

## Mining safety under review after deaths from known risks

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**The NSW government is to crack down on the mining industry over how it implements and reports on safety controls for significant known risks, after an investigation found a spate of five deaths showed up deficiencies.**

The move follows concerns about a sharp increase in fatalities in mines across the nation, which union officials claim reflects companies hit by low commodity prices using more under-trained casual labour and cutting corners on safety, allegations the mining industry rejects.

The number of work-related deaths in mines spiked at 17 in 2013-14, the third highest in 15 years, with five fatalities in NSW alone in eight months, and others in Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Analysis by Australian Mining said that in a six-month period, an Australian miner was killed at work every 15 days.

The fatality rate continues at a historically high rate nationally, with eight deaths in the mining industry so far this year, compared with 10 in the whole of 2013.

NSW Resources Minister Anthony Roberts last year wrote to the Mine Safety Advisory Council seeking “a deeper, holistic examination of current circumstances to ensure, as the regulator, we identify and respond to any systematic and underlying issues”.

The report of the investigation conducted by consultants Noetic Solutions, to be released today, says that while the accidents each involved different circumstances, “three of the four incidents represented the tragic outcome of well-known risks in the mining industry”.

Just one of the accidents was regarded as extremely rare.

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