



F. 789
24th March, 1966

The General Manager,
Australian Blue Asbestos Pty.Ltd.,
WITTENOOM.

Produced in Asbestos Personal
Injury Cases: Abrasive load and
copied to Richard R. Scruggs

Dear Sir,

SORTING. Following on discussions at Wittenoom, would you please carry out a test to determine the amount of fibre in the rock discarded from the picking station.

The last test was made in June 1964 and letter No.643 from Perth dated 16th June, 1964 refers. Copy of this letter is attached.

STAFF. Would you please let us have a breakdown of current A.B.A. staff. It seems that several people may be now regarded as staff who were previously classed as wage earners and we would like to have these details and to know to whom the staff conditions, such as rent free houses, fares etc. apply. On comparing our records it seems that the number of clerical staff have increased. Please advise if this is so, and let us have a comparison between current total staff and that of say a year ago.

PRODUCTION. With the increase in supervisory staff in the mill and, particularly while the production is low, there should be every opportunity to closely supervise the picking of waste rock and we would ask you to give this aspect a high priority.

We agree with you that the factors used in calculating the overall yield may not be accurate and that as an absolute figure the overall yield may not be correct. However, it seems to us that it is still valid for comparison with past periods provided the same methods of measurement of fibre and ore are still being used and the same factors are used. Looked at from this point of view there has been a marked drop in overall yield to about 75% in the last six months as compared to 80 to 85% for the preceding several years and this is a strong indication that there has been a change in performance either underground or in the mill or in both. You suggest that two contributing factors are ore broken, but left underground, and losses of

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fibre in picked waste. If you are right on the first point then close attention needs to be given to the final cleaning up of stopes as was discussed with Mr. Graham by Mr. Broadhurst and we would like Mr. Graham to closely check the stopes worked out during the last few months and to have an estimate made of the amount of ore still left. A close estimate can be made of the fibre left in the areas by measuring the depth of broken ore and the area. The usual practice was to ensure that the amount of ore covered in the screener contracts was less than that broken and to set a separate contract for £15 or £20 for the final clean up. As the fibre from the clean-up ore is often hard to clean in the mill, the work was spread evenly by doing one area each week-end.

Regarding the loss of fibre in picked waste the position could be improved if the use of water underground could be minimised or further reduced and if better lighting is provided at the picking station.

Apart from these points we are not sure that the milling operation is being controlled as closely as it needs to be for maximum recovery and there appears to be some indication that the actual loss of fibre in tailings is higher than is shown by the mill shift tester's routine checks.

We think it is advisable to arrange for Mr. Langley, who is familiar with the mill operations and has had several years experience of working on improvements to the efficiency of the milling process, to spend several weeks at Wittenoom as soon as possible to examine each stage of the milling process to try and pinpoint changes in performance and possible fibre losses. Assuming you agree with this we would like you to telegraph us your approval so that immediate arrangements can be made for Mr. Langley to go to Wittenoom.

TRAINEE MINERS. Following on a visit to Canberra by Messrs. Broadhurst and Allan, we have been giving some further thought to the amount of bonus payment to trainee miners as discussed with you during the recent visit of Messrs. King and Broadhurst. It is clear that we cannot expect any influx of men from overseas for some months and we must build up the labour force from local applicants.

Assuming that all trainee miners stayed with us for three months and collected the full amount of bonus payment, and that we only retained one in four of them, we would at the most be involved in a payment of about £4,000 per annum. By comparison with the time required and cost of improving the labour position in other ways such as by up-grading accommodation, the bonus payment to trainee miners appears to us to be the quickest and cheapest way of trying to improve the underground labour position. This being so we should make it as attractive as possible for underground trainees to remain at Wittenoom and we would prefer to see the agreed amount of £25 at the end of each four weeks for

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the first 12 weeks increased to £40. Even at this level we doubt if we are matching what unskilled men can earn for a week's work (even though the hours may be longer) on other projects in the Hamersley area.—

Would you also please send us a list showing the number of trainees who have been engaged during the last six months and the length of time for which each of them has remained.—

We realise that some tapering off payment may be necessary after the 12 weeks period and we leave this to you to arrange.

PERTH OFFICE. The Perth Office carries out two groups of functions. For the mine it is mainly concerned with labour engagement, purchasing and payment for purchases. On behalf of the C.S.R. Company, Perth Office looks after the details of fibre shipment, invoicing and receipt of payment.

We believe that these functions can all be looked after satisfactorily by Mr. Shepherdson as Perth Office Manager. The Perth Office thus provides a service to the mine at Wittenoom and in respect of these matters the Perth Office Manager would receive instructions direct from the A.B.A. General Manager at Wittenoom.

In respect of fibre sales, Mr. Thomas is responsible on behalf of C.S.R. for maintaining contact with customers, and meeting their requirements as regards quality, and passing information to the mine in respect of quality requirements. Mr. Shepherdson will maintain close liaison with Mr. Thomas in respect of all fibre shipping matters and as Mr. Thomas is the senior officer in Perth he will have general supervision over Mr. Shepherdson's activities without, however, responsibility for matters connected with mining operations on which Mr. Shepherdson receives instructions direct from Wittenoom.

All correspondence to Perth from Wittenoom should be addressed to the Office Manager and it will be distributed by Mr. Shepherdson. All staff in Perth Office, other than Mr. Thomas, of course, will be under the control of Mr. Shepherdson from an office management point of view, and it will be Mr. Shepherdson's responsibility to interpret your instructions.

Yours faithfully,

Edk

per General Manager.