

M A T T E R S

**HVO win Chief Executive
Safety Award**

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Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) has won the Rio Tinto Chief Executive Safety Award for 2007, following its Most Improved Award in 2006.

Rio Tinto Chief Executive Leigh Clifford, who recently retired and has been replaced by Tom Albanese, said a number of characteristics common to Rio Tinto's best safety performers were noted at HVO.

"The presence of world class performers within the Group is very important in highlighting that excellent safety performance is achievable in the mining industry and is independent of local culture, economic conditions and past practices," Leigh said.

"It also provides an ever growing number of positive role models for the rest of the Group to follow.

"During the evaluation process, what was most apparent was the visible and passionate commitment of the management team to develop a sustainable safety culture in which employees actively participate, and an overwhelming attitude amongst employees and contractors that all work can and will be done safely. Congratulations to all at HVO."

HVO General Manager Operations Rick Fairhurst thanked HVO employees and contractors on their continued efforts to improve safety standards.

"Well done to all at HVO - this is a prestigious award within the Rio Tinto Group and it is a great recognition of the efforts made by everyone to continuous improvement," Rick said.

"There has been immense change at HVO over the past several years in both performance and culture. Several years ago HVO was incurring a Lost Time Injury (LTI) at least once a week.

"Now one injury, whether it is a Medical Treatment Case or an LTI, is felt by all of us as something we could and should have done more to prevent."

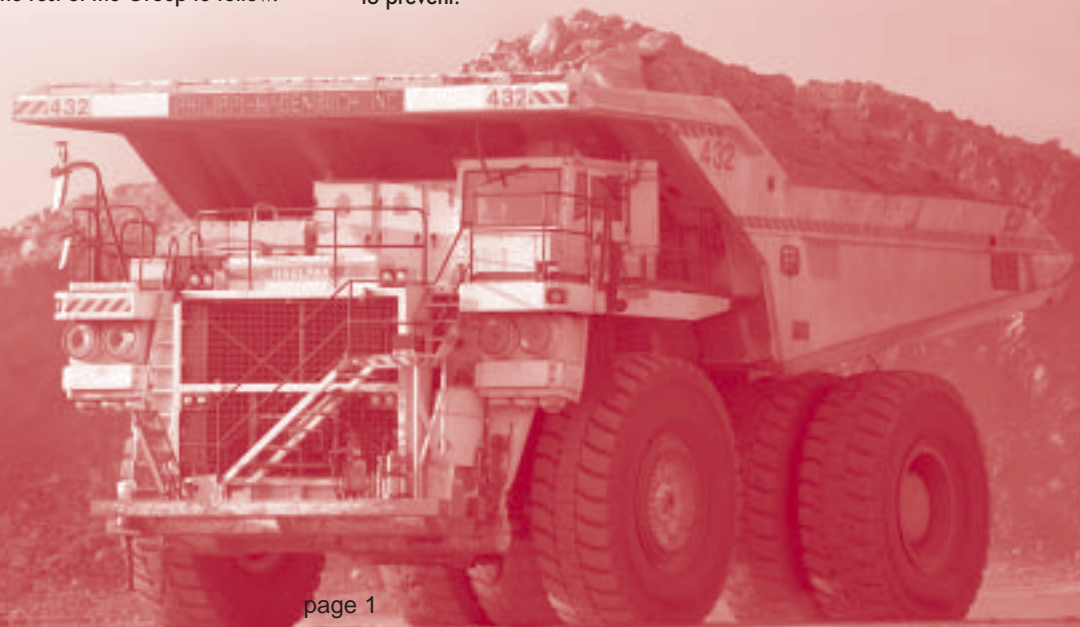
HVO Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee Chair Kerry Wild said allowing employees and OH&S committee members to have input into safety programmes through consultation had been the key for employees taking responsibility for their safety and the safety of others.

"All employees want to make sure they return home to their families at the end of the day," Kerry said.

