$60K TO GO
$12K TO STAY
A NEW DAWN FOR MINING

LABOUR HIRE UNDER FIRE
All eyes on OneKey case >> Page 11

STANMORE, ANGLO, QCOAL, PEABODY TO EXPAND
Strong coal prices put miners back on front foot

CEASE FIRE AT OAKY NORTH
Miners back at work......for now >> Page 4
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CONTENTS

NEWS

04 CONVENIENT TERMINATION
06 ANGLO EXPANSION PLANS
07 DROPPING THE “BULL SHIT”
10 PEABODY TURNAROUND

REGULARS

19 FRANK THE TANK
19 MAD MUMZIE
22 PUZZLES
25-26 MINER’S TRADER

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Shift Miner is published by Fitzroy Publishing Pty Ltd
A.B.N 72122739879
368 Williams St Rockhampton QLD 4700 - PO Box 1440
Rockhampton QLD 4700

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March 19, 2018 3
Be warned. The “termination for convenience” clause – unheard of a decade ago - is back and it’s a feature of just about every new mining contract being drawn up in a resurgent mining sector.

The existence of the clause in contracts signed through the mining construction boom, was devastating when the party ended. Contractors who had taken on astonishing amounts of debt to fund significant machinery purchases - armed with letters of intent and legal contracts from the companies they were working for - discovered they were worthless when their services were no longer needed.

Companies simply employed the “termination for convenience” clause and walked away.

Administration was almost universally the result for the contractor.

Director of McKays Solicitors in Mackay Suzanne Brown, says despite the carnage of 2013, the clauses are back and likely to remain.

“We are seeing so much more opportunity now, definitely everybody is busy, there are skills shortages and rates are finally coming back,” she told Shift Miner.

“However in the contracts, I am seeing, the termination for convenience clause seems to be the new norm. I don’t think it’s something we will just see in the downturn, confidence is up, but people are wary so its part of virtually every contract we have dealt with.

“However the difference now, is that we are not seeing it used to end contracts early and more often than not, we are seeing contracts being extended.”

Given its devastating impact through the downturn - why are businesses allowing it back into contracts?

“Well, the problem - as it has always been - is that there is an imbalance of power between the parties involved in the contract. The contractor needs the work more than they don’t need the clause - so they live with it. While Ms Brown says it can be tough to negotiate to remove the clause, there are some ways that contractors can mitigate the risk.

“It can be a double-edged sword, and all parties to a contract need to think about its value to them,” she said.

“If you can’t remove it, you need to mitigate the risks associated with it.

“You can negotiate the length of notice required before the clause can be activated and try to limit the circumstances in which it be used, so you have some warning before the axe falls.

“You can also try to negotiate for a ‘penalty’ or ‘early termination’ fee to be paid if the clause is activated, so it’s not just a get out of jail free card for big business.

“Finally if it’s part of contracts signed with the businesses you are working for, you need to try and mirror it in the contracts signed with your subcontractors, so you’re not the person left holding the baby and locked into contracts when the work stops.”

There is also new legislative protection for small business that took effect in November 2016. Small businesses employing less than 20 people who are entering into standard form contracts for the sale of goods and services up to $300,000 (or a $1 million over more than one year) are now given protection from unfair agreements by law.

“A standard form contracts is one that has been prepared by one party to the contract and where the other party has little or no opportunity to negotiate the terms - that is, it is offered on a ‘take it, or leave it’ basis. It could include documents like terms of trade, credit application and other agreements.

“For example, a court may deem a term unfair, and therefore effectively remove it from the contract, where only one party, but not other, has the power to terminate, avoid or limit their obligations, walk away from or vary a contract.

“It is brand new legislation, and everyone is still trying to get a better understanding of how it applies but there are loopholes that business needs to be aware of.

“Unlike other legislation, it treats every company (including subsidiaries) in a corporate group separately, meaning a small subsidiary company of BHP could still be considered a ‘small business’ and get the protection of the unfair contract terms legislation”

The future of the industrial action underway at Oaky North coal mine will be decided on the 27th March when miners get a second chance to vote on whether to accept a new Enterprise Agreement.

There was a minor breakthrough in the ten-month long industrial dispute recently, when Glencore suspended a six-month-long lock-out of workers, following two days of hearings at the Fair Work Commission.

Around a month ago, the vast majority of the 180 affected CFMEU workers rejected the proposed EA, despite it having the endorsement of the FWC, Glencore and the CFMEU.

The lock-out was in response to more than 30,000 hours of time lost to strike action.

Glencore says its hopeful that the EA will be accepted second time around.

“The vote will take place on 27 March and with the continued support of the CFMEU to the in-principle agreement, Glencore is hopeful for a successful vote to bring an end to this industrial dispute.”

The CFMEU has not responded to numerous calls from Shift Miner, but the picket line just outside of Middlemount has been disbanded.

If the workers again reject the new EA, both parties will have the option to resume industrial action, either through protected strike action or lockouts.

Santos has announced it will spend nearly $1 billion expanding their Bowen and Surat Basin gas fields to secure gas supplies for their Curtis Island LNG plant.

The work will see increased gas infrastructure built across the Maranoa, Western Downs, Central Highlands and Banana council areas, with the highlight being a commitment to spend $750 million developing the Roma East Project over the next three years.

Santos’ Brett Woods made the announcement near Roma.

“This important project will create up to 400 construction jobs and provide opportunities to local business in the Roma area,” he said.

“Roma East will also add nearly 50 PJ a year to gas production in Queensland in 2020 – which is the equivalent of about 8 percent of the expected east coast domestic gas demand this year.

“This is great news for both the domestic gas market and our LNG exports.”

The Roma East project will require the drilling of 430 new wells, the laying of 420 kilometres of water and gas gathering pipelines, and the construction of 670 kilometres of power lines and 25 kilometres of fibre optic cables.

Water from the wells will be used to irrigate another 200 hectares of land near Roma.

Santos and their GLNG partners say they’ve invested almost $20 billion in regional Queensland since 2011 and this new investment is a huge vote of confidence in the state.
Emeco pays $12K to stay

Miners working for Emeco had something to smile about recently, after receiving an unsolicited $12,000 pay rise according to one miner.

“Mining is going crazy again,” he told Shift Miner.

“Some training companies are running programs to recruit straight from the Australian Defence Force, and Emeco rang all their guys and told them they had a 12k pay rise.

“Just rang em out of the blue!”

A spokesperson for Emeco, said while the payment was possible she couldn’t confirm it. However, she said it definitely “hadn’t been applied across the entire workforce”, but does reflect the growing competition for skilled people in Queensland.

Emeco released its half-yearly results yesterday reporting a 140% increase in profit in the first half of the 2018 financial year, (compared to the same period in 2017) and their first positive Net Profit After Tax (NPAT) since 2013.

“Our strong financial results were driven by improved market conditions and our strong operational excellence, focus and cost discipline,” Managing Director Mr Ian Testrow said.

“The outlook for the remainder of the 2018 financial year is positive as improved market conditions have resulted in project wins and increased demand for equipment.”

It’s been a similar story for Mackay based mining contractor Mastermyne whose half-yearly results last week reported profit in the second half of 2017 was up nearly 350% compared to the corresponding period in 2016.

Mastermyne now says it has 85% of its machinery utilised with current contracts at Moranbah North, North Goonyella, Broadmeadow, Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, Kestrel and a suite of coal mines in NSW.

Managing Director Tony Caruso said the turnaround reflects the increased work available.

“The strong first-half result is a continuation of the momentum generated by the company in the second half of last financial year,” he said.

“Recent contract wins, scope growth on existing contracts and strong demand for equipment have flowed into a much stronger financial result over the first half. The company has emerged from a deep cycle in excellent shape, and a healthy contracted order book underpins continuation of improved profitability.”

The Mastermyne workforce increased by around 20 percent in the second half of 2017 to 898 people.

In the context of an escalating skills shortage, the claim is believable and follows news that sign on fees of $60,000 are being offered to skilled people in the Bowen Basin.

Similarly, the improving fortunes of local mining contracting firms has meant there is more scope to reward critical people within organisations.

In the context of an escalating skills shortage, the claim is believable and follows news that sign on fees of $60,000 are being offered to skilled people in the Bowen Basin.
Ailand fights on
New Hope Coal has pledged to continue fighting for the approval of its New Ailand stage three mine expansion in Southern Queensland, despite suffering another legal set back today.

The Queensland Government today rejected Newhope’s attempt to have the Environmental Authority (EA) for its New Ailand Coal Stage 3 Expansion amended. “We are disappointed with this outcome and are considering our options in response,” Newhope Managing Director Shane Stephenson said.

“At previously advised a Judicial Review of the Land Court decision is underway, and the Company is committed to securing approval for this Project.”

Today’s announcement follows a Land Court recommendation in June last year that Newhope shouldn’t be granted a mining lease for the New Ailand Expansion.

The publicly funded Environmental Defenders Office solicitor Jo-Anne Bragg said the decision was a win for the environment.

Silk purse or sow’s ear?
A chartered accountant with a Canadian commerce degree is the next boss of Anglo American’s Central Queensland coal operations.

Anglo has appointed Tyler Mitchelson as the next chief executive officer, taking over the role from the first of April.

