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Unions welcome call for uniform Industrial Manslaughter laws

The ACTU welcomes the findings of the Senate Inquiry into industrial deaths handed down this afternoon which recommended the establishment of a national system of uniform Industrial Manslaughter laws to keep workers safe.

The report released by the committee also recommends that unions and families be given the right to bring cases under the new laws on behalf of workers and that the health and safety framework needs to respond to the poor safety outcomes from insecure forms of work, such as labour hire.

These changes would be a huge step forward for safety at work and would ensure that employers are held accountable when their actions threaten or end the lives of working people.

Approximately 200 people die at work every year and a further 2000 die due to injuries or illnesses related to their work.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"The families who have lost loved ones to preventable workplace fatalities have worked too hard and waited too long for us to allow this opportunity for change to pass us by.

"We urgently need national, uniform industrial manslaughter laws."

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Michael Borowick:

"Everyone has the right to come home safe from work but every year hundreds of people don't, and in some cases that is because of the disgraceful actions of reckless employers who can't be held to full account due to the limitations of the legal and regulatory framework.

"The proposed changes set out in the report would assist in ensuring that such employers are held to account for negligence or carelessness which ends a worker's life.

"Big business is using insecure forms of work like labour hire to avoid responsibility for injured workers.

"We have to change the rules to ensure that workers are safe and that employers do everything they can to ensure that no more families are destroyed by deaths in the workplace.

"In recent years we have seen repeated cases of asbestos contaminated materials appearing on building sites and the re-emergence of Black Lung in Queensland. Employers and business can and should do more to protect workers.

"We welcome the recommendations of the report and call on the Morrison Government to implement them immediately."

ENDS

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