"Being able to contribute through the consultation process to improve practices rather than being told to follow guidelines that have not been developed by the people affected has made a real difference at HVO."

Rick urged all employees to keep up the improvement focus on all aspects of work but first and foremost on the health and safety of themselves and their team.

"Taking accountability for the health and safety of each other is the key to an even safer workplace where we can celebrate zero harm in years rather than months," Rick said.



From the MANAGING DIRECTOR



SAFETY

After a somewhat disappointing start to the year, safety performance has improved in recent months. Safety interactions are an excellent tool to assist you and your workmates stop and think about each individual task you carry out as part of your duties. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of TAKE 5, even on actions you repeat time and time again as part of your daily activities.

I would like to congratulate everyone at Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) on winning one of the Rio Tinto Chief Executive Safety Awards for 2007. The award recognises HVO as one of the world class safety performers within the Group, having won the Most Improved Award last year. This is an outstanding achievement and HVO's excellent safety performance over the last two years is to be commended.

CLIMATE CHANGE

There has been unprecedented media coverage on the issue of climate change in the last six months. It will certainly continue to be a major issue in Australia, especially with the upcoming Federal election.

I'm pleased by the recent announcement of a joint venture between BP and Rio Tinto. The new company, Hydrogen Energy, will be a key platform for Rio Tinto in the implementation of clean coal technologies. See page 5 for more details. I am impressed that already some employees have come forward with suggestions to improve energy efficiency and conserve water at our operations. Site energy champions are working to coordinate and

promote energy efficiency activities at each site and in future editions of *Mine Matters* we will present some of the initiatives developed by employees to minimise RTCA's footprint.

PROJECTS

Several months of work has already taken place on the construction of the Clermont Mine, and we are continuing to evaluate the Mount Pleasant Project. The team are approximately half way through the feasibility study, and they are examining options for development. A significant milestone for the feasibility study was reached last month with the opening of a project office in the main street of Muswellbrook. The office, located at 19 Bridge Street (the old Westpac Bank) will provide an important link between the project team and the local community.

Despite the challenges we have encountered this year, the future remains bright for the coal industry. I thank you for your ongoing hard work and commitment, as it is through all of our efforts that we are helping ensure the long term success and profitability of the business.

Doug Ritchie
Managing Director

2007 is proving to be a very challenging year for RTCA, with the announcement last month Coal & Allied sites have cut back production following reductions in port and rail allocations for the remainder of 2007. The 20 per cent reduction in port allocation has meant the loss of 250 full time equivalent contractor positions.

Tarong Mine has also announced production cutbacks due to its only customer, Tarong Energy Corporation, reducing its power generation by 70 per cent to manage their water supply during the drought.

Regrettably, this will mean Tarong Mine will need to significantly reduce coal production this year and decrease employee numbers by 160 over the coming months.

All employees and contractors will be contacted about their preferences, which include applying for vacancies at other Rio Tinto operations and voluntary redundancy packages for operator and maintainer employees. Tarong Mine will continue to operate safely and produce reliably throughout this period of uncertainty.

Mount Pleasant office opens for business

Half way into its 12 month feasibility study, the Mount Pleasant Project team has opened an office in Muswellbrook to provide a Hunter Valley base for the project team and a point of contact for the community concerning the project and Coal & Allied.

Community Relations Specialist Stephen Sneddon said the office, located at 19 Bridge Street Muswellbrook, would give the community the opportunity to talk directly with the project team as well as offer a range of resources such as publications, newsletters and fact sheets about the proposed Mount Pleasant development, as well as more general information about Coal & Allied and RTCA.

"The office will be open to the public between 10am and 2pm weekdays, or at other times by appointment," Stephen said.

"We are providing the local community with the opportunity to find out more about the project and Coal & Allied, and to voice their concerns and questions."

"The office space is also being utilised by the Hunter Region Business Enterprise Centre, which is funded by the Coal & Allied Community Trust. There will be other opportunities for projects funded by the Trust and the Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee (ADCC) to use the space and continue their valuable work in the community."

