

Wednesday 28th April 2021

Workers Memorial Day marks more than 2 years waiting for action on Boland Review, with almost 400 dead

The Government has failed to act on a single recommendation of the Boland review - released in February 2019. Almost 400 people have died at work since the report was released.

The Boland review of model WHS legislation handed down 34 recommendations including that the model WHS Act be amended to introduce an offence of industrial manslaughter.

Other than in Queensland, Victoria, the Northern Territory and Western Australia when companies are found responsible for the death of a worker they pay only a small fine, which can be claimed against insurance. This is no justice for the families, friends and workmates which have lost loved ones and is no deterrence for unsafe work practices which kill roughly 4 workers a week.

The ACTU calls on the Morrison government to act on the Boland review and urgently introduce an industrial manslaughter offence in the model WHS laws.

Minister Cash will be the deciding vote at an upcoming meeting of federal and state ministers which will decide if industrial manslaughter is adopted federally.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

“Almost 400 people have died at work since the Boland review was handed down over two years ago and the Morrison Government has failed to act on a single recommendation.

“Businesses receiving a small fine that they can claim on insurance for someone dying at their workplace is appalling – there is no justice. We need Industrial Manslaughter legislation in every state and territory. It should not matter what postcode your loved one dies in that determines the justice you receive.

“Every week four workers in Australia don't come home. Inaction by this Government is ripping families apart and allowing needless pain and suffering.

“Minister Cash has the power to introduce industrial manslaughter laws across the country at an upcoming meeting of WHS ministers, it's critical that she seizes this opportunity to protect workers.

“Industrial Manslaughter will not only provide an avenue for true justice for the families of those killed at work, but it will also force cultural change that will hopefully lead to fewer deaths at work. “

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