



TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF ROCKFALL FATALITIES IN AUSTRALIAN MINES

ACG Research Report No. ACG:1009-01

MERIWA Project No. M341

ROCKFALL: "An uncontrolled fall of ground of significant size in an entry area, or an uncontrolled fall of ground of any size that causes (or potentially causes) injury or damage."

It is estimated that in the past decade, falls of ground caused 25% of all lost time injuries and 40% of all fatal accidents in WA underground mines. **The ACG, in response to industry demand, has completed the one-year research project, *Towards the Elimination of Rockfall Fatalities in Australian Mines*.**

With input from the project sponsors, the Centre has assembled probably Australia's most comprehensive database on rockfalls, investigating more than 750 incidents that occurred between 1993 and 2001 at 26 underground metal operations.

Rockfall risks can be divided into two types:

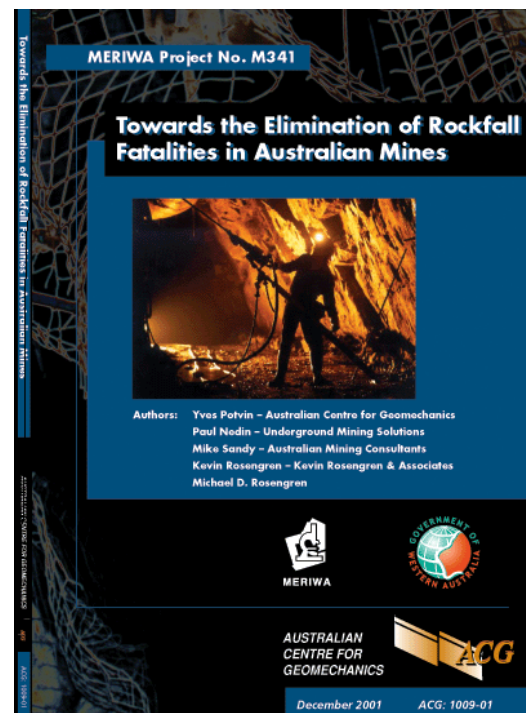
- 1) the risk existing in the intense working areas near the active faces;
- 2) and the risk present in the rest of the mine, including travelways, declines and accesses.

Since 1993, most rockfall injuries have occurred within 10m of active faces and have involved rocks smaller than 1 tonne.

The report findings will assist industry to develop solutions that will reduce the incidence of rockfall related injuries and accidents.

In the second phase of this project the ACG will continue to gather and analyse critical research information and disseminate these important findings to industry. With directive from the CEO Elimination of Rockfall Fatalities Workshop held in April 2002, the ACG in collaboration with the MCA is developing a national guideline for underground rockfall

management to cover metalliferous and coal mining, collate available and potential training and education resources, and also collate available and potential technology to address rockfall risks.



The final project report is available for sale from the ACG.

Preventing recurrence of underground mining accidents remains a top priority requiring constant vigilance and a substantial commitment from all involved in underground mining operations. The Centre appreciates the support from the project sponsors – Barrick Gold of Australia, Henry Walker Eltin, Sons of Gwalia, KCGM, Outokumpu, Pasminco, MIM Lead Mine, BHP Cannington, RTZ Peak Mine, Normandy Bronzewing, WMC and MERIWA.

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