

Press release

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Kestrel Mine wins People's Choice Award for safety innovation

Rio Tinto Coal Australia's Kestrel Mine has won the People's Choice Award at the annual Queensland Mining Industry Health and Safety Conference.

Kestrel Mine acting general manager John Coughlan said the award was received for an innovative new tool for changing rollers on conveyor belts.

"Rio Tinto Coal Australia is continually working to improve safety and actively encourages innovation to pursue its goal of zero harm," said Mr Coughlan.

"I'd like to congratulate the two Kestrel Mine employees, Maehe Austin and Peter O'Brien, who designed this new tool.

"They identified the need for a simpler and safer way to replace rollers, and came up with a solution that not only reduces the risk of injury but is also quicker."

Maehe Austin and Peter O'Brien saw the need for a new tool after changing over 30 conveyor belt rollers in one day.

"Changing rollers the old way is a difficult task, requiring two people and an array of tools including chain blocks, drill steels, roof bolts and crow bars," said Mr Austen.

"One person must get down on all fours, or lie down in mud or dust under the conveyor belt.

"It's a time consuming, inefficient and non-productive process, with significant health and safety issues."

The new tool allows one person to change a roller, without needing to get underneath the conveyor.

"We've designed our tool to be lightweight and easy to use," said Mr O'Brien.

"It's safer and reduces the time taken to change a roller, which means increased production for the mine.

"We went through 18 months of testing and took feedback from the workforce to get the final design right.

"The tool is being used by infrastructure and outbye maintenance crews at Kestrel Mine, and is easily transferable to other operations."

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