



Presentation: Level 1 Emergency Exercise

Location: Clermont and Blair Athol Coal Mines

Date: Tuesday, 29th July 2025

Presented by: Wayne Birch Inspector of Mines



Resources
Safety & Health
Queensland

Introduction.

Purpose of the Presentation:

- To provide an overview of the first Level 1 emergency exercise conducted in an open-cut coal mine in Queensland.
- Highlight the importance of Recognised Standard 08 (RS08) and its role in improving emergency preparedness.
- Share key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for future exercises.

Historical Context.

Moura No. 2 Mine Disaster (1994):

- Tragic explosion resulted in 11 fatalities.
- Inquiry recommended systematic emergency exercises at all mines.

Development of RS08:

- Published in 1996 as the "Approved Standard for the Conduct of Emergency Procedures Exercises."
- Updated in 2009 as Recognised Standard 08.

Significance of Level 1 Exercises:

- Test mine emergency response systems.
- Engage external services.
- Provide a focal point for state-wide emergency preparedness.



The First Open-Cut Level 1 Exercise



Date and Location:

- 29 July 2025 at Clermont and Blair Athol Coal Mines, Central Queensland.

Significance:

- First Level 1 exercise conducted at open-cut coal mines in Queensland.
- Marked a shift from underground-only exercises to include open-cut operations.

Participants:

- Glencore's Clermont Mine and TerraCom's Blair Athol Mine.
- Collaboration between two Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), site leadership teams, and external emergency services.

Objectives of the Exercise.

Primary Objectives (as per RS08):

- Test the mine's emergency response system.
- Test the ability of external services to assist.
- Provide a focal point for state-wide emergency preparedness.

Open-Cut Specific Objectives:

- Test personnel response and emergency capability.
- Verify situation and gather information.
- Coordinate Emergency Response Teams (ERTs).
- Engage external services (QPS, QAS, QFS, RSHQ, etc.).
- Conduct debriefs to identify opportunities for improvement.



The Scenario.

Overview:

- Two Clermont Coal pump crew operators in a light vehicle (LV) lost control and rolled into a water storage dam at Blair Athol Mine.
- Both workers were trapped in the submerged vehicle and drowned.
- The scenario transitioned from a rescue to a recovery operation.

Key Events:

- Missing persons report initiated at 1830 hrs.
- Vehicle located upside down in the dam at 1942 hrs.
- Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) from both sites mobilised.
- External services (QPS, RSHQ) activated.
- Recovery of the vehicle and casualties completed by 2138 hrs.



Key Participants

State Emergency Exercise Executive Management Committee:

- Representatives from RSHQ, QMRS, MEU, Glencore, TerraCom, Simtars, and external emergency services (QPS, QAS and QFS).

Assessors:

- Included representatives from Glencore, RSHQ, Yancoal, and Blair Athol.
- Conducted assessments at the dispatch office, incident scene, and IMT.

Emergency Response Teams (ERTs):

- Blair Athol and Clermont ERTs collaborated on the rescue and recovery operations.



Assessment of the Scenario

Timeline of Key Events:

- 1942 hrs: Blair Athol OCE reports overturned LV in water storage area.
- 1946-2009 hrs: ERTs from both sites mobilised and arrived on the scene.
- 2020 hrs: QPS escorted to the scene.
- 2055 hrs: Casualties confirmed deceased; recovery operation initiated.
- 2138 hrs: Recovery operation completed.
- On Scene debrief: Both Emergency Response Teams.

IMT Formation:

- Prompt activation of Clermont Mine's Incident Management Team (IMT).
- Roles allocated, tabards worn, and battle boards used.
- Effective communication with external agencies and corporate Crisis Management Team (CMT).
- Assessors on scene, in dispatch and at IMT.



What Went Well

Emergency Response Teams (ERTs):

- Quick mobilisation and effective collaboration between Blair Athol and Clermont ERTs.
- Efficient use of resources (e.g., lighting, cranes, boats).
- Strong leadership and decision-making by ERT captains.

