**GROSVENOR MINE INQUIRY SUBMISSION**

**METHANE REGULATION AMENDMENTS THAT CAME INTO FORCE 6TH JANUARY 2020.**

The Methane Regulations and the number of Methane HPI’s at Grosvenor Mine over 4 years between 2016 and May 6th 2020, have been raised during the Grosvenor Mines Inquiry.

There were amendments to the Methane Regulations made under Minister Lynham.

I had been made aware of widespread disquiet and concerns about the content and wording of the newly amended Methane Regulations and in Mid-February 2020, I was provided with the attached Report prepared by John Rowland of Dallas Mining

**Comments pertaining to some of the planned changes to Qld mines regulations (Attachment 1)**

I emailed Peter Newman CIOCM on the 19th of February 2020 and asked.

***I have a few questions about this email and the Report attached.***

***What if any action has the Queensland Mines Inspectorate and you as Chief Inspector of Coal Mines since this Report was circulated?***

I received a reply on the same date from Mr Newman.

***Stuart***

***There are number of inaccuracies in Mr Rowland report which I am not in a position to discuss.***

***Rest assured that the matters raised have been considered and appropriate action taken for the safety of the industry, and currently mines are complying with the amendments.***

***As such I consider this matters closed with respect to the report and matters you raise***

***Regards***

***Peter***

This reply was some 10 weeks prior to the LW104 methane ignition.

My Reply to Mr Newman after trying to get a meaningful response for a number of weeks was sent on the 20th of April, 16 days before May 6th 2020.

***Peter;***

***Let me be up front.***

***I am fed up to the back teeth with your continuing use of terms such as "reply in due course".***

***You have continued to issue such assurances (sometimes with stated dates) and have not done so on any occasion so far in some 3 months.***

***"In due course" from you; means that you will just continue to fob me off and never reply.***

 ***Set actual days and dates to reply and just for once stick to it.***

***If you have any shred of due process, decency and credibility you will actually reply to the multiple complaints.***

***None has been demonstrated so far by either yourself or the Mines Department.***

***In my nearly 40 years since I started in the Coal Mines, this is by far the lowest the Mines Department and Mines Inspectorate have sunk.***

 ***The Departmental and Inspectorate status is nothing more than apologists for Mining Company non-compliance resulting in injury, illness and death in the States Coal Mines***

 ***I repeat.***

***The total absence of any reply leads me to the following conclusions.***

***1) My assumptions and complaints are correct.***

***2) The Department and you as Chief Inspector are too scared to reply to any of my complaints***

***3) The Department and you as Chief Inspector are not fulfilling your Duties, Roles and Responsibilities.***

***4) The Department and you as Chief Inspector are knowingly allowing blatant Non-Compliance to the Coal Mining Act and Regulations to continue***

***5) The Department and you as Chief Inspector are knowingly increasing the Safety and Health Risks to Coal Mine Workers and the General Public.***

***Yours In Safety***

***Stuart Vaccaneo***

My ever-growing fears prior to the events at North Goonyella in 2018 and the visible efforts and attitudes of the Mines Inspectors proved correct.

From the evidence presented at the Grosvenor Inquiry at least Grosvenor Mine was having a great deal with complying on a regular and nearly predictable basis.

Mr Rowlands Report deals with only one of the Regulations and in particular only one of its requirement in particular, that had been subject change due to the amendment that came into force on January 6th 2020.

Regulation 344 is or should be a matter of great relevance and importance to the Grosvenor Board of Inquiry and deals directly with the requirements assigned to all Ventilation Officers in Qld Underground Coal Mines.

***344 (1) The ventilation officer for an underground mine must ensure the mine’s ventilation system provides for the following—***

***(3) The controlled ventilation for a working place mentioned in subsection (1)(b)(ii) or (iii) must provide for a ventilation current of an average velocity of at least 0.3m/s, measured across the cross-sectional area of the roadway in the working place.***

**There are a number of other parts of Regulation that directly apply to the events at Grosvenor Mine on the 6th of May 2020**

This includes **flammable gas in ERZ1 Zones** which are the longwall and development production faces.

The parts of the Regulation that appear most pertinent to the Grosvenor Mine Inquiry are.

***344 Other things for which ventilation system must provide***

***(1) The ventilation officer for an underground mine must ensure the mine’s ventilation system provides for the following—***

***(a) minimising, within acceptable limits, the layering and accumulation of noxious and flammable gas in each place where controlled ventilation is required under paragraph (b);***

***(b) controlled ventilation—***

***(i) in each place used by a person for normal work or travel, other than a place where an inspection mentioned in section 307 is being carried out and no-one else is working; and***

***(ii) in each standing working place that is on the intake side of a working place; and***

***(iii) in each working place in an ERZ1;(c) at least—***

***(i) 1 entry to each working part of the mine to conduct intake air to the part; and***

***(ii) 1 entry to each working part of the mine to conduct return air from the part;***

***(d) monitoring and recording the concentration of atmospheric contaminants in each place mentioned in paragraph (b).***

***(2) Subsection (1)(a) does not apply when there is a sudden, temporary increase in the general body concentration of methane to more than 2.5% and the ventilation system is capable of quickly reducing the methane concentration to not more than 2.5%.***

***Example for subsection (2)— a roof fall in a goaf causes an inrush creating a high and temporary concentration of methane***

***(3) The controlled ventilation for a working place mentioned in subsection (1)(b)(ii) or (iii) must provide for a ventilation current of an average velocity of at least 0.3m/s, measured across the cross-sectional area of the roadway in the working place.***

***(4) Subsection (1)(c)(ii) does not apply to—***

***(a) a shaft being sunk; or***

***(b) a drift or individual roadway being driven and for which it would be impracticable to provide a separate return roadway.***

***Example for paragraph (b)— a single entry drive or longwall face heading***

***(5) This section does not apply to a part of the mine exempted under section 345.***

It was provided to Peter Newman CIOCM and Mark Stone CEO of RSHQ on the 24th of December 2019.

It was provided to me by one of the recipients of the mass email sent by Martin Watkinson (SIMTARS) that included Mr Rowlands.

The email was sent on the 16th of January with the Rowland Report as material to be considered at the 2020 Mine Managers meeting.

The email list is very extensive. (**Attachment 2**). But seems to at least cover.

1. All Underground Mine Managers,
2. All Underground SSE’s,
3. Ventilation Officers both those permanently employed at Mine and Consultants
4. Multiple SIMTARS employees
5. All the Queensland Mines Inspectors

The body of the email is below. The Shaun referred to is Shaun Dodson, Deputy Chief Inspector of Coal Mines.

***All,***

***With reference to Shaun’s presentation to the Mine Managers meeting I find it peculiar that this presentation would only be circulated now. Those legislative changes were due to come into effect on 6th January but rumour has it that the legislative changes may have been postponed given the industry reaction.***

 ***I attach a document I prepared that identifies my concerns on some of those legislative changes, and the entire process undertaken by the Department, following a meeting with the Department on Xmas Eve.***

***I understand its doing the rounds anyway so I attach herein for your interest.***

***I have to say I’m very concerned about the new VO qualification requirements for the VO competency but that’s another story for another day. I will be offshore so will miss the meeting but stay firm one and all.***