General Manager Studies Antony Bijok, who will oversee the Mount Pleasant Project feasibility phase, said at the six month mark the project team has a lot of work to do.

"If the Mount Pleasant Project were to be developed, it would be at a cost of more than A\$700 million, and being located just three kilometres from Muswellbrook requires extensive community consultation," Antony said.

A series of community consultation activities are planned throughout the feasibility stage and will be advertised in local media.

"A final decision on developing the mine will be based on the outcome of the feasibility study as well as an assessment of market conditions and obtaining necessary regulatory and statutory approvals," Antony said.

"RTCA will hopefully be in a position to make a decision on the Mount Pleasant Project by the end of 2007. If successful, the plans will be sent to Rio Tinto's Executive Committee in London for approval."



Safety shares will be published in each edition of *Mine Matters*. Email your ideas to newsletter@rtca.riotinto.com.au

Safe Lifting

Sprain and strain injuries account for a large percentage of injuries both in and out of the workplace. Carrying and lifting the wrong way may result in sprains, strains or other injuries.

RTCA Health and Safety Specialist Don D'Souza said lifting and manual handling was a significant part of most of our jobs and it is vital we perform lifts safely to prevent injuring ourselves.

Don said by following these basic steps you can reduce the risk of manual handling accidents or injuries:

- Examine the object. Check to ensure you can easily handle the weight; check for sharp edges and the load is stable and balanced.
- Plan the job. Check the route is free from trip or slip hazards. Know where the object must be unloaded and plan rest stops if necessary.
- Get help. If possible use mechanical aids (trolleys) or ask a team mate to provide assistance if you have any doubt about moving the object by yourself.
- Get a good grip. Plan how to hold the object, protect your hands (if necessary) and ensure you can grasp the load correctly.
- Lift with your legs. Assume a comfortable stance, bend your legs not your back, lift smoothly keeping the load close to the body, move your feet, but do not twist your body.
- Unloading. Be as careful setting down the load as you were when lifting. Bend with your legs to lower the load, check that you have allowed enough room for your fingers and toes when the load is set down.
- Ensure the load is secure wherever you place it. Check the load will not fall, tip over or block access.

Finally, know your limits, how to lift and carry loads correctly, and know when to get help. Notify your Supervisor if a lift is beyond your ability or is potentially hazardous.

Traditional welcome for Clermont Project



The Wangan Jagalingou people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Blair Athol Mine and the Clermont Project are situated, recently held a smoking ceremony on the Clermont Project site.

Smoking is a traditional ceremony to say goodbye to the country and elders, share goodwill and to make the site safer for people who work there.

RTCA Manager Aboriginal Relations Jeremy van de Bund thanked the Wangan Jagalingou People for the ceremony, and said it helped raise awareness about Aboriginal culture and traditions.

"This ceremony marks an important milestone in our relationship with the Wangan Jagalingou people, and we are privileged to be part of the event," Jeremy said.

"At Blair Athol Mine and now on the Clermont Project, we will continue to work closely with the Traditional Owners and develop a structure to provide sustainable benefits for the Aboriginal community."

The ceremony was attended by Dr Ruth Kerr from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, and representatives from Blair Athol Mine, the Clermont Project and RTCA Managing Director Doug Ritchie.

A Cultural Heritage Investigation Management Agreement (CHIMA) was agreed with the Wangan Jagalingou in 2005, and about 80 per cent of the lease has been assessed, and one third mitigated. Traditional Owners took part in the field surveys, collecting surface artefacts, test pit excavations and protecting scarred trees.

Owen McEvoy, a member of the Wangan Jagalingou Working Group, thanked RTCA for giving them the opportunity to hold the smoking ceremony.

"We didn't want to do this ceremony until we knew the mine was going ahead," Owen said.

"We are really pleased for the opportunity to hold this ceremony and thank Rio Tinto for helping us to hold it."

