Continued inaction despite review of workplace deaths

Workers Memorial Day 2021 has been marked as the federal government continues to fail to act on a single recommendation of the Boland review, which was released in February 2019.

Almost 400 people have died at work since the report was released.

The Boland review of model Work Health and Safety (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 who have lost loved ones and is no deterrence for unsafe work practices which kill roughly four 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.

Industrial relations minister Michaelia Cash will be the deciding vote at an upcoming meeting of federal and state ministers, which will decide if industry manslaughter is adopted federally.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien said: "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. 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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