Mr Mitchelson has been with the company since 2014, during which time he has been Anglo’s head of integration and business planning in London. Before joining Anglo, he worked in business development roles within the resources sector, including as president and CEO of Rozel Nickel Corporation in Canada.

“I am looking forward to joining Anglo American’s metallurgical coal business in Brisbane, working with our experienced operational team to build on their outstanding performance in 2017 and define longer-term opportunities for the business,” Mr Mitchelson said.

His comments confirmed Anglo’s big reversal in direction from the height of the downturn when it said it wanted to exit coal mining in Australia altogether.

In September 2014 - at the height of the mining downturn – CEO of Anglo Mark Cutifani said they were getting out of coal, and put all their Australian operations on the market.

Four years on and the company has reported that their Queensland metallurgical coal mines achieved record production, doubled underlying profit to nearly $2.5 billion, and had been their star performer in 2017.

While a 65% increase in coal prices was the biggest contributor to the result, David Diamond, Chief Executive of Anglo’s Metallurgical Coal business, said they had benefited from the decisions made in the past.

“The strong contribution of our Metallurgical Coal business to Anglo American’s 2017 results demonstrates the outstanding efforts of our people and the high quality of our assets,” he said.

“We made some challenging decisions in 2016, resulting in the divestment of Foxleigh, Callide and Dartbrook mines and commencing a process to divest the Drayton mine.

“These portfolio changes have enabled our business to focus on producing higher-value metallurgical coal, and this strategy and a continuation of our operational productivity and cost improvement measures across all sites has resulted in a strong performance in 2017.”

With its renewed love of coal, Anglo says it’s exploring all options to increase production, and in particular is looking to develop a coking coal deposit called Moranbah South adjacent to the Moranbah North mine.

Anglo’s also planning upgrades at other existing operations.

“Once the Grosvenor mine ramp-up is complete, [Anglo] will look at a low capital option to further increase the Moroanbah Grosvenor plant capacity,” they said.

“We are also progressing further brownfields opportunities to expand the Dawson complex, with the extension of the 9-12 pit and [exploring] further options to extend the life of operations at Grasstree.”

During the downturn, Anglo sold the Foxleigh mine to Realm Resources and the Callide mine to Batchfire Resources.

$60K to stay
Signs on fees of as much as $60,000 are once again a feature of the Central Queensland mining employment landscape as demand for skilled workers escalates.

That’s according to one recruitment officer who told Shift Miner they are looking at every way possible to lure experienced and skilled talent back into their business.

Sign on fees haven’t been seen in mining since the height of the mining construction boom five years ago, and it’s happening just four months after a DFP Mining and Resources job index said permanent roles were up nearly 50% during 2017.

HR Specialist and Director of Confidence Peter Cross said he’s heard similar stories.

“Yes I have heard that there are signs on fees being offered again, which is a return to one of the many bad habits of the past,” he said.

“However I think all the seeds that were sown during the downturn are now bearing fruit.

“While it was important that industry got its costs under control, we now have a workforce that is pretty unhappy, and not feeling any particular loyalty to their employer.”

Longer term, Mr Cross says there are lots of inexperienced people in crucial roles within the industry, and it’s causing problems for employees who don’t have strong networks.

“I know of lots of really skilled and capable people who felt they were mistreated through the downturn,” he told Shift Miner.

“These are experienced people, and they have found the whole process of applying for online jobs both soul destroying and fruitless because they are not being noticed by inexperienced recruiters who are reading off a script when they shortlist applicants.

“Many of them have been out of work for months, in some cases years putting enormous stress on their families, and out of desperation, they have taken labour hire jobs they performed 25 years ago.

“I can’t imagine what the turnover rate is for some of those 100% labour hire operations in the Bowen Basin at the moment, but I reckon 30% wouldn’t be impossible.

“Now that people have a few more opportunities in front of them they are voting with their feet.”

Anglo Boss
A chartered accountant with a Canadian commerce degree is the next boss of Anglo American’s Central Queensland coal operations.

Anglo has appointed Tyler Mitchelson as the next chief executive officer, taking over the role from the first of April.

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His comments confirmed Anglo’s big reversal in direction from the height of the downturn when it said it wanted to exit coal mining in Australia altogether.
After years of stagnation, a Central Queensland earthmoving business says the industry is back in boom territory.

Brett Comiskey, the owner of Comiskey Mining Services which provides wet and dry hire machines and maintenance services to the resources sector, says they are “flat out” - and from what he hears it’s just the beginning.

Mr Comiskey says it started late in 2016, when all of a sudden his phone started ringing off the hook, with requests for quotes and machines. Today he says there isn’t a machine idle anywhere in Central Queensland.

“Every year we go down to Bathurst, and in 2016 we were sitting in the back of the car and the phone just starting ringing off the hook,” he said.

“We spent the whole weekend in and out of our rooms providing quotes, and at that time we had 18 machines parked up at Baralaba.

“Today we are flat out, and we have gone from 50 to 117 machines, and we just can’t keep up.

“You can’t buy anything; it’s listed one day and gone two days later.

“I just had five 793D’s land at the port over the weekend, and within a day we were getting calls about them.”

The change has not come a minute too soon for local mining contractors who have had to weather the steepest downturn in the Basin’s history.

Many businesses failed through that period, and those that survived took casual contracts often at loss-making levels.

“We are now re-negotiating our agreements,” Mr Comiskey said.

“For the first time in three years, we have been able to include minimum weekly hours on our dry hire machines.

“We still have clients on no-minimum contracts from the downturn, and they are saying we helped you through the downturn, you should help us.

“Well I am saying we also helped you, and now that things have changed they are going to have to commit, or the machines will go elsewhere.

“We have all dropped the bullshit and the lifestyle, and this year is looking pretty good.

“But no one picked the first boom or the downturn that followed - we certainly didn’t - but the people I am speaking to are saying that the real boom is going to be the end of 2018 and into 2019.”

However, like numerous other mining-related businesses, Mr Comiskey says the skills crisis is real, and it’s their biggest challenge.

“We are struggling to find operators and maintenance people, because lots of them had a gutful of the industry when they were booted out of jobs when the downturn hit,” he said.

“They have relocated their families back to the coast, and they are not willing to come back again, and I can understand that.

“We went from overpopulation to nobody, and that’s starting to affect the price of labour.

“But so far we aren’t seeing contract costs adjusting to reflect that.”

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March 19, 2018 7
Adani has acknowledged it will miss a second deadline for securing funding for its proposed Carmichael coal mine in the Galilee Basin.

The company has so far set two deadlines for finalising its funding arrangements after the board made a Final Investment Decision (FID) to go ahead with the Carmichael mine midway through 2017. The first deadline to be missed was set for December last year and Adani told media they would miss the second deadline scheduled for the end of March because of the Queensland Government’s backflip on supporting a Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund loan to build the railway.

“Adani’s ambitions in the Galilee, with most government approvals, landholder agreements now in place, and landholder agreements now in place, and landholder agreements now in place, but governments are damaging our investment attractiveness.”

Contracts renewed

Downer EDI has had its existing contracts at the Blackwater mine extended in a deal worth more than $600 million over the next three years.

In August 2015 Downer made headlines when, BMA announced that it had decided to contract out $150 million worth of pre-strip, mobile maintenance and blast operations at Blackwater mine to them.

While the change in operations was widely misreported as a casualisation of the workforce, it nonetheless brought great uncertainty to the 306 permanent, contractor and labour-hire workers who were employed in those areas by BMA. Downer says the announcement this week is mostly a continuation of that work.

“The scope of work to be carried out by Downer under the contract includes overburden removal, equipment maintenance and drilling services,” Chief Executive Officer of Downer, Grant Fenn, said.

“This contract will consolidate two existing contracts and does not have any material impact on existing operations of Downer at Blackwater.

Green light for water project

The construction of a new weir on the Fitzroy River looks likely after both Federal and State Governments committed to funding the $352 million project.

The Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project - better known as Rookwood Weir - is expected to generate around 200 construction jobs, and provide increased domestic water security for Yeppoon and Rockhampton. It will also provide water for agriculture, and increased water security for industrial users in Gladstone.

A businessman plan for the project released late last year forecast a five-year construction window, with significant work packages in design, survey, cranage, and civil construction. Some estimates have put the total boost to the local economy at around $1 Billion. However this largely depends on how the available water is used.

The best estimate of the total economic benefit from the increased agricultural production in the Lower Fitzroy region is $124.79 million [in Present Value terms] according to the State Government’s Business case report.

“Gladstone Area Water Board and Livingstone Shire Council would take the other 34,000 ML. “Hence the economic benefit from increased agricultural production attributable is estimated to be $86.87 million in PV terms (i.e. $124.79 million attributable to the Reference Project less $37.92 million attributable to the Base Case).”

The modelling predicted most water would be used to grow irrigated fodder crops and for feedlot operations. Macadamia nuts were also considered a possibility.

However there were considerable variations in the economic benefit predicted depending on how farmers used the water, commodity prices and the price they had to pay to use it. The 20 per cent increased by around 20 percent in the second half of 2017 to 898 people.
Stanmore Coal expects to increase the amount of coal it sells in the coming financial year by more than a million tonnes as the Isaac Plains East (IPE) and Isaac Plains Underground (IPU) projects commence.

