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EQT takeover must end Cleanaway's deadly safety record

Australian Unions are calling on EQT Infrastructure to clean up Cleanaway. EQT agreed to buy Australia's largest waste company in a deal approved by the Board.

Cleanaway has killed 8 workers since 2021 and its safety performance has got worse under its current CEO. In May, Comcare fined Cleanaway \$1.1 million over a fatal 2014 truck crash in Adelaide. It is the biggest fine ever handed down under federal workplace safety laws.

Unions are calling for EQT to fundamentally reform Cleanaway so it is a safe and model employer. To do this the CEO must go, the board must have skills and experience to reform a company to become safe, and workers must have their voice heard and a fair say on safety.

Quotes attributable to TWU National Secretary, Michael Kaine:

"Cleanaway's appalling attitude towards its workforce and safety has seen 8 workers killed since 2021, and a mother of seven left with permanent vision loss from toxic chemical exposure.

"It is clear that CEO Mark Schubert, who still made over \$4 million last year despite having his pay docked for the horrific deaths and injuries under his watch, must go.

"8 worker deaths is not an accident, it is a wilful decision to put profits and executive bonuses over safety, and EQT must take immediate steps to end this deadly cycle."

Quotes attributable to AMWU National Secretary, Steve Murphy:

"Safety is a non-negotiable right, and every worker deserves to return home to their loved ones in the exact same state they left—free from injury and free from illness.

"Cleanaway's new owners inherit an absolute responsibility to fix this broken company and ensure those accountable for past failures are held answerable."

Quotes attributable to ASU National Secretary, Emeline Gaske:

"Cleanaway has profited from running essential community services including local councils for years. They've presided over the deaths of eight workers on the job since 2021. A company that takes public contracts owes those workers a safe shift above everything else.

"This is a company that has lined its pockets off the back of privatising essential services. Their profit at all costs model has unacceptably led to workplace deaths. It's time they put the needs of workers and community first.

"EQT's purchase of this company comes with the responsibility to fix it. It must work with unions to make these jobs safe and make sure essential community services are delivered for the public good."

Quotes attributable to AWU National Secretary, Paul Farrow:

"Under current management Cleanaway deepened its reputation as one of Australia's very worst employers. Its safety record is nothing short of appalling. The AWU expects EQT to appoint a chief executive and a board with the skill and conviction to rebuild safety from the ground up. The people who do the vital and difficult work at Cleanaway deserve a change."

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

“Cleanaway is one of the worst employers in the country. Its safety record is a disgrace, and working people have paid for it with their lives.

“Deaths have gone up under the current chief executive and so have injuries. EQT’s first priority to fixing safety should be to sack the CEO.

“EQT engaged with unions before this deal was done, and we welcome that. EQT have the responsibility and the power now to reform the company, so that every Cleanaway worker gets home safe at the end of their shift.”

ENDS

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