Above (from left) RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls, Traditional Owner Owen McEvoy, Blair Athol Mine General Manager Operations Andrew Cole, Traditional Owner Adrian Burragabba, RTCA General Manager Projects Hennie du Plooy, Traditional Owner Anthony Jarrod, and RTCA Managing Director Doug Ritchie after the smoking ceremony



Bengalla collaborates and gets dozer back on track

The solution to a 12 month maintenance issue affecting a D10R dozer at Bengalla has been found in less than a week through the use of the online Rio Tinto Collaborative Forum.

Bengalla Production Superintendent James Davison said the dozer, one of five dozers in Bengalla's fleet, was consistently locking its brakes regardless of the direction, gear or task being performed.

The production, maintenance and supplier teams used all available tests to attempt to diagnose the problem. Having exhausted these tests, James raised the problem on the Rio Tinto Collaborative Forum, which reaches the worldwide Rio Tinto maintenance network.

"The D10R dozer brakes were locking to the point where it required regular maintenance and was consistently sidelined due to safety risks. Operators were unable to safely use the dozer around the excavator or on the dump and consequently we had to continuously relocate the dozer to lower traffic areas," James said.

"The whole situation was becoming very unproductive, very expensive and after 12 months of maintenance and our suppliers trying to find a solution, we were no closer to fixing it. That was when we decided to use the forum."

Within 24 hours, two detailed solutions were received from Rio Tinto Iron Ore in Western Australia and Rio Tinto Minerals Boron mine in the United States, both having experienced similar problems with their dozers.

"I've seen the brakes lock up for no apparent reason on a number of dozer models," said Tristian Croft, Condition Reliability Consultant at Rio Tinto Iron Ore (RTIO).

"RTIO diagnosed it as a contamination issue with wear particles from the friction discs or brakes getting stuck in the piston cavity and preventing the piston from releasing."

RTCA Manager Asset Management Mark Quinn said one of the most important learnings from Bengalla's experience was the value of the knowledge held within the Group.

"When people are struggling with an issue it's important to realise within a group such as Rio Tinto there are typically others that are either currently having a similar problem, or have solved that problem," Mark said.

"We need to ensure we utilise this knowledge early in the problem solving process to gain the value of being a part of a larger organisation.

"The RTCA business improvement team is also working with 'communities of practice' to help utilise the knowledge within RTCA. We connect people and create trusting relationships through the various manager forums and common practice workgroups."

Climate Ch

As part of our climate change action plan, RTCA is committed to raising awareness about climate change and supporting a range of projects aimed at developing clean coal technologies to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from the coal industry.

The plan is gaining momentum and over the past few months there have been developments in several areas:

RTCA presents to the United Nations Meeting

During May, RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls presented to the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, Germany. Fiona's presentation focused on the role of coal in the future energy mix and outlined key drivers for the development of clean coal technology.

Fiona said traditionally the UNFCCC has only permitted parties to the convention, governments and non government organisations to present and she was pleased the Australian government had invited Rio Tinto to detail the role of coal into the future.

"It is very significant Rio Tinto and other corporations were invited to present to the UNFCCC which is the body responsible for the Kyoto Protocol. This demonstrates how important it is for everyone from individuals to large corporations and governments to take action on climate change," Fiona said.

Fiona's presentation "Coal with Carbon Capture and Storage - Contributing to Sustainable Development" and its supporting notes are available on the RTCA Portal climate change page.

Coal industry confirms \$1 billion fund to support clean coal technologies

On May 11, the Australian black coal mining industry announced the world's largest whole of industry funding commitment for research, development and demonstration of clean coal technologies aimed at combating climate change.

Australian Coal Association Executive Director Mark O'Neill said this would be achieved through an expansion of the \$300 million COAL21 Fund announced last year. The scheme's voluntary coal levy will now be extended beyond the original five year term, and, for example, based on projected industry growth, would result in an estimated \$1 billion being raised over the next decade.

More details can be found on the RTCA Portal climate change page.

