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Anniversary of the Stena Clyde tragedy must spur improvement of offshore safety

Safety in the offshore drilling industry must be improved, the ACTU said today on the first anniversary of the deaths of two workers on the Stena Clyde in Bass Strait.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Michael Borowick said workers would hold a commemorative rally at noon today outside the offices of the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority in Melbourne, as a mark of respect for the two men killed on the Stena Clyde, and to raise the issue of offshore safety.

"It is a year today that two workers, Peter Meddens and Barry Denholm, were killed and their families got the terrible news that they would never see them again."

"Workers across Australia have the right to go home safely at the end of their shift, and the union movement will not take a backward step in working for the best safety standards possible."

"These deaths must not be forgotten, and the industry and NOPSEMA must work with unions to improve safety."

"NOPSEMA is still continuing its investigation into the fatalities. No charges have yet been laid and nor is there any indication from the regulator about when it might conclude its investigation."

"These deaths were preventable but without a full investigation we will not be able to ensure that other workers are not exposed to similar dangers."

"Offshore drilling is a dangerous industry. It is workers whose lives and health are at risk from any safety failure in the industry.

"The ACTU is concerned that NOPSEMA is too close to the industry to act as an effective regulator. It must ensure it takes the views of workers and unions into account when investigating safety breaches," Mr Borowick said.

Mr Borowick said that national OHS laws should be extended to cover offshore workers, who were currently operating under less protection than other Australian workers.

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