CLUNE, Michael 10 June 1914

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Navvy	Yilliminning	PWD Train collision

Michael Clune was 25 years of age when he died in a collision of his train with a derailed wheat truck, a travelling water tank, on which he had been riding, rolled on him. He was the only casualty in the accident. He is interred at Narrogin Cemetery.

A FATAL ACCIDENT
Coroner's Inquiry , A GUARD CENSURED,
Narrogin. Thursday.
''On the 10th inst. a man named Michael Clune met his death in somewhat tragic circumstances some 40 miles out on the Yilliminning—Kondinin railway, at a spot known as the, Seven Mile.

From the evidence produced at the inquiry before the Acting Coroner (Mr. E. H. Hall J.P.) and a jury consisting of Messrs. Ralph Stone (foreman), N. R. Anderson, and John Edwards. It appears that, the unfortunate man was travelling' eastward on the train leaving Yilliminning about 4 a.m. on the morning of the 10th. He was riding on top of a Water tank. Just before daylight the train struck some obstacle on the line, which completely derailed it and telescoped several trucks. The deceased was thrown to the ground and the water truck fell on top of him, with the result that he was killed instantly. At the time there was a heavy fog which prevented the driver from seeing the obstruction on the line until it was too late to avoid the accident. On examination it was found to be a derailed truck of wheat, which on investigation turned out to be the rear truck of the train which went into Yilliminning late the previous night. This line is only in the course of construction and trains running on it do not have a brake van and it seems that the truck in question was not missed by the guard. An examination showed that the truck had left the rails some 20 yards before becoming uncoupled from the rest of the train, when apparently overturned and became disconnected. The guard admitted to making no check of the train at his destination when handing over. But had he looked he certainly must have seen that he was a truck short as the train on consisted of eleven trucks in all, seven being open trucks and the rear two covered vans, one of which was responsible for the trouble.

The inquiry was conducted by Constable Crowe on behalf of the police, whilst Mr. W. P. Andrews appeared for the Public Works Department.

The fireman of the train from which the truck broke away stated in evidence that he had noticed a flash of light just before the accident occurred and called the attention of the driver and the guard to it, it must have been at this time that the truck was off the line being dragged along.

The driver and guard thought the fireman had seen sparks from the engine as they were at that time burning a lot of wood fuel.

The guard admitted he did not examine his train after leaving the 37 Mile some nine miles before the place of the fatal occurrence.

Bar a good shaking all other persons on the train were lucky enough to escape uninjured.

The verdict of the jury was:

Michael Clune came to his death on the 10th Inst. By a tank of water falling on him, caused by the train colliding with a truck of wheat, and are of the opinion that the guard should have used more discretion in delivering up his train at its destination.

The engine driver and fireman we consider are blameless in the matter.

A rider was added to the effect that on all future occasions a tail light should be used. Had a tail light been carried in this instance the accident would never have happened, as it would have been instantly seen on arrival at Yilliminning that there was a truck missing.

Source: *Trove/The Daily News (Perth) Saturday 20 June 1914 Page 15.*

Author's Note: *The guard of the wheat train,* ***Andrew Sugram*** *was arrested and charged with negligently causing the death of* ***Michael Clune****. He was later acquitted by the jury at his trial. Excessive hours of work, inadequate or non-existent paper work and lax supervision being cited as mitigating circumstances surrounding the death of* ***Michael Clune****.*