Carbon storage study underway in New South Wales

The CSIRO is currently investigating the potential for storage of CO₂ in the Sydney Basin. Coal & Allied's operations are participating in the study through the provision of data to the CSIRO study.

Carbon storage (also known as geosequestration) is the storage of CO₂ and is a technology which involves pumping liquid CO₂ underground into natural geological reservoirs. This prevents CO₂ from entering the atmosphere and contributing to climate change. Prior to storage, the CO₂ produced from power stations is captured and compressed ready to be piped underground.

RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls said the project demonstrated a continued willingness on the part of the coal industry to contribute to the development and implementation of the technology which will be key to addressing climate change.

"The project deliverables include a detailed evaluation of storage options for the Hunter Valley and ranking of suitable sites for CO₂ storage projects, as well as the database with gas reservoir properties and the like."

change update

ising awareness
developing clean
the use of coal.

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**RIO
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COAL AUSTRALIA



BA

employees strive for improvement

Employees at Blair Athol Mine have designed and implemented three major improvements to improve safety across the operation.

Blair Athol Mine Mobile Equipment Superintendent Graham Woodward and his team have developed the Hatcher Hatch - a device which enables the rear window of a shovel ute to be easily cleaned, improving rear vision.

Graham said the rear window was very difficult to clean, due to the mesh barrier placed in front of the window for passenger protection.

"The Hatcher Hatch is a door made of mesh which lifts up, allowing the glass underneath to be cleaned easily. This has reduced the risk of personal and equipment damage due to lack of vision," Graham said.

Fixed Plant Maintenance Supervisor Michael Clements and his team have also developed two safety improvements.

The shovel propel lock, invented by Maintenance Support Officer Jeff Whittington, is a device which prevents damage to the drive assembly of a 2100 P&H electric shovel while it is being towed.

"This invention will prevent significant financial loss from damage and downtime," Michael said.

Maintenance Worker Mark Peach also had a bright idea when it came to the use of stanley knives when cutting Linatex rubber in the coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP).

"Using a stanley knife to cut Linatex sheets was identified as a safety hazard, so the supplier was contacted to see if they could supply the product cut to order. The Linatex is now ordered to specified sizes ready to install," Michael said.

Blair Athol Mine General Manager Operations Andrew Cole said he was impressed by the continual search by employees for safety improvements.

"In order to reach our goal of zero injuries, every single person needs to be looking for ways to make themselves and others safer, and I applaud all employees who take the initiative to improve safety," Andrew said.

Rio Tinto and BP join forces to develop clean energy

Rio Tinto and BP have formed a new jointly owned company, Hydrogen Energy, which will develop carbon free energy projects around the world. The venture will initially focus on hydrogen fuelled power generation, using fossil fuels and carbon capture and storage technology to produce new large scale supplies of clean energy.

Rio Tinto Chief Executive Tom Albanese said coal and uranium are key parts of Rio Tinto's energy business and both will play a part in generating clean energy in the future.

"The investment we are making in Hydrogen Energy along with BP will allow us to prove the business case for decarbonised energy and carbon capture and storage," Tom said.

"By developing projects at this stage, we will be ready to take advantage of future opportunities in the emerging clean energy market and to create value for shareholders."

You can read more about Hydrogen Energy on the RTCA Portal climate change page.



the Kwinana hydrogen power project

Making clean coal a reality

Hydrogen Energy, a new company jointly-owned by BP and Rio Tinto, has announced that it will commence planning for the potential development of a \$2 billion coal-fired power generation project in Western Australia that would be fully integrated with carbon capture and storage.

Located in Kwinana, 45km south of Perth, the project plans to convert coal into hydrogen to generate enough electricity to power about 680,000 homes, while delivering approximately 90% less greenhouse gas emissions than a conventional power station. Instead of releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere it would be captured and stored safely underground.

