

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)



Trainers Professional Development Day

*'A blast from the past' –
Reflections on the Northparkes Airblast Incident
10 years on*

Allison Golsby
Bathurst
17 July 2010



Northparkes Mine

A Rio Tinto company

Located near Parkes in NSW

Produces Copper & Gold

Mining commenced in 1993

2 open pits

Underground development

Uses block caving mining method



7th Kenneth Finlay Memorial Lecture

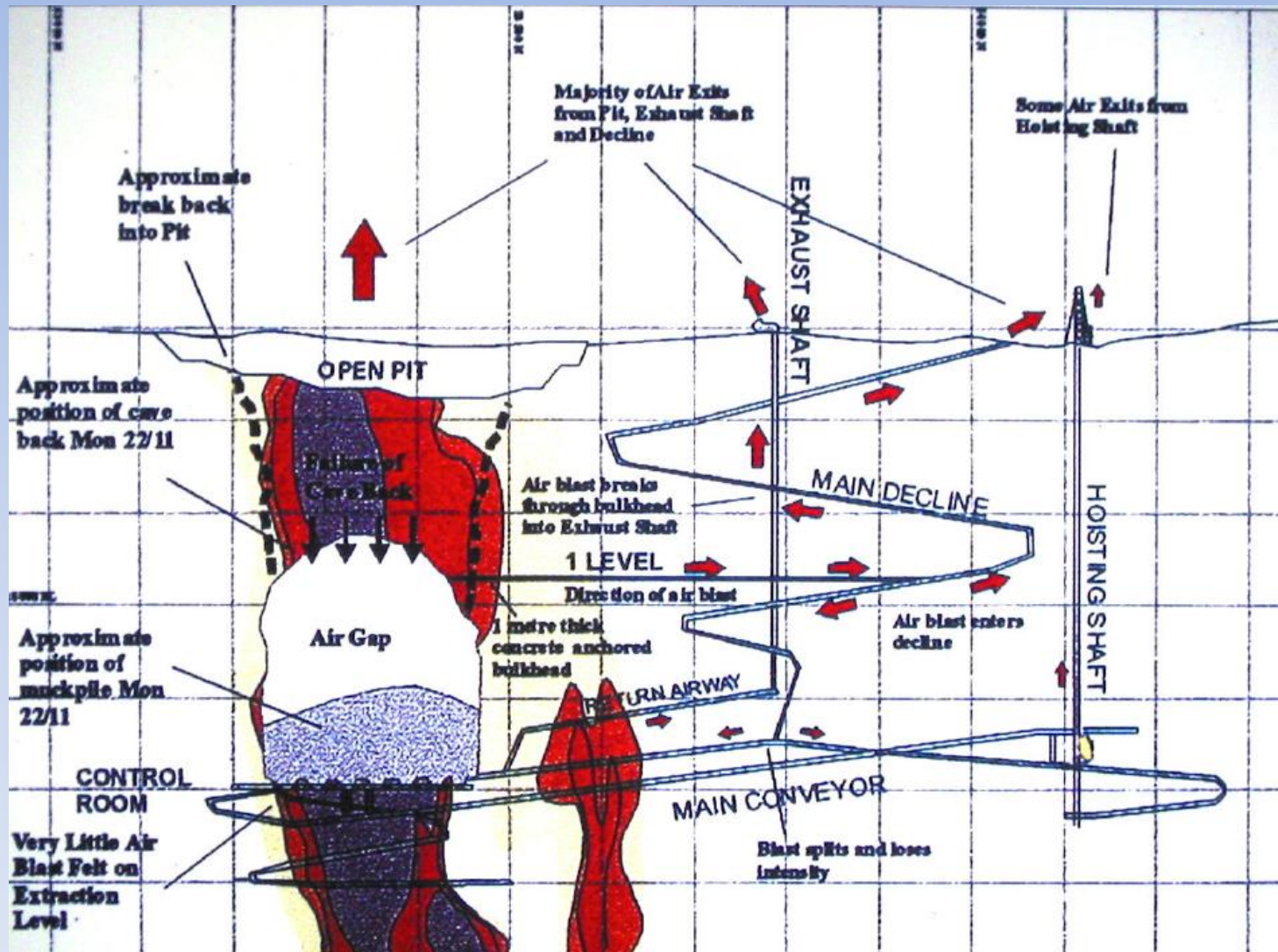
30th October, 2003

**“Northparkes – the findings
and the future”**

Professor Bruce Hebblewhite

(Kenneth Finlay Chair of Rock Mechanics)
Head of School & Research Director,
School of Mining Engineering,
The University of New South Wales

Mine Layout at time of Incident



Northparkes Mine

A Rio Tinto company

FOUR DEAD



Photo 1.42 Wheel and Axle located near the development pump station.
Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 48

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager

Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent

Stuart Osman, Contract Diller and

Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller

Northparkes Mine

A Rio Tinto company

What the video does not tell you is where I was.

I was at the bottom of the shaft access decline at the bottom of the shaft.

We had a late lunch.

A welding jig broke. We fixed it.

With two others, I drove a work ute, following Ross Bodkin. We turned off at the shaft access decline. Ross Bodkin and Michael House drove on past us up to level one.

They were both killed.

