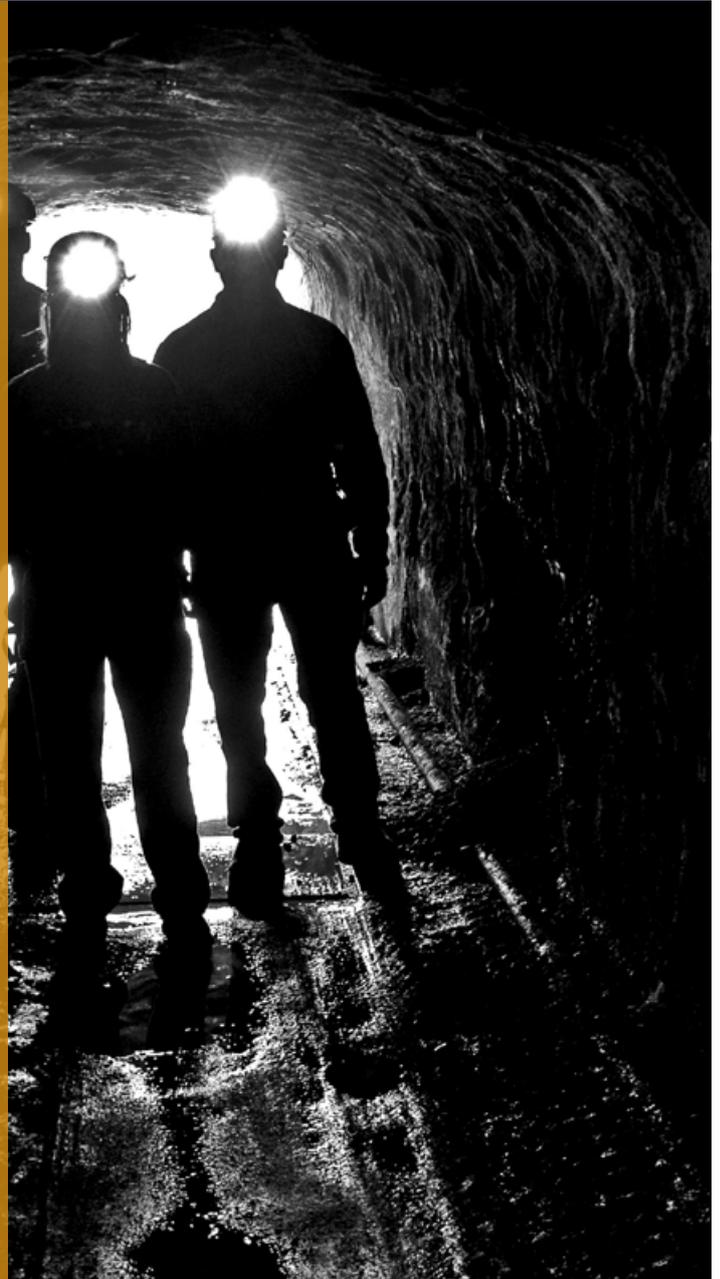


# How Beyonce and Bonaparte are so post-COVID for mining

Written by Hugh Thompson & Peter Laumets

Hi, welcome to the first run of The Practical Change of Mining. We see that a lot is written regards the 'big' picture on trends and changes in mining; but very little at a practical, operational level. We'd like to share our thoughts and experience on a practical level. At times we are just providing guiding questions, rather than prescribing solutions – and we always welcome contact, feedback and discussion.

We see the mining industry as large and diverse. Mine sites, mining companies and service providers come together in an incredibly wide and diverse industry. Currently employment on mine sites is approximately 260,000. When offsite involvement is included, the "mining" industry is 1,000,000 strong. ([Yep, believe us - the reference is here](#)) There are some 360 operating mine sites, producing 20 commodities in Australia. We are addressing the broader mining community here. So does the last swing on nightshift have common ground with the C-suite in their office towers?