For more information please visit www.hydrogenenergy.com



A joint venture between BP Alternative Energy and Rio Tinto

MTW introduce PMOs



Mount Thorley Warkworth (MTW) have commenced conducting Planned Maintenance Optimisation (PMO) exercises on their heavy mobile equipment as a part of the Improving Performance Together (IPT) programme.

PMO aims to optimise resources by identifying and eliminating obsolete and duplicated maintenance tasks as well as helping to properly sequence equipment service schedules. PMO exercises are considered to be best practice for improving maintenance plans.

Maintainers from MTW were joined by members of Hunter Valley Operation's maintenance team to conduct a detailed two week workshop on the P&H 4100 and P&H 2800 shovels. The team focused on the relevance, frequency and reasoning for more than 800 common maintenance tasks on each machine.

The PMO on the P&H 4100 shovel analysed 830 mechanical and electrical maintenance tasks. Of these only 15 per cent remained unchanged, while 14 per cent were found not to be necessary and deleted. A further 15 per cent were added to improve reliability.

MTW Reliability Engineer Myles Huntly said tasks impacting on safety and the environment were of particular importance.

"We found some tasks were potentially more hazardous than others, and we asked if these tasks carried detailed

enough instructions and provided the most appropriate resources to minimise the hazard," Myles said.

"There was also a lot of attention placed on components that could affect the environment if they failed.

"The team highlighted areas of machines that, for example, could cause a large oil spillage, and placed these critical parts on priority maintenance schedules. This means detailed inspections and replacing parts when they are at medium risk of failing."

Recently, Myles travelled to Hail Creek Mine to present the results of the MTW programme. This allowed MTW to share best practice and prepare for an upcoming PMO exercise planned for the P&H 9020 dragline in collaboration with Hail Creek Mine and Bengalla.

"MTW, Hail Creek Mine and Bengalla all share the same type of dragline, which gives us the opportunity to combine resources, knowledge and results to maximise the benefits of the PMO," Myles said.

Previous PMO exercises carried out at MTW have focused on Le Torneau L1400 and L1850 loaders and Komatsu 830E and Liebherr KL2450 haul trucks and have provided MTW expertise in conducting PMO workshops.

"Although it is still early days in seeing reliability improvement, we have seen some good improvements in the equipment that has been through the PMO process," Myles said.



RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls (in white) joined other Hunter Valley partners to launch the **TogetherTODAY** initiative.

Coal & Allied joins **TogetherTODAY**

Coal & Allied joined Newcastle City Council and other partners in launching **TogetherTODAY**, a not for profit environmental partnership aimed at making Newcastle and the Hunter the world's most water and energy efficient region.

TogetherTODAY will support the research and development of leading water and energy saving initiatives, and encourage everyone in the community to use water and energy efficiently.

RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls said as a major contributor to the region's economy and energy needs, Coal & Allied was committed to improving water and energy efficiency at its three operations in the Hunter Valley.

The **TogetherTODAY** partnership works in conjunction with RTCA's business wide climate change action plan, working to improve energy use at all operations, projects and the supply chain as well as working on the development of solutions to reduce coal's impact on the environment.

"As part of our commitment to sustainable development Coal & Allied has been working on environmental management programmes for many years, however with the challenge of climate change we realise there is an immediate need to play a greater role," Fiona said.

"**TogetherTODAY** offers everyone in the community, from school children to major corporations, a chance to get involved and work together to make Newcastle and the Hunter the world's most energy and water efficient region."

Other partners in the initiative include Newcastle City Council, NBN TV, Macquarie Generation, EnergyAustralia, CSIRO, Hunter Water, Port Waratah Coal Services, the University of Newcastle, Department of Education and Training, TAFE New South Wales Hunter Institute and Catholic Schools Office.

For more information, visit www.togethertoday.com.au or visit the RTCA Portal climate change page.

Tarong improve safety on dozers

A Tarong Mine safety audit has identified a potential hazard on dozers that had previously been overlooked, leading to the implementation of a step and hand rail to improve safety.