Last month Stanmore confirmed it had received approval for an amendment to their existing Isaac Plains Environmental Authority, clearing the way for the IPE mining lease they have been working on since July last year.

“The issuing of the EA amendment, execution of Landholder compensation agreements, and the state’s approval of the coordination arrangement with an overlapping gas tenement holder are conditions required for the granting of the IP mining leases,” they said.

“Its anticipated the IPE mining leases will be granted in the coming months.”

The Isaac Plains East (IPE) coal deposit – formerly known as Wotonga – is nearly adjacent to their existing Isaac Plains mining operations, and was purchased from Peabody for around $7 million in 2015.

In its Mining Lease application, Stanmore predicted the coal produced from IPE over the life of the project would be worth around $890 million (assuming long-run average price of US$83.91/t and US$68.23/t for semi-soft coking and thermal products respectively, and average exchange rate of AU$0.77/US$).

While IPE will primarily operate as an extension of the Isaac Plains Mine and will utilise the existing Isaac Plains Mine infrastructure, mining equipment and workforce, Stanmore says it’s considering a plan to add a truck and shovel mining fleet to their operations.

They predict this extra fleet would add around $10 a tonne to costs.

However, by putting them to work as soon as possible at IPE, they believe it would put them on track to achieve ROM production of 3.5 million tonnes by around 2020.

Meanwhile, they have appointed consultants to complete a bankable feasibility study into the viability of an underground operation at the existing Isaac Plains mine.

In the short term, however, Stanmore still has production challenges with ROM coal and saleable coal produced down around 35% in the last three months due to a 16-day dragline shutdown and an extended ship queue at the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal.

On the bright side, their new quarterly advanced benchmark coal price for the first three months of this year is $US143/t which is up around 20% on where it was in the last quarter.

They have also contract loaded about 190 thousand tonnes of coal for TerraCom who are using their train loadout facilities until they find a better solution to load coal from the Blair Athol coal mine.
Big turnaround for Peabody

Peabody’s Australian coal mining operations have been their star performer for the second year running, bringing in around 56% of the company’s total revenue of US$6.6 Billion for the 2017 calendar year.

It represents an astonishing turnaround for the company, which more than three years ago lost more than US$2.6 billion - and 97% of its share value - in a single year, and was forced into administration (or the American equivalent).

Average production costs across Peabody’s Australian mines in 2017 were about US$56 a tonne (US$90/t met and US$34/t thermal) and remain near the record low of US$51/t set in 2015.

However, its been the significant improvement in coal prices that has made the big difference.

“Australia’s full-year Adjusted EBITDA of $906.7 million marks the platform’s largest operating result since 2008,” they said.

“Umining contractor Wolff Group has been trialling the machines leading by record North Goonyella production, including introducing another longwall system at North Goonyella which they say would "underwrite double-digit free cash flow for the foreseeable future".

It is not clear whether Rio Tinto has any plans to start using automated Haul trucks on their Central Queensland Hail Creek and Kestrel coal mines, however it seems unlikely since both mines are reportedly for sale.

“The trend looks likely to continue in 2018 with a big rally in prices toward the end of 2017, meaning they have been able to lock in a contract PCI coal price of around US$156.50 per tonne for the first three months of this year.

Peabody’s roughly 300 employees at the Millenium mine, the company has set aside more than $6 million to facilitate its closure and is scaling back production. This follows the sale of Peabody’s 50% share in the Millenium Coal Handling and Preparation plant last year.

Retraining for automation

Rio Tinto says it will accelerate the rollout of Automated Haul Trucks (AHTs) off the back of major productivity and safety benefits recorded in their Western Australian mines.

According to Rio, AHTs moved 29% of the material shifted in WA, and in 2017 they did 700 hours more work over the year compared to human operated trucks, contributing to per unit cost savings of around 15%. In the decade since they first started trialling AHT’s, Rio has now shifted one billion tonnes and has a working fleet of 80 machines, which they hope to increase to 140 by the end of 2019.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore chief executive Chris Salisbury said they are working through the adjustments required in their business.

“Hauling one billion tonnes autonomously is an impressive milestone for our business and again highlights Rio Tinto’s pioneering spirit when it comes to adopting revolutionary new technologies which are making the industry safer and more efficient,” he said.

“If we’re to unlock the future of mining, we need to prepare our people for a future with automation.

We are studying future additions to the autonomous truck fleet that we expect will contribute to our $5 billion productivity programme, specifically Iron Ore’s commitment to deliver $500 million of additional free cash flow from 2021 onwards.

“We remain committed to working closely with our employees as we expand our autonomous haul truck fleet including providing opportunities for new roles, redeployment, retraining and upskilling.”

“Overall there remains an imbalance between greenfield and brownfield exploration, with 67% of drilling happening in already explored brownfield locations.

“This imbalance must be addressed if Australia is to find the future mines.”

No tomorrow?

Australian miners would appear to be still sitting on their exploration budgets and greenfield projects with another quarter of record low exploration levels reported across Australia’s resource sector.

While actual money spent on exploration increased slightly by 4.4% to around $500 million in the last three months of 2017, it appears most of that work is desktop exploration with metres drilled, falling more than 5% on average and nearly 10% for greenfield exploration.

While the exploration trend line is slightly increasing from the cyclical lows of 2015, total expenditure levels remain lower than they have been for more than a decade, and are just 40% of where they were in 2011.

Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, Warren Pearce says it’s got significant implications for the future of mining.

“While the rise in mineral exploration expenditure is good, the fall in metres drilled is a concern and the fall in greenfield mineral exploration is particularly worrying,” he said.

“Overall there remains an imbalance between greenfield and brownfield exploration, with 67% of drilling happening in already explored brownfield locations.

“This imbalance must be addressed if Australia is to find the future mines.”

“While the rise in mineral exploration expenditure is good, the fall in metres drilled is a concern and the fall in greenfield mineral exploration is particularly worrying,” he said.

“Overall there remains an imbalance between greenfield and brownfield exploration, with 67% of drilling happening in already explored brownfield locations.

“This imbalance must be addressed if Australia is to find the future mines.”
Labour hire in crisis?

A Mackay based industrial relations specialist says companies across the coalfields could be facing “back-pay” liabilities worth millions of dollars and possibly even administration if a court decision to cancel a Labour Hire enterprise agreement stands.

According to Mackay based Workplace Consultant Craig Joy, a case currently in front of the courts involving well-known labour-hire firm OneKey Resources has significant implications.

Mr Joy says just four administrative people voted to accept the original EA, but later more than 1000 operational people were employed casually under it.

“The Enterprise Agreement was revoked by the court because the judge felt it was not genuinely agreed,” he told Shift Miner

“With the EA [retrospectively] cancelled, the Coal Mining Award takes effect, which has far more generous provisions for sick pay, holiday pay and redundancy.

“And that decision has big implications for OneKey because they could be liable for millions of dollars in back pay for anyone who worked as a casual under that EA in the last few years.

“Having to do that would make most of the work done [with that labour force] loss-making, and would put an enormous strain on their business.

“OneKey has had to put up a significant amount of money as surety to cover this liability, but if they lose the appeal, my understanding is that the actual cost could be considerably higher.

In that case, a miner employed by Workpac on a casual - or labour hire - basis for three years is challenging the legitimacy of his employment contract.

“At issue, is how you define casual employment,” he said.

“In the Workpac contract being examined by the court, the same employment contract was being used for permanent and casual employees.

“Which aspects of the contract applied to you depended on what box you ticked on the back page about your employment status.

“In the Fair Work Act and the Coal Industry Award, there is no reference to permanent workers, just full-time, part-time and casual, so you need to be very careful about using the word permanent.

“However the Fair Work Act and the Coal Industry Award also don’t define the term casual, so in that case, it diverts to a dictionary definition, and they’re 20 years behind.

“All it says is that casual is either irregular or uncertain.

“Well everybody accepts in the real world, casual means you get a casual loading, but the court has to use the definitions provided.

“It looks at the miner and sees he’s been working 7-on-7-off for three years, and if he hadn’t left he probably still would be.

“Well that’s not casual according to the definition, therefore under Workpac’s EA and contract, he must be permanent, and so we get to the same place.

“In hindsight, it suggests he should have been paid annual leave, sick pay, and even redundancy which are very generous under the Coal Mining Award.

“I have had lots of calls from business worried about what both cases mean for them.”

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Contact Jon Ward – 0422 380 572

March 19, 2018
What medical certificate will do?

Employers in the resources sector have retained the right to dismiss employees who refuse to attend a functional assessment with their chosen medical professional before returning to work.

Last month a Fair Work Commission (FWC) hearing concluded, in which former Peak Downs miner and CFMEU delegate Darrin Grant tried to appeal a decision by the court in 2014 which upheld his dismissal from BHP’s Peak Downs operation.

Mr Grant was dismissed in mid-2013 after he refused to attend separate medical appointments upon returning from eight months sick leave for a shoulder injury and operation. On 27 March 2013, Mr Grant informed BHP he was fit to return to his pre-injury duties and presented two medical assessments to that effect. One from Dr Bastaile, a medical practitioner at the Mater hospital in Mackay and another by Dr Cutbush, the orthopaedic surgeon who had conducted his shoulder surgery.

