

Thirty Years since Moura No.2, So what has changed?

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ABSTRACT

The loss of 11 miners in the 7 August 1994 Moura No.2 Underground Mine Disaster was the catalyst for major change in the way safety was managed in the Australian Mining Industry. The impact was felt across all sectors not just underground coal. It was the catalyst for the overhaul of the regulatory frameworks, moving away from prescription to management systems and risk management. This had a big impact on the way not only the industry operated but also on how the regulator functioned. It heralded the introduction of competency-based training across all levels of the mining workforce. Since that time major improvements in safety performance have occurred. However hiding within the statistics are some disturbing trends. This paper aims to analyse the progress made in the past thirty years and identify the current and emerging issues. Automation is bringing major production and safety benefits, but at the same time other factors such as the reduction in workforce numbers, ever increasing production pressures is leading to high turnover rates. This in turn causes to a loss of experience and expertise. In addition of particular importance is the recognition of psychosocial wellness on workforce safety. Many of these factors are not unique to the mining industry however they may be exacerbated by the scale of mining, the remoteness of the mines and family unfriendly mining rosters.