During the audit, Tarong Mine's maintenance department found maintainers working on the engine of a D11N Caterpillar dozer could potentially be above the 1.8 metres working at heights limit when positioned to access the rear of the engine.

While a Take 5 risk assessment had been completed prior to the task, working at heights had not been identified as a risk because most of the work was being completed below a height of 1.8 metres.

Shift Supervisor Mal Marriott said once the hazard had been identified, work stopped and the team discussed the golden rules.

"It was discovered if a fitter stood up to place parts on the cab

platform of a D11N fitted with a carrier roller, it placed the fitter at over 1.8 metres off the ground," Mal said.

"At first we implemented harnesses for working at heights, but this raised another hazard with finding a suitable anchor point for the harness. A team got together to brainstorm ideas to find a suitable solution."

The handrail system was primarily designed to make the task safer but also needed to be light, easily fitted and transportable. The handrails fitted minimise the risk of a fall to the ground if a maintainer who was working at a lower height overbalanced backwards, slipped or tripped.

"The use of the handrail allows maintainers to conduct general maintenance tasks without having to wear fall restraint as long as they stay within the handrails. Maintainers now also have the ability to carry parts and tools safely on to the dozer."

Two sets of handrails have been designed for when the dozer is in for maintenance repair, one with entry gained via steps coming over the push arms and a second type of straight handrails, used when the blade and push arms of the dozer are removed, allowing access from a small set of steps clamped onto the front of the tracks. A non slip fibreglass mat is fixed to the tracks to provide a flat surface for extra safety in both situations.

Tarong Mine General Manager Operations Cam Halfpenny said the improvement pointed to the importance of reassessing potential safety risks of common tasks.

"This improvement was a direct result of a Rio Tinto Safety Audit finding and Tarong's maintenance and safety teams have done excellent work to address this issue," Cam said.

A work instruction has been developed for the fitting and use of the handrail system and will be made available across RTCA sites.

Hail Creek Mine introduces Indigenous traineeships

Hail Creek Mine, in partnership with local industry association Mackay Area Industry Network (MAIN), has developed the Wiri Traineeship Programme to enhance traineeship opportunities for the Wiri people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Hail Creek Mine operates.

As part of the MAIN Care programme, the traineeships in Fitting and Turning or Business Administration with local Mackay businesses aim to address the skills shortage in the mining, engineering and construction sectors by employing trainees and providing an appropriate training environment.

The two trainees for 2007, Talia Alberts and Nikita Sauney, commenced 12 month traineeships with Austchrome and Macs Engineering in April this year, and will obtain a Certificate III qualification in Business Administration on successful completion.

The traineeship programme also includes an initial skills development course where all applicants who apply for a position attend a four day course to further develop their skills in interview techniques, resume writing and self confidence. The course is aimed at providing the applicants with the confidence and ability to succeed in the interview process, as well as the necessary training to become 'work ready'.

Hail Creek Mine General Manager Operations Tom Palmer said the programme will provide an opportunity for the trainees to develop the fundamental skills required to progress a career.

"This programme is focused on providing the Wiri people with the opportunity to develop skills and experience in areas of need in the current resources boom," Tom said.

"A key component to the success of this programme will be to create opportunities that will build community capacity and provide long term sustainable benefits, particularly in the areas of training and skills development."

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE TOGETHER IPT UPDATE

Rio Tinto's Improving Performance Together (IPT) programme has made a larger than expected impact in the Group's financial results, contributing more than US\$400 million (A\$478 million) in cashflow across the Rio Tinto Group.

Closer to home, RTCA experienced a A\$71.4 million increase in value, well above the forecast of A\$63.9 million made in early 2006.

RTCA General Manager Business Improvement Nick Barlow said besides the improvements to the company's bottom line, IPT delivered value in many other areas.

"From IPT programmes we now see fewer equipment failures and extended lives of equipment components," Nick said.

"In addition there have been great opportunities for people to further develop their capabilities, which is enabling us to produce better plans for the future," Nick said.