However, BHP was not satisfied with the generalised medical certificates before it, and on the advice of its HR staff, requested Mr Grant attend its nominated medical specialist for a functional assessment test before being assigned duties.

However, Mr Grant’s disputed this directive, and his representative the CFMEU argued that the BMA Enterprise Agreement only required the presentation of a medical certificate from the employee’s medical practitioner before returning to work in relation to a non-work-related injury. BMA’s Field Maintenance Superintendent at the time Mr Gustafson was of the view (in response) that his obligations under the Coal Mine Safety and Health Act (CMSH) overrode any terms of an enterprise agreement and insisted Mr Grant see the nominated Doctor.

In the end, the dispute over the issue escalated and contributed significantly to Mr Grant’s dismissal, which he then challenged in the Fair Work Commission. Upon receiving evidence from both parties in 2014, Commissioner Spencer ruled in BHP’s favour on the basis that they were entitled to require further medical information.

She also noted that despite his experience and work history, Mr Grant’s “failure to follow the lawful and reasonable directions - specifically the failure to attend the medical assessments - and his unreasonable refusal to participate in the disciplinary investigation” formed a valid reason for his dismissal.

However, this week Mr Grant sought to appeal that decision arguing that Commissioner Spencer had erred in 10 different areas.

While the FWC addressed each of the ten grounds for appeal, it ultimately upheld the 2014 ruling. “The application raises issues of general application for employees in coal mining operations in Queensland and who are subject to the CMSH Act and CMSH Regulation, and bears on the proper interpretation of how health assessments are authorised under that legislative framework and otherwise,” the FWC said.

“There are also claims that the decision of the Commissioner was not harmonious with a decision of the Queensland Court of Appeal. “In such a context as argued, we consider the public interest justifies granting permission to appeal. “Having so decided to allow the appeal, we have not identified an error of law or a significant error of fact in the Commissioner’s decision, and consequently, we uphold the Commissioner’s decision and dismiss the appeal.”

Low-hours don’t exist

The inability to move earth could end up being the biggest brake on Australia’s mining industry in the short to medium term, with a heavy machinery supply crisis facing the industry.

Earthmoving businesses in Central Queensland report that buying good second-hand machines is just about impossible, and Andrew Cotton, Senior Operations Manager with industrial auctioneer Greys Online, says there is a good reason for it.

“There are huge civil projects underway in NSW and Victoria where they are spending a fortune on infrastructure, and at the same time, we have seen the mining sector picking up.”

Meanwhile the big machine builders like Cat, Hitachi and Komatsu scaled their production right back during the downturn, and while they are slowing building up, it’s going to take time.

“So there were years where no new machines were coming onto the market, and now that means that if you want a late model low hour machine they just don’t exist.”

The current situation represents a significant turnaround from 2014 when at least two local earthmoving businesses shut their doors.

Emerald based Jonker Hire, who had been in business since the Mid 1970’s, entered into administration, while Coalfields Constructions shut their doors after more than 20 years working across Central Queensland.

“The decision to close the doors was a bittersweet one,” Joel Clarke told Shift Miner at the time.

“But there is just no business around, and for the work, you can find there is absolutely no margin.”

“At the end of the day, if mining companies can afford to do what they are doing, without relying on contractors like us, then that’s just business.”

“We can’t complain, we made a good profit during the boom.”

Road still closed

Anglo American has commissioned accounting firm, Ernst & Young, to undertake a social impact study on the worsening situation on the Gibihi Road near the Dawson mine. In November last year, a crack about 30 metres long, and about half a metre wide opened up on the road following a routine blast at the Dawson Mine. Since that time the road has been shut, and investigations undertaken to determine the extent of the problem.

“The Gibihi Road failure was unexpected, and investigations into the cause of the incident indicate the circular geotechnical failure is significant and extends between the mine and Gibihi Road,” the company said this month.

“The area is extremely unstable and continues to be monitored using a slope stability radar system.

“Anglo American, in consultation with Banana Shire Council, is conducting an options study to determine the safest approach for future public vehicle access [but] the technical requirements to develop options has been more complicated and taken more time than originally expected due to the failure mechanisms.

“We apologise for the uncertainty and frustration this has caused.”

As a consequence of the cracks and instability, cars moving between the Leichhardt Highway and the Moura-Theodore Road are having to take an extended detour along a graded dirt track, significantly increasing travel times.

Anglo says they hope to announce a long-term solution soon.
Empty train from Baralaba?

A spokesperson for the Baralaba Coal Company says they have “no idea where Aurizon got its information” regarding a recommencement of coal mining at the Baralaba North Coal Mine.

In an analysts presentation released to coincide with Aurizon’s half-yearly results, the rail operator reported it had won a contract to haul two million tonnes of coal a year for the Baralaba Coal company for the next ten years - with a start in three months.

In response, Shift Miner called the Baralaba Coal Company for an update, but a spokesperson said there had been no decision made on a restart to mining operations.

“No we are not operating, and don’t have a date set to restart,” they said.

“I don’t know where Aurizon got that information, but there isn’t anything happening on site, and no date has been set for a restart.

“This is the right number to call, but I suggest you try again next month.”

In 2016 the Baralaba Coal Company - the current owner of the Baralaba and Baralaba North Coal mines - went into administration, less than a year after the previous owners Cockatoo Coal also went broke.

In both cases, US-based major shareholder Liberty Mines and Metals presented a rescue package or Deed of Company Arrangement (DOCA) that was accepted by creditors - although it did result in a new company structure and name. According to the administrators of the Baralaba Coal Company - the most recent owner of the mines - the DOCA put forward was the best option available.

“Liberty’s DOCA proposal provides a better outcome for creditors than an immediate winding up of Baralaba Coal on the basis that employees will be offered ongoing employment on terms no less favourable than their current employment with BCL,” they said at the time.

“It will materially improve the quantum and timing of payments to unsecured creditors, and it provides certainty around timing and outcome of the restructure and it provides a release of Baralaba Coal from its secured obligations.”

In the information released by administrators regarding the DOCA, Shift Miner understood that Liberty proposed establishing a new company - probably called Cockatiel Coal - which would be the new vehicle for operating the Baralaba mine.

However, the spokesperson from the Baralaba Coal Company spoken to this week said Baralaba Coal would be the right people to talk to about the mine in the future.

Busby liquidation

Rockhampton based civil and mining construction company Busby Contracting has entered into liquidation leaving employees owed $420,000, other business $600,000, and the Australian Tax office $1.4 million.

The decision to close the company and try and sell its assets was voluntarily decided by Directors Donald Stephen and Patrick Busby at a meeting in early February, with papers lodged with ASIC by administrators last month.

Busby Contracting grew rapidly through the mining construction boom working for a long list of resource sector companies including Downer, Clark Energy, Dyno Nobel, BGC, Ensham, and Qantas.

However, despite the recovery in mining in the last twelve months, the downturn proved too long with directors concluding the best chance of creditors getting their money was through liquidation of the business.

Joanne Dunn and John Park from FTI Consulting were appointed liquidators telling Shift Miner they have commenced investigations into the company. All proceeds from the liquidation process (after paying FTI Consulting) will go toward paying debts, with employee entitlements a priority.
Draglines for work or smoke?

BHP faces the prospect of having to shut down draglines to allow union access following a successful appeal in the Fair Work Commission (FWC). The CFMEU has won the right to appeal a 2015 ruling which found that the area located on a Dragline between the engine housing and the operator’s chair – which is often used for eating meals – did not constitute a “specified location” for union meetings under the Act.

In what is an argument mostly about the meaning of words, Deputy President Asbury formerly ruled that using this area of a Dragline was not supported by the act and would be impractical.

“I am of the view that the specified areas are not rooms or areas within the meaning of section 492(3) [in the Act],” she said at the time.

“The evidence establishes that the specified areas are primarily functional work areas…within operating pieces of equipment.”

That a functional work area on a Dragline has facilities in which employees can store and prepare food and drinks to consume either in the area itself or in the operating cabin of the Dragline, does not make it an area provided to take meals or other breaks.”

However, the CFMEU has this week won the right to appeal that decision, which has big implications for Union workplace access rights everywhere.

“In allowing them to appeal, a full bench of the FWC said it came to a different conclusion than that reached by Deputy President Asbury in 2015.

“In our view, subject to compliance with all other provisions relating to the right of entry, a permit holder can access the specified locations because they are provided by BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance for the purpose of taking meals and other breaks.

“We therefore respectfully disagree with the conclusion reached by the Deputy President.

“We grant permission to appeal due to the importance of this matter, and it involves the interpretation and application of a relatively new and somewhat contentious provision of the Act.”

In late 2014 when the CFMEU first took the issue to the Fair Work Commission – BHP coal boss Dean Dalla Valle said the Union had been offered alternative venues nearby and that allowing Union Permit holders to enter Draglines would have huge production implications.

“This request for the CFMEU to meet the two operators in the cabin of the dragline would require the dragline to be stopped to ensure the safety of employees, resulting in a substantial operational impact,” he said.

“Every hour a dragline is shut down is a significant cost and loss of productivity: despite being offered an alternative venue close by, the CFMEU has taken the matter to the Fair Work Commission to press its claim to meet in the dragline cabin itself.

“This dispute, one of around 75 disputes between the CFMEU and our coal operations, is ongoing and a typical example of the distraction and impact to our operations that we face daily.”