## COVID Practical Change – the detail.

COVID, COVID 'top of mind' – correct? But how will this impact us on a practical level? Here are our thoughts, specifically as regards to the next 3 to 9 month horizon. Most mine sites seem to have gone past the initial pandemic response, have embedded changes to site procedures to respond to the health aspect, and are basically back to a "Business As Usual" position. A lot of service providers, particularly those based in large cities, are not there yet. Change is diverse, non-uniform and at times lacking focus.

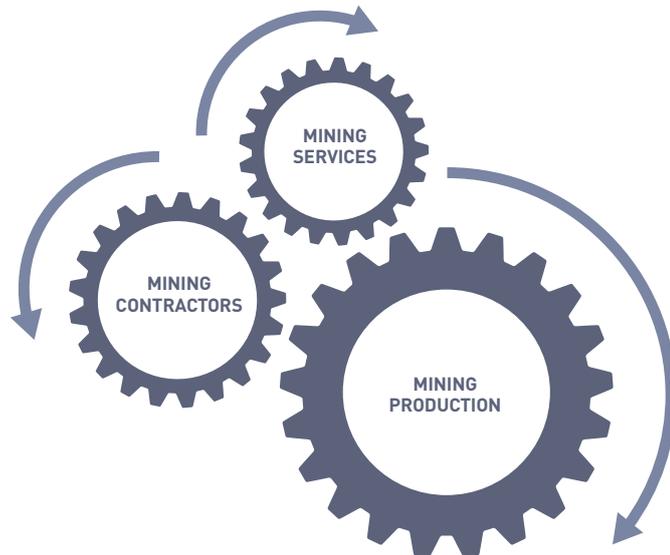
### Are you ready for the COVID Practical Change?

#### COVID Considerations

- › Duty of care
- › Fitness for work
- › Contact tracing
- › Response protocols

#### Tools & practices required:

- › Risk management structures
- › Change management protocols
- › Management system controls



Mine Production : Open Pit and UG mine and process workers and site staff; 24/7 Shifts, FIFO and Domestic

Maintenance contractors - Electrical, mechanical, primary & sub-contractors, onboarding, exiting, PPE, OH&S requirements

Mining services - Supplemental crews, Engineering, D&B specialists, Tyre fitters, Road crews & downstream stakeholders (rail, transport, shipping, CHPP), Consultants, Financiers and Inspectors

**Reality is that a vaccine roll-out will take time, new variants will continue to emerge, hotspot management doesn't look any more predictable and mining is very mobile. Owners and managers will need to become more proactive and agile in managing day-to-day responses to COVID.**

So, some practical actions to look at

- › **'Fit for work' testing** - Already some companies are doing pre-emptive COVID testing of their work force.; ie. before getting on the plane, before getting on the bus to travel to site for the next swing. Essentially treating this as similar to drug and alcohol testing, and Fitness to Work practices. Practical considerations here include:
  - › *Are your OH&S, HR and Procurement systems set up to do this?*
  - › *Have you thought how this, fits in with your Duty of Care responsibilities? The DoC responsibility for an employee on a FIFO site, who is 'cared' for on a 24hr basis is way different to the DoC for an office-based staff member in a city.*
  - › *Have you looked at the COVID practices of your key suppliers? Especially in functions like maintenance, where outsourcing and non-visible supply chains often feature.*
  - › *How will town mines cope, where everyone goes home every day?*
  
- › **'Beyonce Team Leadership style'** - People are used to the work-at-home via Zoom world - one implication of this is that the workforce has become more egalitarian. Easier to not really listen to the boss when on an 'iffy' internet connection. *Now, how does that change life in the office?* Especially as people come back to work. Team leaders now need to be more "influencers" rather than "imperialists". So, think Beyonce, not Bonaparte.
  
- › **'Mentor the front-line Leader'** - *How is that change being managed?* Training? Obviously. Better yet, workplace mentoring and coaching (Yes, these are different! See the comparison below). Organisations need to honestly assess who needs this help, it is most useful to team leaders and supervisors; however is often only provided to senior managers. And obviously we can talk though these differences.

