



## Kara Martin

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We introduce new Out of the Pit board Member Kara Martin

### ***So, when did you first become interested in mining?***

I started becoming aware of mining as a TV journalist in Wollongong, south of Sydney. The local coal industry was a source for several stories. There was a great sense of tradition in the region, however, it was a little love-hate as the expansion of real estate, concern about coal trucks, and fear of subsidence meant there was growing public pressure on the industry to begin phasing out.

### ***Why did you leave TV journalism?***

I felt coerced by the News Editor to change what I was writing to suit the popular view and attract viewers. I didn't enjoy the sensationalism and compromise, and decided to resign.

### ***What happened then?***

I joined one of the coal mining companies, Kembla Coal & Coke (Rio Tinto), as a Communications Officer. It was a fun job, writing up the company's newsletter and publications. This meant that I went down the pit several times. In the early 90s this was sometimes a radical thing to do, with no women underground and many of the men considering female presence bad luck. I then moved into the human resources area.

### ***You left that job?***

Yes, my husband worked for BHP and received a transfer opportunity to the wire mill in Geelong. I managed to get a job with Rio's engineering company Minenco, running training programs. I enjoyed a brief stint there when I was asked to join the development team for Century Zinc. This was an exciting break to work as a business analyst as part of the marketing team.

I had the chance to travel, visiting smelters and negotiating contracts for material that had not even been dug out of the ground!

### ***Sounds the dream job...***

It was pretty fun, but then I discovered why I kept falling asleep at my desk. It wasn't jetlag, it was my future daughter Jaslyn draining my resources! I took maternity leave. While on leave, I had the chance to take up some consulting opportunities with Pacific Coal and Peak Gold.

Eventually I decided that mothering was much too important to do part-time and resigned from Rio. Since then, I have continued some consultancy opportunities that I could do from home.



***You have also used the time as an opportunity to study?***

Yes, I was involved in the start-up of Macquarie Christian Studies Institute at Macquarie University, and was given the chance to do some lecturing. I really enjoyed it, especially courses on Everyday Ethics and An Introduction to Christian Spirituality. I decided I would do a Master of Arts in Christian Studies. I have really enjoyed the study.

***How did you hear about Out of the Pit?***

I work two days a week at the Council of Private Higher Education, a lobby group, and a young man turned up to work in the office next to mine. That was Richard Fortune. He immediately gave me a brochure for the OOTP Conference! It was impossible not to be enthused by what Richard had to share.

***Why did you want to join the Board?***

My time with mining companies had shown me that the culture can be very alien for Christians. I never worked at FI/FO operations, but can imagine it would make Christians feel very isolated. I know that shiftwork alone can make it difficult for Christians to participate in the usual rhythms of church life, such as Bible study groups.

I had also developed some lectures in Work & Spirituality looking at ways we can integrate our faith with our work. I am interested in applying the concepts to mining and developing some resources for the website.

Eventually I would like to research and lecture in the area of practical theology, and that means I need the discipline of applying biblical principles to everyday life, including work. Out of the Pit will help make me accountable for that; and that involves engaging in an ongoing conversation about how to help Christians stay strong in making their faith work, and their work faithful.

Thanks Kara, I hope you have many of those conversations.