BHP to confront productivity

The weaker performance of BHP’s Central Queensland coal business in the last six months has played a significant part in a 25% fall in underlying profit for the company. According to BHP, reduced productivity at the Blackwater and Broadmeadow operations due to geotechnical issues cost the company more than $200 million, and was a significant contributor to per unit costs increasing 26% to $71 a tonne.

As a consequence, BHP’s return on the capital employed in Central Queensland has fallen to around 25%. However, when put in perspective against other results released this week, it’s still pretty good going for BHP – even if it was below market expectations.

For example, Wesfarmers’ market-leading Bunnings business had a return on capital for the same period of an “astonishing” 47%, and its Officeworks business had a “solid” return of 15.7%.

Making up for the shortfalls on the cost side were continuing strong coal prices which meant BHP was able to report free cash flows of around $200 million in the coal business. Which means there is money available for expansion projects like the Caval Ridge Southern Circuit project which is on track for completion early next year.

Looking past the issues at Blackwater and Broadmeadow, just about all other operations had record production, and BHP is still expecting to produce around 42 million tonnes of coal this year at an average per unit cost of $66 a tonne (up from $57).

BHP has also flagged an ambitious plan to reduce the number of its employees exposed to respirable silica, diesel particulate matter and coal mine dust over the next five years by 50% in response to the Black Lung Crisis.

The death of 31-year-old mining contract Daniel Springer following an accident at the Goonyella Riverside Mine in August last year was one of two deaths the company reported.

“While Total Recordable Injury Frequency, or TRIF, this period fell to 4.1 per million hours worked, tragically, two of our colleagues died,” CEO Andrew Mackenzie said.

“One, at Goonyella Riverside in August and another, in the Permian, in November. “These fatalities have had a profound and permanent impact on families, friends, colleagues and everyone at BHP.

“We are more committed than ever to learn from these events, to make sure all our people go home safe, every day. And to bring this about by how we design, plan and execute work, and how we make sure that effective controls for all fatal risks are firmly in place.

“Our field leadership program, where leaders spend more time in the field on safety, has now recorded over half a million interactions in the first half and this creates the culture to eliminate fatalities and reduce injury rates.”
The state government has released its best estimates for the number of people who will be commuting to the Bowen and Surat Basin for work over the next four to six years.

Queensland Treasury approaches the problem by creating four different scenarios for resource sector growth - and then makes predictions on the non-resident workforce population that would follow. Notably, however, the estimates are just a small proportion of the overall resource sector workforce, because it doesn’t include workers living locally (by some estimates 75% of the workforce), nor are those FIFO or DIDO workers not on shift the day the counts are taken.

That said, the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (QGSO) predicts the number of FIFO and DIDO workers in the Bowen Basin could be up by nearly 15% to around 17000 in the next 4 to 6 years under its most optimistic vision for the future.

Under that scenario, those resource projects that have all approvals and are committed, those that have an EIS and are working on approvals, and those that have just lodged an initial Advice Statement but gone no further, are assumed to go ahead.

By comparison, the most conservative estimate which considers only existing and fully approved and committed projects predicts the non-resident population will be roughly unchanged for the next six years at around 14500 people.

Under that scenario, the most significant mining community, with the Isaac Regional Council area to accommodate most FIFO and DIDO miners under all scenarios.

However, the Whitsunday and Barcaldine Regional Council areas, who currently have virtually no FIFO or DIDO workers - could see a whole new population segment pop up under specific scenarios for the future.

The QGSO has also registered the turnaround in mining in the last 12 months with the number non-resident workers up around 15% in the Bowen Basin. However, it’s still a long way from the heady days of 2012 when there were 25,000 non-resident workers in the Bowen Basin on any given day.

In the Surat Basin - where the vast majority of the Resource Sector workforce is FIFO or DIDO - the QGSO predicts their population will either be maintained at around 4000 or increase to about 5000 if a suite of gas and solar projects are built.

Most of the growth will be in the Western Downs Shire, but again the numbers are a small fraction of the heady days of 2014 when the non-resident workforce in the Surat Basin was around 15,000 at the height of the CSG construction boom.

The reason why the numbers are so different is that most new work that could happen in the gas industry will be related to sinking new wells which won’t require the same amount of people the gas construction projects of the past did.

As always the QGSO released the figures with the following caveat.

“Projections are based on the best available data and advice at the time of preparation,” they said.

“The projections reflect certain assumptions about the likelihood of projects advancing according to advised commencement dates, sequencing of project stages and timing of workforce peaks.

“Changes to any of these factors can make a significant difference to the cumulative non-resident workforce at a given point in time, particularly during construction phases.

“Short-term influences such as extreme weather events, industrial action and supply chain delays can all result in changes to project scheduling and to these projections.

“QGSO does not advocate any one series as being the most likely or favoured outcome, and users should consider the assumptions affecting each potential scenario.”
BLACKWATER CELEBRATES AUSTRALIA DAY

Australia Day celebrations

(L-R) Therma, Lenny, Kwinn and Norm

(L-R) Helen, Eli and Steve Wood

Colin and Frances Seeman

Cheryl Goethmann and Barb Hocking

(L-R) Maggie, Owen and Margaret Ross

Sgt Paul James and Snr Const Patrick Dyer

Breif and Jenny Ryan

(L-R) Frank, Karen, Salvatore and Francesca Brunetto

Cindy Peters enjoying her breakfast

(L-R) Porky, Bev and Carly Richardson

(L-R) Poria, Lexi and Warren Draper

Logan Scott enjoying his sausage on bread

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Adani left off FIFO list

The Isaac Regional Council has written to the Queensland Government requesting that Clermont is added to a draft list of protected towns under the “Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act” (SSRCA).

The IRC discussed a draft list of towns and mines that would be affected by the new legislation, ahead of the SSRCA taking effect this year.

The SSRCA will, in theory, bring an end to the use of a 100% fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workforce for the operational phase of a large resource project when there is a nearby regional community.

The legislation will define “a large resource project” as one that requires or holds a site-specific Environmental Impact Statement and has a workforce of more than 100 workers, while a “nearby regional community” is within a 125 km radius of the project, and has a population of more than 200.

However, after political lobbying by some stakeholders, Isaac Regional Mayor Anne Baker says they now have a more vital role to play.

“Under the legislation stakeholders like Council can now have a much more active role in the process for assessing the social impact of new mines in our area,” she told Shift Miner.

“So with Clermont being more than 125 kilometres from the proposed Carmichael mine, we can ask the Coordinator general to consider including it, which is what we have done.”

“I know there have been criticisms of the legislation, particularly around its practical implementation, but I am confident about it, and I definitely don’t think its set and forget.”

There was broad criticism of the SSRCA (and its definitions) when the bill was first proposed in 2016. The Infrastructure, Planning and Resources Committee (IPRC) which included experienced mining people like Jim Pearce, were concerned that new mines could easily circumvent the legislation by employing a token number of local workers, and by arguing it wasn’t safe for workers to drive to work.

“It’s recognised that the prohibition of 100% FIFO practices will have limited application, and would not preclude a high percentage of FIFO workers being employed,” the IPRC wrote 12 months ago.

“The IPRC also concedes the bill leaves the door open to 100% FIFO, where the mine’s owners can argue that it’s just too dangerous for miners to be driving to and from a site after 12 hours on the tools.”

And to date, this and many other complex issues remain unresolved.

Consequently, mining companies remain concerned the SSRCA will become a legal monster where the onus of proof - and the bureaucratic burden it implies - will be on the employer.

For example, what happens when an employer chooses a non-local person over a local? They will need to be able to prove the decision wasn’t based on where they lived. Otherwise, they could be fined a $1 million.

Also, what happens when a miner decides to relocate away from the Bowen Basin and commute to work to give their kids an educational opportunity, will that put their job at risk?

QRC Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane shared these concerns last year.

“This Bill will add unnecessary extra red-tape to our sector’s operations, and lower the state’s competitiveness, at a time when the industry is rebounding, and more jobs are coming onto the market.

“It is worth noting that of the (nearly) 50 operating coal mines in Queensland, just two were originally designed as 100% FIFO mines.

“These two mines were approved by the previous Labor Bligh Government at a time when the sector was at its peak, and there was an extreme shortage of skilled workers to fill jobs. However, since operations began at these two mines, both now use local contractors to service the mines and are therefore no longer 100 per cent FIFO.”

Labor’s CQ team

The CFMEU’s Russell Robertson, Zac Beers from the Australian Workers Union (AWU), and small business woman Belinda Hassan from Mackay will be Labor’s local candidates in the next Federal Election.

The 42-year-old Mr Robertson is based in Moranbah and has been a coal miner for the last 17 years, and recently became the President of the Goonyella Riverside Lodge of the CFMEU.

He was confirmed as the candidate for Capricornia this week, aiming to beat two-term LNP Member Michelle Landry who holds the seat with a margin of just over 1%.

Mr Robertson says his “number one priority will be to fight for local infrastructure and real local jobs”.

Twenty-eight-year-old Zac Beers is yet to have his candidacy for Flynn officially confirmed, but is the red-hot favourite after nominating for the role in late January and receiving high-level endorsements from within the Labor Party.

He narrowly lost the last election to current LNP Member for Flynn Ken O’Dowd after a 5.4% swing against the LNP reduced the margin to less than 2%.