#### TRAINING

Relevant subject matter  
Personal development  
Knowledge directed  
Content driven  
Framed by content

#### COACHING

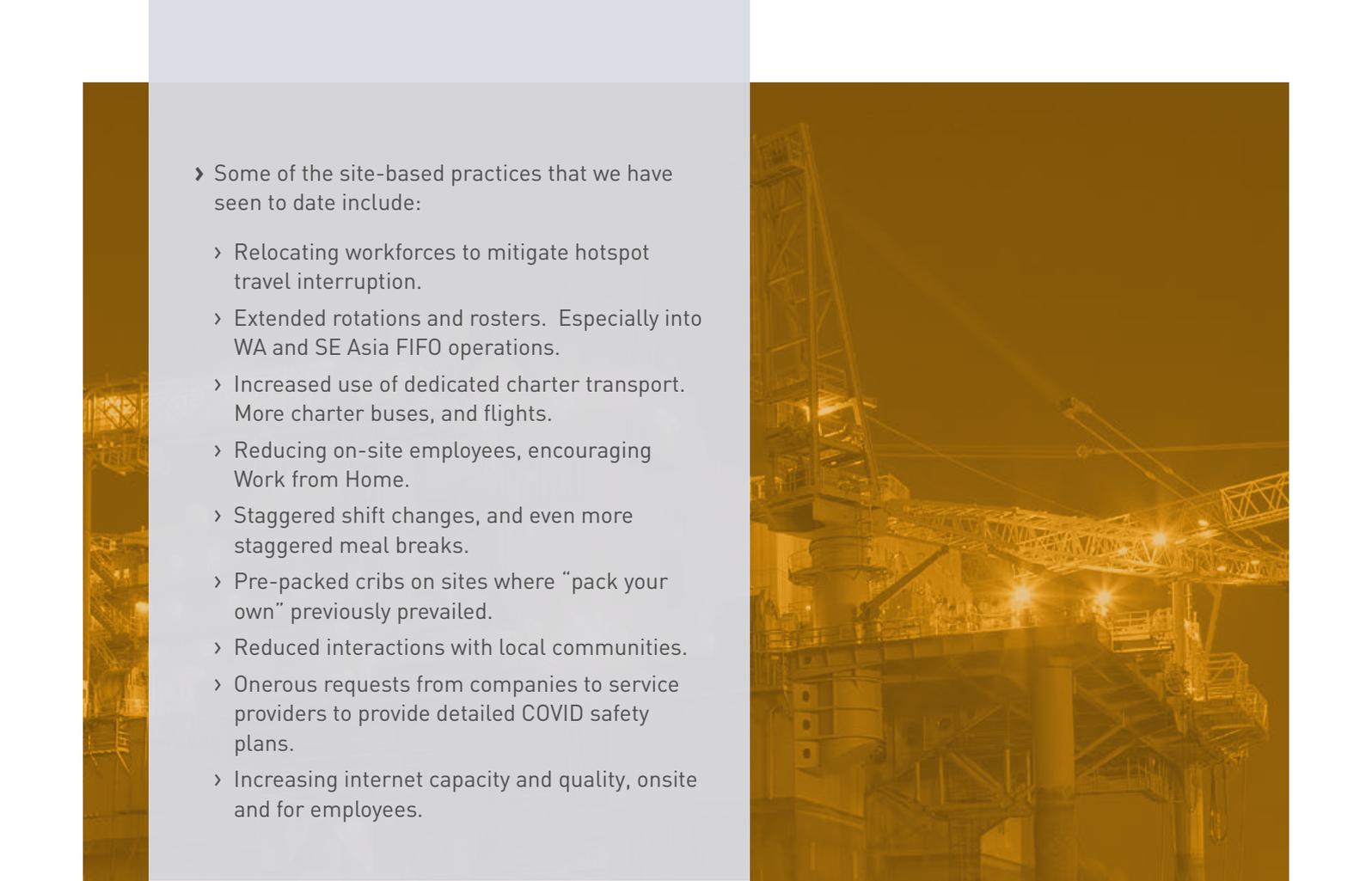
Transforming mindsets  
New perspectives  
Problem / tactical directed  
Coach driven  
Control / Boundary

