

MEMORANDUM TO: The Manager, Australian Blue Asbestos Pty. Ltd., Wittenoom
 FROM: C. H. Broadhurst
 SUBJECT: Production and Costs

It is clearly evident that the current poor results are mainly due to -

- (1) Incorrect mining techniques
- (2) Lack of ore drying facilities in Mill

MINING Weaknesses in the mining technique are -

- (a) Failure to drill in what is known as the boring seams situated above and below the ore body. This results in -
 1. Slower boring rate
 2. Higher steel and compressed air usage
 3. Destruction of some fibre
 4. Over fragmentation causing increase in quantity of fiberised and wet fibre to the Mill
 5. Lower earning rate for miners with consequent high labour turnover
- (b) Inadequate training methods. Weaknesses have been -
 1. Insufficient information and training given to the Shift Bosses
 2. As a result of 1. incorrect methods have been passed on to trainee miners
 3. Insufficient advice and assistance has been given to trainee miners after they left the school
 4. Failure of the Shift Bosses to realize that successful training of new miners is their responsibility.
- (c) Contract rates and party number in scraper teams have become unbalanced. Main features are -
 1. The sliding scale of 10/-, 12/6 and 15/- per square yard for 1, 2 and 3 man teams respectively which was established years ago has been abandoned.
 2. One man team in large stopes has been permitted resulting in inefficient removal of ore and excessive earnings for the crews.
 3. Because of inefficient removal of ore during the week excessive overtime had to be paid during the weekend to remove the ore.
- (d) Percentage of lower seam ore has been excessive. Effects of this have been
 1. Less fibre in the ore together with a larger percentage of short fibre which is not recoverable under current milling conditions.
 2. Higher backs and lower floors on some lower seam stopes have caused excessive dilation
- (e) For the tonnage being mined some of the underground services have been over-manned.

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MILLING. Weaknesses in the milling are -

- (1) The absence of suitable drying facilities have slowed the milling rate and reduced the yield
- (2) The tailings treatment equipment collects the longer fibre quite efficiently but a large quantity of shorts still go to waste.

It is clear that corrective measures instituted during the past three weeks must be pressed home regardless of any opposition from any quarter. The main points to be adopted are -

1. DRILLING. All miners must drill in the boring sense and the direction of the hole must be substantially parallel with the country. No holes in the fibre will be permitted except in rolls or in other exceptional formations and circumstances.

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2. TRAINING. A short but concise brochure is to be drawn up showing the main features of our seam together with sketches showing the mining methods to be adopted. Alternatively a full scale model may be made and set up in the underground crib rooms for instruction purposes. It is the responsibility of the Underground Manager and Foreman to satisfy themselves that the Shift Bosses are conversant with the correct methods and to see that the information is properly passed on to the trainee miners. The Underground Manager must see that proper attention is given to trainees after they have left the school and daily statistics covering their performance must be supplied by the Shift Boss in charge of training. In this way a close check can be kept on each trainee and assistance given when and where required.

3. CONTRACT RATES. Except in most exceptional cases the existing one man scraper teams must cease forthwith. Two, or, in some cases, three man teams, depending on the size of stope, will increase efficiency, will enable the stopes to be kept clear of ore and will eliminate the excessive and unhealthy earnings that currently exist. The aim must be to completely eliminate weekend stopping except in cases where it is necessary to clear the face to enable the miner to commence drilling without loss of time. This, however, must be reduced to an absolute minimum.

After a period of 2 and 3 man scraper teams the original sliding scale contract rates may be re-introduced. The rates recommended are 10/- per sq.yd., for 1 man party, 12/6 for 2 man party and 15/- for 3 man party. The length of haul will in most cases govern the price per sq.yard.

All stopes must be cleared of ore as far as practicable and kept in that condition at all times.

4. TRAIN CREW. Until recently the train crew have been paid the average earnings of the scraper crew. Basically this is correct but in future the amount paid will be the true average contract earnings and wages shifts. Contract earnings will be calculated at actual contract earnings and will not include amounts paid to make up contract earnings to award rates of pay.

5. UNDERGROUND CONVEYOR. The hinged skirtings are to be fitted at loading point as planned and the men now employed at this point are to be dispensed with. Instructions have already been given to the effect that the final vulcanised section is to be fitted into the No.1 conveyor forthwith. This is to be immediately followed by complete vulcanising of all joints in No.2 belt.

6. GENERAL MINING. All services and costs are to be constantly examined with a view to eliminating any waste of labour and material. For the time being at least, no contract rates are to be increased without the full knowledge and approval of Mr. Thomas.

MILLING

1. DRIER. The re-commissioning of the Rotary Drier is expected to overcome the major milling problems of low yield and low production rate. When the drier is operating the instructions as laid down by Mr. Davies are to be strictly followed. If any change in technique is desired the reasons are to be submitted to Head Office for approval. In view of the importance of this equipment it must be regularly examined by the Mill Superintendent and reported on each month with special consideration to the mechanical condition of the shell, liners and furnace. Performance will of course be covered in the usual way in the Manager's report.

2. FIBRE RECOVERY. Apart from maximum attention to increase yield of fibre over 1" in length efforts are to continue in connection with recovery of fibre above 3" in length from the tailings. Reports on trials in this connection are to be sent to Head Office as they become available.

3. DUST COLLECTION. It is possible that drier ore may cause some dust in the mill. This must be watched closely and corrected promptly if trouble occurs.

The dust collection on the first crushing station leaves something to be desired and this should be closely examined and improved. If your own efforts fail in this direction S.W.Hart & Co., should be asked to check it and make recommendations.

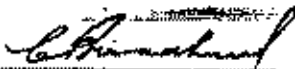
REPORTS. Your monthly report is to comment more on the financial outcome with emphasis on costs in the different sections and measures being taken to reduce costs. Until further notice the usual mining statistics are to be given and the details regarding stone preparation as set out in your report for 4 v.s., 11.4.51, is to be included.

Production information and items of interest are to be covered but some of the minor information as discussed need not be included. Emphasis must be on the main production information which will give Head Office a clearer picture of progress.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE. Approval will be requested for the immediate purchase and installation of a mechanical bagging press as discussed. You should obtain details covering a new coarse ore bin and extensions to the mill building to provide fibre storage space and when production increases and the financial position is improved and stabilised these installations will be considered. With the exception of necessary mining equipment all other capital expenditure must be deferred.

EXPLORATION. It is most important that some reliable information regarding fibre assays by diamond drilling be obtained as quickly as possible. Now that sufficient bits are on site or en route the four holes already prepared are to be cored without delay. Mr. Pimstone will recommend a further four holes and this recommendation is to be sent to Sydney for approval.

This drilling project is to receive your close attention and weekly reports are to be sent to Sydney until further notice.



C. H. Broadhurst.

2nd June, 1961.