



15 August 2023

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA:**

**(1) MAYORAL MINUTE**

MM5/2023 Bellbird Mine Disaster 100th Anniversary .....2

Mayoral Minute

Report No. MM5/2023

General Manager's Unit



**MAYORAL MINUTE No. MM5/2023**

**SUBJECT: BELLBIRD MINE DISASTER 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council notes that on 1 September 1923, 21 local miners perished as a result of a fire at Bellbird Colliery.
2. That Council notes on 1 September 2023 there will be a memorial service commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Bellbird Mine Disaster held at Bellbird Miners Memorial Park, at the corner of Wollombi Road and Kendall Street, Bellbird commencing at 11am.
3. That Council notes various commemorative events are planned by Cessnock Council for the Bellbird disaster centenary.
4. That the General Manager investigate the option of naming new streets in the Bellbird area after the 21 miners that lost their lives.

**REPORT/PROPOSAL**

In the Bellbird Colliery explosion that occurred on 1st September 1923 explosions and fires underground killed 20 men and their horses, another man died in the rescue attempt bringing the death toll of the disaster to 21.

In 1923 the Bellbird colliery employed 538 men, 369 of whom worked underground. At 1:00pm on 1 September 1923, 20 men of the mine's afternoon shift entered the colliery to commence their day's work. 3 Deputies from the day shift were also in the mine, undertaking inspections of the working places as part of the shift handover. At about 1:30pm, having finished their inspection's, the three gathered near No. 4 West flat at the main haulage way where they greeted the afternoon shift Deputy who proceeded into the mine. As the 3 began to walk out the afternoon Deputy ran back calling "Come quick, it's fire!"

The loss of life had a devastating effect on the town of Cessnock the funerals of the victims were held on one day all 15 caskets proceeded to the cemetery in one procession. 25,000 people lined the streets to pay their respects to the deceased and to their families.

On Friday 1 September 2023 will be the 100th year anniversary of the Bellbird Mine Disaster and Coalfields Local History Association has organised a memorial service to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The memorial service will be held at the Bellbird Miners Memorial Park, at the corner of Wollombi Road and Kendall Street, Bellbird commencing at 11am.

**Mayoral Minute**

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Names of the 21 men who lost their lives;

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Position</b>
Frederick Moodie	53	Deputy
Harold Richards	39	Miner
William Griffin	30	Miner
Charles Mills	38	Miner
Gordon Locking	25	Miner
William Hartley	27	Miner
Alfred Hines	25	Miner
Jerry McLaughlan	36	Miner
John Stewart	38	Miner
Jack Graber	43	Miner
John Morgan	50	Miner
Maurice Hyams	23	Miner
George Sneddon	33	Miner
Alexander Corns	21	Wheeler
Phillip Roberts	21	Wheeler
George Kelly	22	Wheeler
George Chapman	32	Wheeler
Joseph Lambert	22	Driver
Fred Fone	21	Waterman
Malcolm Bailey	28	Substation Attendant
John Brown		Manager, Aberdare Colliery

**ENCLOSURES**

- [1↓](#) Bellbird Mine Disaster 100 Year Anniversary flyer



## INVITATION

**The Bellbird Mine Disaster memorial event** will be held to acknowledge the centenary of the 1923 Hetton Coal Company Ltd Bellbird Mine Disaster that resulted in the death of 21 miners and the inception of Mines Rescue.

**Friday, 1 September 2023**

Arrival 10:45am for an 11:00am start

**Bellbird Miners Memorial Park**

Cnr Wollombi Road and Kendall Street, Bellbird NSW

**RSVP before Friday, 11 August 2023**



<http://stks.be/bellbird-disaster-centenary>

Alternatively, please call Jenny McPherson (MEU) on 1300 712 791 or 02 4990 7600

Following the event, the Mining and Energy Union (MEU) will provide light refreshments at the Bellbird Workers Club from 12.30pm until 1.30pm.

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The event is proudly sponsored by Coal Services and the MEU, in support of the Coalfields Local Historical Society centenary event initiative.

