

15 May 2018

UnionsWA Incorporated • ABN 64 950 883 305  
Level 4, 445 Hay Street, PERTH WA 6000  
PO Box Z5380, St Georges Tce, PERTH WA 6831  
Tel: +61 8 9328 7877 • Fax: +61 8 9328 8132  
unionsyes@unionswa.com.au • www.unionswa.com.au

Hon Adele Farina MLC  
Chairperson  
Standing Committee on Public Administration  
4 Harvest Terrace  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Ms Farina

## **Inquiry into WorkSafe – Additional Question**

Thank you for your correspondence in regards to the Mines and Safety Division's Significant Incident Reports and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) investigation reports.

UnionsWA believes that more detailed reporting by WorkSafe would be a useful mechanism for ensuring that lessons learnt from significant incidents are understood by unions, industry and health and safety representatives.

UnionsWA has long examined Significant Incident Reports released by Mine Safety as per the first question from the committee and believes that WorkSafe should replicate that reporting. We have no experience in responding to ATSB or other investigation reports.

The issue of reporting of safety lessons from workplace fatal ties and serious safety incidents has been raised by UnionsWA for some time within tripartite occupational health and safety forums.

As an example a recent Mine Safety Significant Incident Report (No. 261) was released on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May following a fatality at a unionised workplace.

This report provided significant detail on the method of the fatality as well as the contributory causes. Most importantly the report detailed the actions required to ensure that other mine operators can rectify safety issues on identical or simular plant or equipment.

Under the current circumstances for general industry unions and industry have to rely on either a Coroner's Report to be released or for a prosecution to occur. Either of these can involve delays up to several years.

In contrast the Significant Incident Report no. 261 was released 11 days after the workplace fatality.

UnionsWA believes that the Mines and Safety Division strikes the right balance when communicating about serious incidents, in terms of the level of detail about the incident in its Reports, and the promptness of its responses. Appropriate respect is paid to family members of a deceased person, and future prosecutions of the workplace incident are not compromised.

Given the recent machinery of government changes, one of the positives that should come from the amalgamation of Mine Safety into a safety division of DIMIRS, would be for WorkSafe to adopt Mine Safety practices which have proven to be effective.

Yours sincerely

 **Owen Whittle**

**Assistant Secretary**