

TestSafe visit provides an insight to mine safety

The Mining Electrical and Mining Mechanical Engineering Society (MEMMES) has continued its sponsorship of a visit to TestSafe at Londonderry for electrical and mechanical apprentices and engineering trainees within the Hunter Valley mining and support industries.

TestSafe Australia at Londonderry is recognised worldwide as an expert body in testing explosion-protected electrical equipment. MEMMES first embarked on an organised visit and inspection of the TestSafe facilities two years ago. Industry support for the concept was very positive and the visit has become an annual event.

The visit is aimed at providing the industry's 'tradespeople of tomorrow' with an insight into the stringent testing conducted on equipment that is to be used in mines and other hazardous industries.

Coal mine explosions are high-risk events and as such require special electrical equipment to be used as a risk control. This is called explosion-protected equipment and includes, among others, the principles of flame proofing and intrinsic safety. This is a key competency area for electrical tradespeople within the mining industry. To develop future tradespeople MEMMES is contributing to the learning process through education in varying formats.

This year's TestSafe visit involved a halfday guided tour for 23 apprentices / trainees from the Hunter Valley and three apprentices from the southern area. They were accompanied by MEMMES president Peter Whipp, MEMMES treasurer Harold Lonsdale and NSW DPI Inspector of Electrical Engineering Robert McKenzie.

During the visit the apprentices were told of the Appin mining disaster, the resultant impact on the mining industry that was to be the catalyst for the founding of TestSafe and the centre's contribution to the electrical safety within the coal mining industry.

The tour of the testing centre also included the:

- Intrinsically safe testing laboratory
- International protection
- IP-rated equipment test laboratory
- Diesel testing station
- Conveyor belt frictional testing station
- Conveyor belt and wire rope tensile strength testing station
- Explosive test rig
- Fire Gallery

TestSafe welcomes having the MEMMES apprentices as it is an opportunity to reinforce the message regarding following established safe work procedures, particularly when working in hazardous environments.