Mrs Hassan will seek to topple LNP member for Dawson George Christensen who currently holds the seat with a 3.3% margin.

Central Queensland is expected to be critical for victory in the next Federal Election which will be called later this year or early in 2019.

Bid for Middlemount

Taurus Funds Management appears to have maintained its bullish outlook for the coal sector in Queensland, attempting to buy the 12% of Realm Resources it does not already own.

Realm Resources main mining asset is the Foxleigh coal mine, which it acquired from Anglo American in August 2016, and operates through a subsidiary called Middlemount South Pty Ltd.

Aside from its 88% stake in Realm Resources, Taurus also has a significant interest in Stanmore Coal which operate the Isaac Plains mine, and Terra Com who operate the Blair Athol coal mine.

The board of Realm Resources have advised shareholders this week to do nothing in response to the Taurus offer.

According to Realm “Entities associated with Taurus” first approached them in December last year when they made a conditional, private and non-binding offer of $0.90 a share.

Realm Resources have not traded publicly since July 2016 - but the offer is roughly 20% higher than their price in the last month of public trading in 2016.

Realm Resources rejected that offer saying it was too low and didn’t represent the full value of Realm Resources.
BLACKWATER STATE HIGH SCHOOL FORMAL
A big night at the Blackwater Civic Centre

(L-R) Lochy Getler, Josh Clarke, Kobie Ellis, Maddison Conway, Hayden Ring and Jaden Parsons
(L-R) Keiran Doyle, Faith Gibson and Jacob Jackson
Rina Lee and Skye Saunders

(L-R) Blake Sumption, Joshua Mathewson, Daniel Holt, Declan Nelson-Barrford, Ethan Shoesmith and Mitchell Cook
Tyson Latchford and Jaden Parsons
(L-R) Cayelle Morgan, Rhannon Noonan and Georgia Willman

CLERMONT RACES RECENTLY
Fun, fashion, friendship and fine racing in Clermont

(L-R) Friends Trudi Lisseloff, Rhonda Bryon, Jo Caranagh, Aimee Moore, Sharon Breckon, Bernie Selwood and Nadira Anis enjoy fun, fashion and fine racing at Peppertree.

(L-R) Recruit Station’s Moller family dressed in colourful outfits for the Clermont Spring Races. Pictured are Christy and Craig Moller with daughters Dempsey, Amity and Libby.

Race Club Committee member David King studying the field.

(L-R) Nicole Lund with baby Bray and Nicole Obst with baby Havana were all smiles at Clermont’s much loved racing event.

Isaac Regional Council Division 8 Councillor Lyn Jones presented Del Diavo the winner’s blanket for the Isaac Regional Council QTIS Maiden Plate 1000m.

Shop 38 Fashions on the Field Clermont Pharmacy Princess of the Track runner up Imogen Finlay with winner Libby Moller.
Dear Frank,

With the turnaround in mining I have just been offered a promotion at work. My missus wants me to take it because it means more money but frankly, I don’t think I could do it without feeling a little out of my depth. What do you think I should do? My wife doesn’t understand how I feel.

Dave.

Dear Dave,

This question isn’t about relationship advice, it is about your ability to feel confident. Confidence is the well-spring of success – and, as I like to say, it is also the well-spring of failure. But then, confidence is also the well-spring that helps you to bounce back from failure. Confusing, I know. But true.

Take my entire life – it has been fuelled by my immense self-confidence. Some would argue this confidence is completely and utterly without basis. But what would those morons know? Confident people don’t sit around waiting for others to endorse them. They leap upon life’s challenges, content in the knowledge that they are awesome.

There is no reason why you should not accept that job Dave. Don’t let lack of confidence get in the way of success. Do you think a former reality TV show host – could become the leader of the free world without confidence? I doubt it.

Likewise if I had not been so self-assured, I never would have made it in my lucrative but very brief career as a maritime engineer for BP on an oil rig off New Mexico a few years back.

In case you are not aware – there were a few minor issues which made the papers regarding that project. I managed to get out of the office by the time they had found out that:
a. I was in no way qualified to design oil rigs
b. I had been stealing people’s lunches from the office fridge

Confidence, when applied liberally and without any effort to educate or prepare oneself, is the key to success in any situation. For example, protecting your own home. I routinely sleep with a fully loaded revolver in hand, cocked and with the safety off. When I am sleeping and a creak in the house wakes me, I leap out of bed firing at anything that looks suspicious. It is a practice I would encourage each and every one of you to adopt.

Editor’s note: Shift Miner does not endorse the practice of sleeping with loaded weapons and firing at shadows upon waking.

And Dave, that brings me to my last point. If you lack confidence – buy a gun. It is like an injection of pure awesome into your bloodstream. If this new position is in the area of management, bring a gun into work and see what threatening your subordinates can do for confidence levels. I do. It is a well-spring of confidence, if you will allow me the expression.

I wish you a well-spring of good luck.

Frank

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**Streaking good love advice**

Dear Dave,

Don’t worry about taking the new job. If it has been offered to you then it is occurs to me that your employer or boss is confident in your ability to do a great job. I remember when I first started at Shift Miner I was a young journalist, just out of university. Now I have the confidence to conduct interviews and write quality stories on complicated issues. Of course there will be a learning curve, but if your wife thinks you can do it and so do I.

I would urge you to disregard all of Frank’s advice. I am struggling to find anything that he has suggested which is not illegal. Secondly, Shift Miner management has launched an investigation into whether or not he has accepted money from Well-Spring Bottled Water.

Good luck,

Susan

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**HOW HOT IS IT?**

The “official” temp might be 42 but it can reach high 50’s in the pit.

It’s best to be on night shift sleeping through the worst of it with the a/c on, waking to put jeans, shirts and boots on is no fun, but it beats the dust, sun and heat.

What does your site do to manage extreme heat? I have heard mixed reports. As workers we need to make sure they are listening to us and help us back it out here, summer after summer.

Who works the longest and gets the hottest? Who has it the hardest in the heat?

I don’t think it should matter. You chose your career and knew it was part of the deal, but does that make someone else feeling the heat more than you do, a whim or soft?

This is another stigma we – as workers in our industry – need to try and stamp out. It can be serious, even deadly. It’s bloody hot for everyone and anyone can suffer from severe heat stroke. Even you perhaps?

So, how long do you keep going before you speak up if you’re not right, or let a workmate struggle thinking they should just hold on? Do you stay hydrated? Check your wee :-) it’s a good sign. Lighter the better unless you have berocca every day, it may be orange!

If you don’t look after yourself, you can go downhill real fast. Do you know what the signs are? Nausea, red face, dizziness, headaches, delirious, hot, stop sweating and hallucinations are some signs.

What do you do to manage it? It’s common sense and we hear it all the time, but it also helps us to know what we can do:

Shade from the harsh sun, wide brim hard hat flaps
Water, ice, electrolyte cordials and ice blocks.
Singlet will absorb sweat under work shirts
Aircon to escape, at least for a bit during the day in car, crib hut or machines.
Rest in between hot jobs
Plan hot tasks on night shift
Swap operators around

Sunscreen

My point is that it’s all relative and shit can go down if anyone gets crook from being too hot. Look after you, and your mates.

Cheers,

MM
Peabody Energy has invested hundreds of millions in a new start of the art – significantly automated - longwall for its North Goonyella underground operation.

The company flagged the purchase in its recent half-yearly results, where Australian operations contributed well over half of the company’s total revenue of US$5.6 Billion for the 2017 calendar year. Peabody has secured a contractPCI coal price of around US$156.50 per tonne for the first three months of this year, which has given them the confidence to invest in the new Longwall which they say will: “underwrite double-digit metallurgical coal production for the foreseeable future”.

The 300-metre face CAT longwall system will include a suite of automation.

“North Goonyella produces premium coking coal via a Cat longwall system, which was instrumental in achieving record production from the mine in 2017,” A spokesperson for CAT said.

“The decision to move to a new Cat system was driven by technological advances that enable automated shearer steering and face alignment, reduced exposure of operators to dust, and less maintenance. “The shearer will be equipped with the Cat PMC™ Evo-S control system, intelligent software modules and advanced measuring technology.

“Software tools and sensors in the gate ends and in the shield controllers enable advanced calculations for full 3D navigation and an accurate floor profile calculation.

“Caterpillar engineers will design a state-of-the-art dust suppression system for North Goonyella.”

Average production costs across Peabody’s Australian mines in 2017 were about US$56 a tonne (US$90/t met and $34/t thermal) and remain near the record low of US$51/t set in 2015.

However, its been the significant improvement in Australian prices that has made the big difference to them with Australian earnings of $ 906.7 million in 2017 being their largest operating result since 2008.

Stanmore Milestone

Stanmore Coal is calling this months government approvals a significant milestone for the company that will sustain 200 existing jobs and see production double in the next financial year.

Stanmore was awarded mining leases by the State Government, and received environmental approval from the Federal Government, for the proposed Isaac Plains East Project.

The Isaac Plains East (IPE) coal deposit - formerly known as Wotonga – is nearly adjacent to their existing Isaac Plains mining operations, and was purchased from Peabody for around $7 million in 2015.