Incident Management Team (IMT):

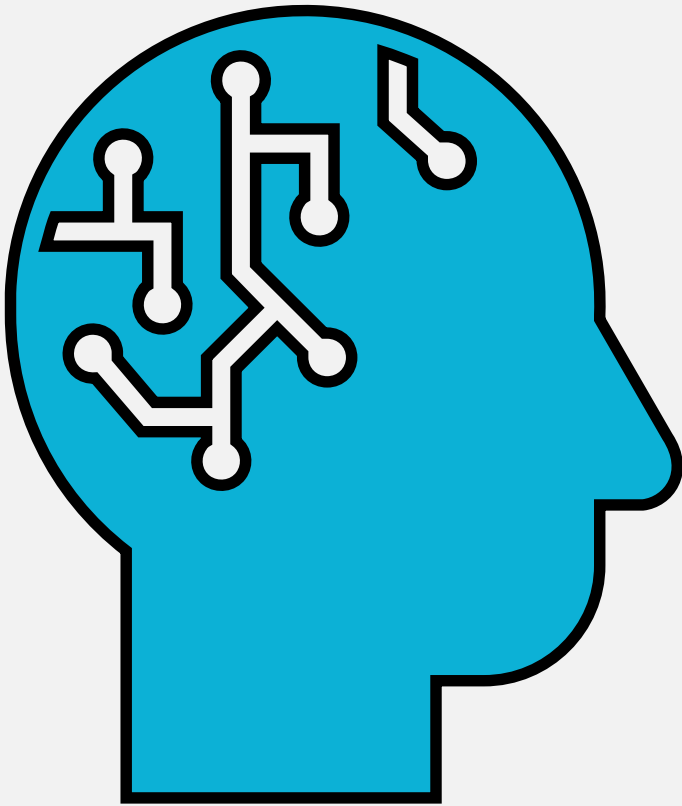
- Professional and methodical response.
- Effective use of tools (e.g., IVMS, DAMSTRA, task cards, battle boards).
- Clear communication with external agencies and corporate teams.

Dispatch Office:

- Dispatcher demonstrated critical thinking and multitasking under pressure, including the allocation of duties to a CMW/Assessor.
- Utilised GPS tracking and swipe card data to locate missing workers.



Opportunities for Improvement



Emergency Response Teams (ERTs):

- Improve access to life jackets and water rescue equipment.
- Conduct refresher training on working in and around water.
- Enhance understanding of transitioning from rescue to recovery scenarios.

Incident Management Team (IMT):

- Reduce delays in receiving situation reports (Sitreps) from the scene.
- Increase use of scribes to document decisions and actions.
- Improve focus and minimise distractions during IMT meetings.
- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between neighbouring mines for emergency coordination.

Dispatch Office:

- Update contact information for neighbouring sites.
- Develop a documented process for inter-site emergency communication.

Lessons Learned

Collaboration is Key:

- Strong teamwork between neighbouring mines and external agencies is essential for effective emergency response.

Preparedness Saves Lives:

- Regular training and exercises improve confidence, decision-making, and response times.

Importance of Communication:

- Clear and timely communication between the scene, IMT, and external agencies is critical.

Continuous Improvement:

- Debriefs and assessments are vital for identifying gaps and implementing corrective actions.

OPERATION BOARD

DATE: 29/7/2025 TIME: 7:24 PM

SITUATION: 2 crew not contactable - ramp main location
RAMP 3 BA WATER VOID

OBJECTIVES (KEEP IT SMART)

1. locate 2 missing people
2. support BA in emergency response
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

INCIDENT START TIME: 7:24 DATE: 29/7/2025

INCIDENT LOCATION: Ramp 3 - water void BA hole

CURRENT STATE OF MINE (INCLUDING HAZARDS):
Emergency status

PERSONS AT RISK: Casey Flohr, Troy Buchanan

LAST KNOWN LOCATION: IUS Ring 2 Ramp 3

NOTIFICATION	YES	NO	DATE	TIME	COMMENT
GCAA					
REGULATOR					
ISHR					
AMBULANCE					
FIRE					
POLICE					
MINES RESCUE					
INCIDENT CONTROLLER					

NEXT MEETING: 8:30

Recommendations

Review RS08:

- Ensure it is fit for purpose for open-cut coal operations.

Enhance Inter-Site Coordination:

- Establish MOUs between neighbouring mines for emergency response.

Improve Equipment and Training:

- Ensure life jackets and water rescue equipment are readily available.
- Conduct joint training exercises for neighbouring ERTs.

Strengthen Communication Protocols:

- Address delays in Sitrep communication.
- Utilise photos and videos to enhance IMT situational awareness.

Address Psychosocial Impacts:

- Provide support for workers and families affected by emergency scenarios.



Conclusion



Summary of Key Points:

- The 2025 Level 1 exercise was a milestone for Queensland's mining industry.
- It successfully tested emergency response systems at open-cut coal mines.
- Valuable lessons were learned, and opportunities for improvement were identified.

Call to Action:

- Encourage all mines to prioritise emergency preparedness and conduct regular exercises.
- Support the review of RS08 to ensure it remains relevant and effective for all mining operations.

Thank You.



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