

## 2013 CONFERENCE OF CHIEF INSPECTORS OF MINES

Perth, Western Australia

8-13 September 2013

### COMMUNIQUE

The 55<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines (CCIM) was held in Western Australia from 8-13 September 2013. The conference was hosted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum of Western Australia, chaired by Mr Mohan Singh (Papua New Guinea) with representation from the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand and the Australian Federal Government.

#### **Pre-conference**

##### ***Rio Tinto's Nammuldi iron ore mine***

Mr Nick Courtois, AHS (Autonomous Haulage System) Principal Technology Planning & Development, gave a tour of Rio Tinto's Nammuldi iron ore mine in the greater Brockman region of the Hamersley Ranges. Nick's presentations focused on the AHS deployed at Nammuldi –AHS uses high precision GPS and includes a number of safety layers. The AHS domain has no entry without going through physical barriers such as gates or windrows and people are largely excluded. In April 2013, Rio achieved a total of 100Mt moved autonomously since the AHS project started in 2008 with 5 trucks at West Angelas, followed by 13 trucks at Yandi in 2012. At Nammuldi, a similar number of AHS trucks now operate. Nick presented a vision of the mine of the future - safe, consistent, reliable and efficient. Nammuldi is located near Brockman 2 and accessed by Boolgeeda airport.

##### ***Perth Mint Refinery***

CCIM enjoyed the rare opportunity to tour Australia's only gold refiner accredited by the London Bullion Market Association. The Perth Mint currently refines the total annual production of gold in Australia and also receives gold dorée from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Thailand and Malaysia. Refinery throughput is typically 300 to 400 tonnes per annum. Delegates viewed assaying, furnace melting using chlorine gas to drive off the base metals to produce at least 99.5% gold purity, pouring of gold anodes, chlorination electrolytic refining of the gold to 99.99% pure gold, palletisation of the gold to help build correct product weights, and the manufacture of various gold bar products. Handed around were a 400 ounce gold bar, typically held by banks, and a 1Kg bar, now commonly sold into China.

##### ***Both Rio Tinto's & BHP Billiton's Perth Operations Centres***

CCIM members viewed both Rio Tinto's & BHP Billiton's centralised operations centres for Pilbara-based iron ore mining, processing, rail transport and ship loading. Both centres provide 24-hour real-time pit to ship co-ordination across each companies iron ore supply chain. Centralised co-ordination has delivered increased tonnages. Last year, Rio shipped 239 Mt from 14 mines connected by 1500 Km of rail to 3 port terminals. BHP shipped 183 Mt from 7 mines via 1330 Km of duplicated rail to Port Hedland which has 8 berths. Centralised co-ordination has enhanced opportunities for collaboration, rapid replication and increased the capacity to adopt, adapt and invent. Layout consists of pods of work stations for each mine, for rail and for ports, with systems developers embedded between. Operating for reliability is underpinned by backups in communications links, power supply, data sever facilities and staffing, with a final fall back, if ever needed, to on-site operators, such as at the mine. Perth fulfils a co-ordination role and mine-site safety responsibility remains with mine-site management. CCIM extends thanks for the visits to Mark Warrener, Manager – Controllers Operation Centre, Rio Tinto Iron Ore, and to Dominic Collins, Manager – Integrated Remote Operations Centre, BHP Billiton Iron Ore.

The CCIM members appreciated the time given by operational staff at all four sites to outline operations, safety, current initiatives and programs. Visits of this nature provide the CCIM with a

collective opportunity each year to interact with site personnel and to exchange experiences across jurisdictions. These have become a valued and informative part of the Conference process.

## **Conference**

### **Fatalities and major incidents (in camera)**

The CCIM reviewed *in camera* circumstances involving fatalities and high potential or major/significant incidents over the last twelve months. Analysis was presented of the contributing causes and circumstances with the view of sharing the relevant lessons between jurisdictions. Discussions of this nature provide the CCIM with a unique opportunity each year for an important exchange on sensitive issues.

### **National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF)**

The National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF) Secretariat provided a paper on the current progress of the implementation of the NMSF strategies. Members noted that the NMSF Steering Group was formally dissolved by the Standing Council on Energy and Resources (SCER) in May 2013. Given the ongoing nature of some activities, particularly in relation to the National Database, Steering Group members have agreed to continue to meet on an informal basis once per year. This will ensure the continuation of a tripartite process to monitor consistency and provide advice to governments.

### **Issues discussed included:**

Diesel particulate studies currently underway towards a national Code of Practice; safety training; implementation in New Zealand of the core regulations of the NMSF; a risk analysis of 12 years of fatalities; Inspector training to Diploma level; responses within jurisdictions ensuing from Pike River; safety concerns in crane design and lifting practices; Institute of Quarrying Australia equivalent certificate; and revitalising the competency advisory committee. Members also provided updates on the current issues and situation in each of the jurisdictions represented.

CCIM has now concluded its fourth year as an independent body. CCIM members have successfully continued ongoing dialogue, contact and sharing of solutions. The CCIM, as the peak body for mining regulators, has proved to be an effective forum to exchange information, share experience and lessons learned and develop consistency in the spirit of harmonisation.

### **Website**

The Chief Inspectors noted that a revision of the CCIM website is to be undertaken shortly. This will reflect jurisdictional and membership updates.

### **CCIM 2014**

The 56th Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines is currently scheduled to be held in the Queensland from Sunday 12th October to Friday 17th October 2014.

Mohan Singh  
Chair, CCIM 2013  
September 2013



**CCIM attendees, September 2013**

Left to right: Greg Marshall (SA); Keith Porritt (Cwlth); Michael Firmin (NZ); Andrew Clough (Qld); Bill Barracclough (NSW); Phil Goode (Qld); Rob Kelly (Vic); Mohan Singh (PNG); Simon Ridge (WA); John Mitas (Vic); Andrew Chaplyn (WA); Peter Waggitt (NT)