Four Dead

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager
Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent
Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller



Photo 1.55 Looking towards caving zone from just inside centre drive
Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 50

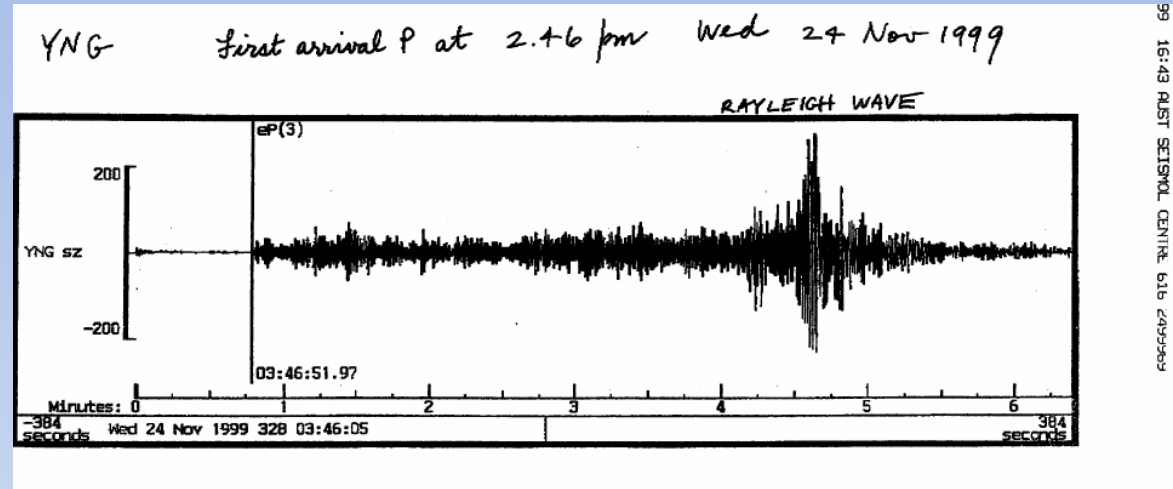
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Four Dead

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I had pulled up at the bottom of the shaft, jumped out of the ute. The air blast hit from behind. I was thrown violently against the door of the ute, but jumped back in to the cabin.



Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 45

Debris rushed past us at high velocity for 4 minutes. Calculated to be in the order of 271m/s or 1000km/h

Our ears popped. We could not see for the red dust in the air. I turned the air conditioning on the high recirculation setting so that we could reduce the dust in the cabin to be able to see each other and breathe.

Northparkes Mine

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After the air blast, communications and electrical cabling, along with all the other infrastructure had been stripped from the drives.

I reversed the ute up to a stock pile, turned it around and drove to the main decline.

There were two stationary land cruisers.

Peter Luke was in one of the vehicles.

That vehicle had no windscreen or back window. He was motionless, in shock.

Four Dead

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager
Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent
Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller



Photo 1.6 Fan Cowl Lodged in the Explosion Door Opening

Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 47

Then we saw the next one.....

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We turned our attention to the other vehicle. A sandblasted, shell of a landcruiser.

We found the body of a man under the wheel arch.

Michael House.

Four Dead

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager
Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent
Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller



Photo 1.49 Wreckage of Vehicle located adjacent to the intersection of the main decline and the SAD. Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 48

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Four Dead

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I drove down to the production area, which was to be the area most likely to suffer the most damage in an air blast. I wanted to help.

At the production area, all were alive with no major visible injuries. They were all covered in dust and suffering shock, with some also suffering burst ear drums.

There was a telephone in working in the production area connected to the Mine Manager's Office on the surface. I told the Control Room what I had seen and that there were fatalities.

As a member of the Mines Recue Team I wanted to search and help. I was ordered to remain in the production area.

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After some hours we were told to drive up the decline as far as we could. We walked past Level 1, where another vehicle was waiting for us and drove us to the surface.

On the surface, I was given a 'pat down' by Ambulance Officers who found no visible injuries. I was then taken to a Rio Tinto Site Office and debriefed.

I was prohibited from being further involved in any rescue effort and ordered to go home.

Four Dead

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager
Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent
Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller



Photo 1.95 View of Dust Cloud caused by caving event.
Bruce Hebblewhite, 2003, 7th Kenneth Finlay Lecture, page 46

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Four Dead

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We will now examine the following questions:

What can you expect to find, when you are called to the scene of the a major mine incident involving multiple fatalities?

What should you do?

What will you be permitted to do?

What lessons can you learn from this presentation?

What are the likely injuries?

Northparkes Mine

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Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent

Stuart Osman, Contract Diller

Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller

What can you expect to find, when you are called to the scene of the a major mine incident involving multiple fatalities?

- Incident Emergency Team will be managing the incident
- Little or no information
- Morgue
- Families
- Rescue Teams
- Support groups
- Medical Teams
- Damage

Northparkes Mine

A Rio Tinto company

Four Dead

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Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller

What should you do?

- **Listen to direction from the Incident Emergency Team**
- **Document**
- **Work as a team**
- **Stay calm**
- **Monitor and manage anyone in the incident**
- **Follow directions**

Northparkes Mine

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Four Dead

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What will you be permitted to do?

- **First Aid**
- **Assist medical staff**
- **Document**
- **Trauma First Aid**

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Four Dead

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Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent

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Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller

What lessons can you from this presentation?

- The scene
- The emergency structure
- The injuries
- What to expect
- Nothing is normal
- Communication

Northparkes Mine

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What are the likely injuries?

- Burst ear drums
- Deafness
- Webbing in throat
- Soft tissue injuries with bleeding
- Broken teeth
- Ringing in the ears
- Shock
- Bruising
- Puncture wounds

- Anxiety
- Nightmares
- Suicide

Four Dead

Ross Bodkin, Underground Mine Manager
Michael House, Technical Services Superintendent
Stuart Osman, Contract Diller
Colin Lloyd-Jones, Contract Diller

The personnel most affected were not actually underground at the time of the air blast, were not part of the rescue team and were not otherwise directly involved in the incident or its aftermath.

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Thank you

Any Questions?

