

NEWS

Miner's widow: 'Families suffer for the rest of their lives'



Janessa Ekert | 17th Feb 2015 9:06 AM



Kelly Butterworth

PAM MacDonald, whose husband was killed after a tyre exploded at a mine site, is shocked by the death of another mine worker under similar circumstances.

One man died after a tyre exploded at the Dawson mine, 30km south-east of Moura, about 4.30am.

Another man, believed to be 21, was airlifted to a Brisbane hospital with fractures to the shoulder and upper-arm.

"I can understand how his family is feeling, the pain that they must be going through at this moment," Mrs MacDonald said.

Wayne MacDonald was killed by the air blast of a 22.5 inch truck tyre he'd just finished changing when it exploded as the vehicle was lowered to the ground on December 18, 2010 at Anglo American's Foxleigh mine.

Mrs MacDonald's thoughts went out to the families of the workers killed and seriously injured yesterday morning at Dawson Coal Mine, also owned by Anglo American, just outside Moura.

Last year Coroner David O'Connell made a number of recommendations after an inquest into Mr MacDonald's death.

Mrs MacDonald said she was frustrated and emotional that there had been another incident.

"It's been four years since my husband's accident. It never goes away. And each time there's fatalities in the mine, I relive it all over again," she said.

"Families suffer for the rest of their lives."

CFMEU Mining Division Queensland president Stephen Smyth yesterday called for a thorough investigation into the number of deaths at Anglo American mines in Central Queensland after a third fatality in the last 12 months occurred yesterday.

Mr Smyth said there had been a pattern of tyre-related incidents at Anglo American open cut coal mines.

Yesterday's tragedy was the third fatal tyre-related incident for the company in the past few years, he said.

The company said yesterday operations were being suspended while investigations were taking place.

"At this point our focus is on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all people while the incident is being managed," an Anglo American spokesperson said.

Anglo American's employee assistance program has been made available to provide support and counselling to all employees as required.

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