



Beaconsfield Gold Mine Media Release

SUBJECT: Larry Knight Inquest
DATE: 22 July, 2008

Since the Anzac Day rock fall Beaconsfield Mine had become the most investigated mine in Australia and possibly the world, Beaconsfield Gold Chief Executive Officer Bill Colvin said today.

He said there has been an unprecedented level of investigation by authorities and by the mine itself following the tragic accident.

“What we know now was simply not foreseeable at the time of the rock fall,” Mr Colvin said.

In addition to investigations into the cause of the rock fall, over the past two years the mine has developed four Cases for Safety which have examined every aspect of the mine’s operation and which have now been accepted by Workplace Standards Tasmania.

After extensive consultation with employees and the AWU the mine is now using a new remote mining method that avoids the need for personnel to enter the ore body during the production phase.

The ramp-up to full mining rates was completed during June 2008. Employment levels are now back to slightly above pre Anzac Day levels, as exploration and mine development starts to be accelerated.

Mr Colvin said the mine had decided against the examination of every witness during the Inquest because the cause of the rock fall had already been subjected to 27 months of intense inquiry by a highly experienced and respected senior counsel, Mr Greg Melick, SC.

“This position should assist the process and help in achieving closure for Larry Knight’s family and for past and present employees of Beaconsfield Gold Mine,” Mr Colvin said.

Mr Colvin said the rock fall was a terrible tragedy and, on behalf of everyone involved with Beaconsfield mine, he wanted to publicly express condolences to Larry Knight’s family and friends for their loss.

“We cannot imagine anything else that the mine could possibly add to the understanding of this matter that hasn’t already been provided and exhaustively investigated by Mr Melick,” Mr Colvin said.

“However, we absolutely respect the role of the Coroner to now carry out what he judges to be the appropriate enquiries,” Mr Colvin said.

“There are two general issues which have generated some media attention. These are the implication that financial pressure compromised safety, and that there was a lack of proper hazard identification and risk analysis.

“These are scandalous allegations based on flimsy and, in some cases, factually incorrect evidence, which are addressed in our submission today, and by the weight of evidence already presented to the Special Investigation.

“Mr Melick concluded in his report that there was no evidence for saying that financial considerations compromised safety.

Information provided or available to the Coroner included:

- Extremely detailed written responses from the mine in response to a series of notices issued by the Special Investigation team in June and November 2006;
- Interviews with the mine’s senior managers, many of the mine’s employees, and the 7 external consultants who had provided reports to the mine;
- 1,131 documents in both electronic and hard copy form, totalling 53,000 pages;
- More than 60,000 emails;
- The Melick report itself which, with its 57 annexures runs to more than 2,500 pages and which includes the 85 page report of Mr Marisett on geotechnical issues, and the report of Professor Quinlan on occupational health and safety issues which runs to 420 pages.
- The four detailed Cases for Safety which examine every aspect of the current safe operations of the mine and which total 1,800 pages;

Mr Colvin said that nevertheless all key mine witnesses would appear at the Inquest and co-operate with the Coronerial Inquiry, and would have access to legal counsel.

Counsel representing the mine also urged the Coroner to call Special Investigator Greg Melick QC to provide evidence on his findings, in view of his unrivalled command of all of the material gathered by the Special Investigation.

For further information please contact Michael Lester on 0425 235 157.