In its Mining Lease application, Stanmore predicted the coal produced from IPE over the life of the project would be worth around $890 million (assuming a long-run average price of US$83.91/t and US$68.23/t for semi-soft coking and thermal products respectively, and an average exchange rate of AU$0.77/US$).

While IPE will primarily operate as an extension of the existing Isaac Plains Mine and will utilise the existing infrastructure, mining equipment and workforce, Stanmore says it’s considering a plan to add a truck and shovel mining fleet to their operations.

They predict this new fleet would add around $10 a tonne to costs.

However, by putting them to work as soon as possible at IPE, they believe it would put them on track to achieve ROM production of 3.5 million tonnes by around 2020.

“The proposed production plans and the successful progression of both projects allow Stanmore to take another significant step forward towards our objective of 3.5Mt ROM for the complex over the next two years,” Stanmore Managing Director Dan Clifford said.

“The Isaac Plains East mining lease supports the continued direct employment of 210 people in the Moranbah district, provides approximately $75 million in additional state royalties over the life of the operation, and will provide numerous opportunities for local and regional small business and is a great outcome for Stanmore and our stakeholders.”

Deal a door-opener

Mackay based Mastermyne Group is hopeful that its involvement in the development of a bankable feasibility study for a possible underground expansion at the Stanmore Coal owned Isaac Plains mine will lead to valuable contract work in the future.

Known as the Isaac Plains Underground Mining Project (IPUMP), the proposal is to exploit a measured and indicated resource (JORC) of more than 21 million tonnes in the Eastern part of the Isaac Plains mining lease using continuous miners, shuttle cars, and mobile boilters to extract the coal.

According to Stanmore, at peak production, the IPUMP would have a theoretical output of around one million tonnes of coal a year which would be processed and loaded through existing above ground mining infrastructure.

If the project proves feasible, and the board of Stanmore approves it, then Stanmore has said they expect to use Mastermyne to provide the contract services required - assuming they can agree on cost.

“We are very pleased to have secured this contract and are looking forward to working closely with Stanmore Coal,” Mastermyne CEO Tony Caruso said.

“While the study itself will not have a material impact on Mastermyne Group's turnover, the award of ECI [Early Contractor Involvement] is an important step in realising the company’s strategy for the whole of mine operations. “We look forward to completing the study and seeing the mine move into production.”

A fortnight ago Stanmore released its half-yearly report recording net profit after tax of more than $8 million, after losing around $500,000 in the same period 12 months ago.

The main improvement in the performance of the business was a near 20% increase in Run of Mine Coal production, a consequent 12% increase in the coal produced and a 16% decrease in per unit mining costs to (FOB) to $99 a tonne.

The average coal price received was $131 a tonne.
Confusion about Baralaba?

Despite a spokesperson at the mine telling Shift Miner last month, they had no date set to restart operations, a recommencement of coal production at Baralaba seems imminent with the mine’s owner Cockatiel Coal Pty Ltd advertising for operational roles in the last fortnight.

According to ads posted on SEEK, Cockatiel is looking to recruit a coal quality coordinator who will “work closely with the mining contractor to ensure that the coal mined is of optimum quality and minimal dilution.”

In late February, a spokesperson for the Baralaba Coal Company said they had “no idea where Aurizon got its information” after the rail operator reported it had won a contract to haul two million tonnes of coal a year for the Baralaba Coal Company for the next ten years – with a start in May.

In response, Shift Miner called the Baralaba Coal Company for an update, but a spokesperson said there had been no decision made on a restart to mining operations.

“No we are not operating, and don’t have a date set to restart,” they said.

“I don’t know where Aurizon got that information, but there isn’t anything happening on site, and no date has been set for a restart.

“This is the right number to call, but I suggest you try again next month.”

In 2016 the Baralaba Coal Company – the current owner of the Baralaba and Baralaba North Coal mines – went into administration, less than a year after the previous owners Cockatoo Coal also went broke.

In both cases, US-based major shareholder Liberty Mines and Metals presented a rescue package or Deed of Company Arrangement (DOCA) that was accepted by creditors – although it did result in a new company structure and name.

In the information released by administrators regarding the DOCA, Shift Miner understood that Liberty proposed establishing a new company – probably called Cockatiel Coal – which would be the new vehicle for operating the Baralaba mine.

Macmahon buy

Mining contractor Macmahon has announced its intention to purchase the Bowen Basin focused civil construction firm TMM Group this week.

Neither party has released a purchase price, however the owners of TMM will continue in their current roles and will be paid in both cash and shares providing they meet agreed performance benchmarks over the next three years.

Macmahon is hopeful the deal will give them access to new areas of work.

“The acquisition of TMM will provide Macmahon with additional civil capability,” a spokesperson for Macmahon said.

“That’s expected to be an enabler to core mining work through contracts for initial site earthworks and construction services, as well as the ability to target site rehabilitation projects.”

According to Macmahon, TMM’s current annual turnover is around $60 million which they hope to build on.

In 2013, TMM Group purchased the Coppabella based Windsor Earthmoving Group in a private sale that took their workforce from around 50 to more than 200.

That transaction got them a foot in the door with a suite of big miners including Jellinbah Resources, Thiess, BMA, and Leighton before the downturn.
SODOKU

Across
1. Wishful thinker
5. Ungainly
9. From the menu
10. Cuba’s capital
12. Overmuch
13. Savoy or Hilton
14. Very eager
16. Entertainers
19. Arise (from)
21. Had prior knowledge
24. Aggravated
25. Unmodified
27. Goes on all fours
28. Deeply touching
29. Igloo dweller
30. Influenced

Down
1. Endorsed
2. Roofing grass
3. ... & groans
4. Taking (exam)
6. Abhorrent
7. Dining hour
8. 12-month-old horse
11. Salesmen
15. Series of tennis comp wins (5,4)
17. Second-rate
18. Listeners’ forum, ... radio
20. Large Australian birds
21. Start of match (4-3)
22. Shocked
23. Revised (text)
26. Quarrel

THE “GREATEST AUSTRALIAN IN THE CRIB ROOM” QUIZ.

1. Name Australia’s western-most point?
2. How much of Australia is classified as desert A) 8% B) 16% C) 25% D) 35%?
3. Which is the second largest city in NSW?
4. In what state/territory is the Brisbane Ranges National Park?
5. The Tamar River flows to which Tasmanian town/city?
6. What is the tallest waterfall in Australia?
7. What is the longest river in the Northern Territory?
8. The landmark Kata Tjuta is also known as what?
9. What is Australia’s largest non-salt lake?
10. What is South Australia’s largest island?

ANSWERS


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March 19, 2018
A Brisbane engineer whose job description includes regular commutes to Mongolia has been named Queensland’s Exceptional Woman in Resources for 2018. Jo-Anne Dudley, Senior Manager Strategic Mine and Resources Planning with Rio Tinto, has worked in underground mines throughout Australia, Africa, the USA and Mongolia.

Jo-Anne, a mother of two, moved her family from Brisbane to Vancouver in 2010 to work on a feasibility study for the Oyu Tolgoi mine in Mongolia. Now based back in Brisbane Jo-Anne travels regularly to Mongolia and manages 30 people across three locations; Brisbane, Ulaanbaatar and the Oyu Tolgoi mine.

Jo-Anne has been a regular guest lecturer in Caving Studies at the University of British Columbia, and chaired the voluntary group Women in Mining and Resources Queensland (WIMARQ) in 2008 and 2009.

A member of the University of Queensland Women in Engineering Initiative Advisory Board, Jo-Anne says she helps promote the entry of women into engineering, supports them at university and prepares them for post-university life.

“To ensure that not only the strongest survive those early, and often lonely years, I am a passionate participant in the WIMARQ/QRC mentoring program having mentored four wonderful women in resources over the past three years,” she said.

Jo-Anne was only the second woman in New South Wales to gain an underground mine manager certificate and is one of only two females in Rio Tinto, classified as a Competent Person to sign off on reports of reserves and resources under the JORC code.

The annual Resources Awards for Women, organised by the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) and WIMARQ were presented by the Minister for Women Di Farmer at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in front of a crowd of more than 1,000, including about 450 people watching via the internet in Moranbah, Mount Isa, Blackwater, Curragh Mine, Cannington Mine and Rockhampton.

“These awards play a pivotal role in our sector’s efforts to bring better gender balance to our workforce,” said QRC Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane.

“The QRC and its members have a goal of at least 20 percent women in ‘non-traditional’ roles—such as engineering, earth sciences, trades and operators—by 2020,” he said.

“Since 2006 these awards have provided a cohort of role models and ambassadors to inspire women to enter and remain in our resources sector.

“The economic and social benefits of better gender balance for our sector are clear and we believe that women should have equal access to the rewarding and high-paying careers it offers.

“It’s been more than a decade since the introduction of our Women in Resources Action Plan, the proportion of women working in non-traditional roles in our sector in Queensland has risen from just six percent to 14 percent in our latest survey of members.”

Other category winners were:
• Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance, Rio Tinto
• Exceptional Young Woman in Queensland Resources, Holstein Wong, BHP
• Exceptional tradesperson, technician, operator in Queensland Resources, Dannielle Weston, Hastings Deering
• Gender Diversity Champion in Queensland Resources, Rachel Durdin, Rio Tinto
• Exceptional Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA) Student in Queensland Resources Caitlyn Barnes, Moranbah SHS

Isaac Regional Council puts on eight

Isaac Regional Council officially welcomed eight new trainees to the organisation recently. Mayor Anne Baker said Council was proud to offer a traineeship program that saw locals from all walks of life upskilled and job ready.

