

Queensland quarry owner jailed for worker's death



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Rushing to get a central Queensland quarry operating, against the advice of experienced contractors, was a key factor in the death of a young worker who was pulled into a conveyer belt, a court has heard.

Sean Scovell, 21, died at MCG Quarries' South Moranbah site in June 2012, six months after the quarry was hurried into operation by managing director William McDonald.

McDonald, his company MCG Quarries and site senior supervisor Tony Addinsall were found guilty of multiple charges of failing their health and safety obligations following Mr Scovell's death.



Sean Scovell, 21, died at MCG Quarries' South Moranbah site in June 2012. (9News)

"McDonald's directions and actions were designed to push the time frame for completion against the advice of experienced persons," magistrate Penelope Hay told the Brisbane court on Friday.

"He was personally aware the plant was operating before commissioning had been completed."

Ms Hay said the mining industry was "an inherently dangerous field of endeavour and it must be understood there is no ability to ensure 100 per cent people's safety."

But if safety obligations had been completed at the site, it "was very likely nothing Mr Scovell did on the day would have resulted in his traumatic death."

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Brisbane Magistrates Court heard Mr Scovell was working alone under an uncommissioned conveyor that did not have a safety guard fitted when the accident happened on June 5.



Rushing to get a central Queensland quarry operating, against the advice of experienced contractors, was a key factor in the death, a court has heard. (9News)

He received "deep and vicious" wounds to his chest and abdomen that resulted in his aorta being torn after his hand became trapped in the conveyor's pulley wheels, Ms Hay said.

"It is these things that render the offending by McDonald and MCG at the more serious end because it ultimately led to the death of a person," she said.

McDonald was sentenced to 18 months in prison, with parole after six months, but was immediately released on bail pending an appeal against his conviction.

Addinsall, who resigned shortly after the accident, was fined \$35,000 and had no conviction recorded.

MCG, which is now insolvent, was fined \$400,000 but it is unlikely the money will ever be paid.

The court heard McDonald paid for Mr Scovell's funeral costs, the travel costs of all people who wished to attend and erected a memorial at the site.

Outside court, Mr Scovell's father Brett Scovell said no penalty would take away the pain of losing his son.

"Sean's case was the first of its kind to ever have a jail term given as a penalty," he told reporters.

"Hopefully, that sets precedence so that this case may be used for hundreds of years to come against other companies that put profit before safety."

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