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EVERY WORKER MUST BE ABLE TO GO TO WORK AND RETURN HOME SAFELY

The tragic death of a waterside worker at the toll shipping facility in Melbourne yesterday and of a worker at the Boggabri coal mine in NSW this morning is yet another reminder that workplace safety is a life and death matter.

ACTU assistant secretary Michael Borowick passed on the condolences of the union movement to the family of Anthony Attard and the mining community in Boggabri as well as the MUA and the CFMEU.

“Every worker deserves to return home safely at the end of each day,” Mr Borowick said.

“Workplace deaths are unacceptable and unions will continue to fight to improve safety but employers and government must step up to the plate and take it seriously.

“Waterside workers in Australia are 14 times more likely to be killed at work than the average worker and the fatality at the Boggabri mine comes only a month after two miners were killed near Cessnock.

“These alarming statistics must be a wakeup call to governments and employers to make the workplaces safe.”

Mr Borowick said that unions want stronger regulation to save lives.

"Unions fundamentally reject the Abbott governments calls for less regulation. it is offensive to say workplace safety is 'red tape'.

"Safety must be made mandatory through regulation. Safety must be law.

“There is an obligation on employers to provide a safe workplace. The statistics prove that more must be done.

“Workers should not have to pay the cost of unsafe workplaces and once again, these workers have paid the highest price.

“Every worker should be able to go to work at the beginning of the day secure in the knowledge that they will return to their family unscathed.

“We need to lift workplace health and safety standards for all workers, not reduce them.”

Mr Borowick said the Abbott government’s support to weaken occupational health and safety laws through changes to the model OH&S act was a disgrace and also called on the government to categorically rule out abolishing safe work Australia as recommended by the commission of audit.

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