#### MENTORING

Experiential comparisons  
Strategic & Conceptual  
Goal Directed  
Mentee driven  
Outside the box



- › **'Capacity of Suppliers'** - Companies need to understand their supplier's capacity and help them extend their limits. However don't over-extend those limits. For example helmet mounted cameras, with live audio and video are great, and can help with a range of tasks. But they are not a replacement for independent site visits for safety audits or JORC reserve sign-offs. Similar, VOD for workshop training is good, but check what happens with warranty clauses.
- › **'Lockdown implications'** - Service providers and consultants should look at their contracts and understand what may happen if a forced lockdown occurs whereby travel is delayed, or returns are impossible. Who picks up those costs? Do you have adequate business interruption insurance?
- › **'Survey benefits are conditional'** - COVID Surveys with your employees and teams are a powerful tool. So powerful we have put our own together, as per the link at the end of the article. Now, if you do this; Please have a plan on how you are going to action the responses!
- › **'Changing cost base of projects'** - Mining is "coming back strong" even booming. However in 2020 lots of capital projects were frozen. So now we are hearing of prior-approved projects actually being realised. Don't forget to deal with the cost/price escalation. We don't want to repeat the previous cycle where mining gained a reputation of not delivering to budget. Consider changing contract terms to cover the cost differential. The post COVID world will change the cost base; added training, higher rates of PPE use, extending and variable lead times for non-domestic sources will lead to increased holding costs. How do these change your project schedule and working capital?
- › **'Work From Home technical bandwidth'** - If you are encouraging WFH, then provide your employees with clear guidance to the minimum and suggested internet connection technical requirements, ie. speed and bandwidth, as well as security.
- › **'Work From Home managerial bandwidth'** - have your leaders of people changed their management practices to accommodate remote work? Are your WFH leaders aware of mental health issues?
- › **'Vaccination, is not a debate'** - Start thinking about vaccination in your workplace. Will it be mandatory? How much warning will people, both your own workforce and suppliers be given? If it happens at site, then does it become the standard at the city office as well? How will proof of vaccination happen?

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- › Some of the site-based practices that we have seen to date include:
    - › Relocating workforces to mitigate hotspot travel interruption.
    - › Extended rotations and rosters. Especially into WA and SE Asia FIFO operations.
    - › Increased use of dedicated charter transport. More charter buses, and flights.
    - › Reducing on-site employees, encouraging Work from Home.
    - › Staggered shift changes, and even more staggered meal breaks.
    - › Pre-packed cribs on sites where “pack your own” previously prevailed.
    - › Reduced interactions with local communities.
    - › Onerous requests from companies to service providers to provide detailed COVID safety plans.
    - › Increasing internet capacity and quality, onsite and for employees.

## Prompted thoughts, items to action.

As indicated above, we have put together a COVID Survey. This is a health and wellness check of your direct reports. This can be accessed [here](#). These really are examples of the types of questions we feel you need to be engaging your team with.

We will now have prompted some thoughts about items to action and brought some different ideas into play for you. We would welcome the opportunity to talk these through on a one to one basis, if that's what you want.

We know the mining industry is changing, and it will need to do so in the future. The pace of change is likely to increase. Listed here are some of the future ideas that we are thinking of writing on. If there is a topic you'd like to hear from us about, then please be in touch. Similarly, please sign-up to the link below, to ensure you don't miss these.

- › **The Long COVID ? – where this is going over the next 2 to 3 years.**
- › **Lessons from the outside – where Australian mining might look to off the lease for change.**
- › **Mining; a special case for change ? - what is peculiar to mining, with respect to implementing change.**
- › **Future of Mining and Skills - How mining can respond to the skills base changes in both supply and demand.**