In a presentation about IPT to the financial community, Rio Tinto's Chief Financial Officer Guy Elliot spoke of the pressures being placed on the company as a result of the mining boom.

"Labour shortages, higher energy costs and the rising costs of consumables such as tyres make it imperative to improve performance where possible," Guy said.

"Already we have seen the demonstrated success of many initiatives within IPT, for example, today Rio Tinto leads the industry in safety. That was not always the case. Through collaboration with the world's best



safety performer, Group wide standards were set, contributing to the company's industry leading safety performance today.

"Perhaps one of the most important aspects of IPT has been to ensure people feel they can move between sites to facilitate discussion, share ideas and information, talk to peers and break down barriers."

Nick Barlow said RTCA now looks firstly to adopt practices from others, secondly to adapt them and only as a last resort to develop new practices ourselves.

"The results are a clear sign IPT is working, and it will continue to be an important part of our improvement programme at RTCA," said Nick.

EMPLOYEE

Profile

The Kestrel Mine Improver - Jon Firth



With the drought in Queensland showing no signs of easing, Kestrel Mine's Jon Firth decided to use his plumbing knowledge to improve Kestrel Mine's water efficiency.

An Emerald resident since childhood, Jon has seen significant changes in the town's water supply.

"I have seen the dams go from capacity when I was growing up, to the current state where we are banned from washing the car. It has really hit home that we can't take water for granted," Jon said.

"I went along to Fiona Nicholls' climate change briefing in February and I started looking for things I could do to save water. I changed the shower heads in my own home and thought what a big impact these shower heads could make in a place like Kestrel Mine where there are hundreds of people having showers a day."

After discussing his ideas with his supervisor, Jon introduced water saving showerheads in the Kestrel Mine bathhouse.

"I calculated the average amount of water used per day by each shift worker is approximately 220 litres. With 100 showers per day, that's 22,000 litres in total and approximately eight million litres each year," Jon said.

The introduction of the water saving shower heads will reduce the average water use per person by 60 per cent to 90 litres per day, saving around five million litres a year.

"With the help of the environment and surface maintenance departments, we've almost finished the trial and a full roll out of the water saving heads will begin soon."

Kestrel Mine Energy Champion Colin Mackey said Jon utilised his background in plumbing to generate a number of possible improvements that could easily be implemented and return large water savings for small inputs.

"It shows great commitment that with one improvement under his belt, Jon was motivated to find other ways of improving the bathhouse area," Colin said.

Other ideas that have originated from Jon include a change in shower taps from older washer style taps to new 'quarter turn' ceramic based taps. The taps require less maintenance and turn off or on easily, reducing dripping water.

Tempering valves have also been installed to avoid excess heating of bathhouse water. Their benefits are two fold, reducing energy use but more importantly, reducing the potential for scolds from boiling water.

General Manager Operations Tony Lennox said he was impressed by Jon's attitude to energy saving.

"It is a great achievement Jon has come up with all of these ideas on his own, and particularly notable that his simple idea has made such a big difference to our water usage," Tony said.

"I encourage all employees to think about how they can contribute to RTCA's efforts to reduce our water and energy use."



Lake Maraboon in Emerald, Queensland.

NEWS

in Brief

RTCA supports next generation

RTCA has awarded four Mining Engineering students with \$8,500 scholarships as part of its annual University Scholarship programme, which supports second year mining engineering students for their remaining years of tertiary study.

General Manager Business Improvement Nick Barlow presented Karl Hunter and Rubik Ghosh from The University of Queensland, and Turia Pitt and Richard Horton from the University of New South Wales with their scholarships.

The programme is an important part of RTCA's employee attraction programme, aimed at securing highly skilled workers for the future.

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Send your story ideas, feedback and suggestions for Mine Matters to newsletter@rtca.riotinto.com.au or via the internal mail to Amy Oldfield or Eleanor Nichols, RTCA.

Mine Matters can also be accessed electronically on the homepage of the RTCA Portal.