the air supply in the event of a sudden hose or coupling failure.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**MINES REGULATION ACT****1. MINES REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL:**

Purpose: To incorporate Parts III and IV of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984.

Status: Draft bill prepared.

2. NOISE ABATEMENT REGULATION:

Purpose: To introduce regulations to monitor and control the level of noise exposure (consistent) compatible with OHSWA Regulations 1988.

Status: Instructions to parliamentary Counsel have been drafted, and circulated for approval to Tripartite Committee.

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT

Purpose: To rewrite the CMRA and Regulations and to incorporate Parts III and IV of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984.

Status: Draft bill is being prepared work on regulations commenced.

**COAL INDUSTRY TRIBUNAL
AMENDMENT BILL**

Purpose: Update jurisdiction of the Act.

Status: Draft bill is being prepared.

EXAMINATIONS**MINES REGULATION ACT 1946-74**

FIRST CLASS MINE MANAGERS
27 NOVEMBER 1989

QUARRY MANAGERS
27 NOVEMBER 1989

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT 1946-74
30/31 OCTOBER 1989

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