“Many of our trainees and apprentices go on to stay at Council or step into other employment opportunities in the region,” Cr Baker said.

“Programs like these reflect our outlook that this organisation and our region is built on the strength of pure people power.

“These positions combine hands-on work experience with a nationally recognised qualifications.

“Each trainee will be with Council for between one to two years in duration, with positions in administration, information digital media technology, land and conservation management, regulatory services, water and wastewater and libraries.”

Cr Baker said this year’s traineeship intake was boosted by a significant subsidy offered by the Queensland Government’s Skilling Queenslanders For Work First Start and Community Recovery Programs.

“We acknowledge the continued support by the State Government for Council’s traineeship program,” she said.

Stellar visit by NRL superstar

One of the NRL’s most capped and respected players Cameron Smith spent the day with Moranbah High School students recently. More than 100 people attended the event, including school students, and aspiring footy players and their families.

Mr Smith said the day was a great opportunity to try and inspire kids from regional areas.

“I think it’s very important to be involved in community based events, and trying to inspire the leaders of the future,” he said.

“It was good to share stories about my career and life with some of the young men and women who were here, and hopefully they got something out of it and enjoyed the day.”

The day was hosted by Stellar Recruitment as part of their “Inspiring Great New Career Heights” initiative.

CHDC 10 trainees

Central Highlands Regional Council has recently appointed ten trainees through the First Start funding program. It’s the third year that council has taken part in the program, which is funded and supported by the Queensland Government under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative.

Training Officer Aleisha Catip said the program allows council to hire additional trainees and gives opportunities to young people and disadvantaged job seekers to gain nationally recognised qualifications and twelve months employment by undertaking a traineeship.

“Council is proud to be part of the program and, in welcoming these trainees, looks forward to supporting them through their traineeship,” she said.

“This is a rewarding experience for the trainees because they are investing in their future, and also for council because it’s fostering a progressive environment for job seekers in the local economy.”

Four out of the ten trainees are diesel fitter apprentices, two are in civil construction, two are learning horticulture, one is in information technology, and one is working in asset management.

Moranbah Help

A crew of Central Highlands Regional Council staff have returned home after travelling to Moranbah to assist Isaac Regional Council with the clean-up and recovery following a freak storm that damaged the town.

The crew of nine staff departed with three trucks and light vehicles to clean-up green waste, while two State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers were deployed to Dysart to assist local units there.

Mayor Kerry Hayes was pleased to receive positive feedback on the crew’s efforts in Moranbah saying he appreciated the staff’s commitment.

“Our staff volunteered to go away from their families, while the weather pattern of storms persisted around their own homes as well,” he said.

“They are showing commitment above and beyond to help our neighbours at Isaac Regional Council.

“Living in our region, we have all experienced the consequences of natural disasters and it’s those times that show our preparedness to help others when needed.”

While the crews were away their colleagues at home were faced with emergency clean-up works in Springsure and Rolleston after heavy rainfall caused flash flooding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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</table>
| CAR FOR SALE    | 4X4 RG COLORADO AND BOAT  
Full camping ready and self sufficient. Micky Thomson tyres 80% new lift, correct bar buttons lights and light bar ARB rooftop tent and awning. | $ 36,000 | Call: 0428 238 069   |
| CAR FOR SALE    | 80 SERIES LANDCRUISER  
Toyota Landcruiser 80 series GXL constant 4x4. | $ 4,500  | Call: 0427 004 382   |
| CAR FOR SALE    | 2002 FORD V8 EXPLORER  
UT 4.6 V8 auto no rust has electronic rust profiling, paint protection, upholstery treatment 167000k oil change every 5000k perfect except for crack in rear lift door has been covered. | $ 5,000  | Call: 0400 306 202   |
| VAN FOR SALE    | TOYOTA LANDCRUISER  
Toyota 200 series V8 turbo diesel Bullbar double side rails, hid spotlights, towbar, uhf. Good condition, auto. | $ 49,000 | Call: 0428 468 440   |
| CAR FOR SALE    | HDR 79 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER TURBO  
2005 model, UHF radio Goose neck ball Brake controller Toys open country mt tyres near new Cloncurry. | $ 30,000 | Call: 0408 199 537   |
| CAR FOR SALE    | 1979 KOMBI 2L  
Full fit out including Rock n’ Roll bed, electric sink, storage cupboards, dual battery system, updated wiring and lighting including safety switch, multiple electrical sockets (usb, 12v and 240v ports). | $ 26,000 | Call: 0414 554 676   |
| CARAVAN FOR SALE| SUPREME EXECUTIVE SERIE 11  
Blackwater, Queensland Date of manufacture December 2011. Full annexe plus 3 shade walls 120w solar panel New heavy duty roll out awning. Price includes Reece towing hitch & camec sway control. | $ 42,500 | Call: 0417 783 865   |
| TRAILER FOR SALE| OFF ROAD CAMPER TRAILER  
Johnno’s Camper Trailer in very good condition, made in Australia for Aussie conditions. | $ 8,500  | Call: 0409 924 969   |
| TRUCK FOR SALE  | DODGE AT4-575 TABLE TOP TRUCK  
1966 Dodge AT4-575 table top truck 65700 Miles from new 318 v8 4 speed manual Paint original and shows signs or wear. | $ 10,000 | Call: 0484 920 953   |
| UTE PARTS FOR SALE | MAINLINE UTE BODIES AND PARTS  
Three x 1953 Mainline ute bodies and parts and running motor for sale. Pickup from Chinchilla. $7500 negotiable. | $ 7,500  | Call: 0410 587 132   |
| BOAT FOR SALE   | 429 RAMPAGE  
PRICE DROP Like new! Hardly used.2016. Need sold ASAP. negotiable. | $ 7,700  | Call: 0419 682 211   |

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### Boat for Sale

- **4.1 meter salmon tinny with 40 hp motor**
- Garmin depth sounder, safety gear, Dunbier trailer with new tyres and wheel bearings, motor has done about 130 hours.

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<tr>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$5,400</td>
<td>Call: 0408 058 585</td>
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### Golf Cart for Sale

- **EZEGO Golf Cart**
- Golf cart 36v in good condition comes with smart charger and single point watering system, will do 36 holes, never had a problem, has Trojan batteries in excellent condition.

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<th>Price</th>
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<td>$3,300</td>
<td>Call: 0418779 970</td>
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### Engine for Sale

- **383 Roller Cam Project Engine**
- Holden project 383 roller cam project engine. Parts includ VT roller cam block (no machining done yet), COME racing 383 stroker kit with forged pistons H-beam rods and 4 bolt conversion caps.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>Call: 0407 152 988</td>
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### Tuff Bull Bar for Sale

- **Tuff Bull Bar [winch compatible] and dual side rails**
- Tuff bull bar in polished alloy to suit 10/15+ 200 series Land Cruiser GXL. All parts in good useable condition.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>Call: 0418716 506</td>
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### Roof Rack for Sale

- **Duel Cab Alloy Roof Rack**
- 6 months old in New condition, has had a weld let go and needs rewelding.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$160</td>
<td>Call: 0499 009 608</td>
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### Buzz Saw for Sale

- **9HP Mobilco Buzz Saw**
- Mobilco Buzz Saw, 9HP Briggs and Stratton engine. Good working order. Comes with extra 34 inch stainless steel blade. Also available is a 240 volt 1000 watt generator for and extra $200.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Call: 0439 634 269</td>
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### Motor & Gearbox for Sale

- **Ford 351 Motor and Auto Gearbox**
- Ford 351 Motor and Auto Gearbox.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>Call: 0410 587 132</td>
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### Crimpers for Sale

- **Cabac Crimpers for Sale**
  - Cabac Hex crimpers 10-120mm. Pick up only. Glenella.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$75</td>
<td>Call: 0474 565 193</td>
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### Backhoe for Sale

- **JCB Sitemaster 4x4, 4 in 1 bucket, Extender hoe, Air conditioning, machine is in excellent condition, Machine is currently located at Clermont qld. Freight can be arranged.**

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<tr>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$31,000</td>
<td>Call: 041 268 357</td>
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### Excavator for Sale

- **Case CX75SR 8T Excavator**
  - Mud bucket, 700mm bucket, 450mm bucket, Plus front blade, Machine has been well serviced, Runs very well.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Call: 0422 963 733</td>
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### Metal Bull for Sale

- **Metal Bull Sculpture**
  - Metal Bull Sculpture for sale – Lifesize. Made in South Africa and can be made to order.

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>Call: 0457 759 519</td>
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### Demountable Accommodation Unit

- **8.4 x 2.4 Steel frame, cladded, Excellent condition. 2 sliding doors, Kitchenette 1 x 1800mm Kitchen bench with Single bowl sink with mixer tap.**

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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>Call: 0408 063 441</td>
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### rims Tyres for Sale

- **X2 excel rims two with tyres. One front rim without us only 6 months old. $250 for the lot. Must sell Rims tyres.**

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<th>Price</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Call: 0400 181 136</td>
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