

Wednesday 27 April 2022

## 32% more deaths at work under Morrison since 2018

One worker every two days is killed on the job in Australia, according to a major report by the ACTU into the Morrison Government's failings on work health and safety.

Scott Morrison has also overseen an appalling 32 per cent increase in workplace fatalities and 8 per cent increase in workplace injuries from 2018 to the most recent data set, which covers 2020.

The Morrison Government received the Review of Australia's Work Health and Safety (WHS) Laws in 2018 and three years later none of the recommended legislative reforms have been implemented.

Morrison has also ignored the rise in silicosis in Australia. With over half a million workers exposed to hazardous silica dust the Government has been dragging its feet on introducing stronger prevention measures that would save thousands from contracting this chronic and incurable disease.

The report also finds that insecure work – another workplace issue made worse by this Government – is a major factor in the occurrence of workplace injuries with casual workers facing the highest frequency of work-related injuries for those aged under 55.

The union movement is highlighting the failures of the Morrison Government to implement stronger protections for workers including:

- Their refusal to introduce Industrial Manslaughter laws in the model work health and safety (WHS) laws;
- Failing to implement recommendations from the 2018 Review of WHS laws requiring employers to take steps to reduce psychological injury and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Implementing a full ban on high silica content engineered stone.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

"Every worker has the right to healthy, safe and secure work. That means a workplace free of mental and physical hazards and where workers can, without fear, raise concerns about unsafe practices.

"Under this Government we have seen decades of steady progress in reducing the number of workers killed and seriously injured at work reversed.

"At least 230 workers a year are being diagnosed with silicosis – many as young as 25. It's 2022 and we're seeing an increase in workers dying from entirely preventable occupational lung diseases.

“The Morrison Government needs to fix the scourge of insecure work in this country. Workers whose jobs are insecure are less likely to feel like they can raise health and safety issues for fear of negative repercussions.

“Working people need a government that will do what is necessary to keep them safe in their workplaces. This Government goes missing when working people need it most.”

**Media contact:** Isabella Tilley 0414 894 040