

Miner killed working underground at Carborough Downs site in central Queensland

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A miner has been killed by a coal fall at an underground mine in Queensland's Central Highlands in the early hours of Monday — the seventh death in the state's resources industry in about 18 months.

Fitzroy Resources Australia said in a statement that 57-year-old Brad Duxbury, from Ipswich west of Brisbane, was "fatally injured in a tragic incident" at the company's Carborough Downs mine site, north-east of Moranbah.

The company's chief executive officer Grant Polwarth said "we are all extremely saddened by this tragic incident and we extend our deepest sympathies to Brad's family and friends".

"Fitzroy's current focus is on supporting Brad's family, friends and all of the Fitzroy workforce impacted by this event," Mr Polwarth said in the statement.

"Brad was a long-term Carborough Downs employee and a valued member of the Fitzroy team."

Mr Polwarth said Mr Duxbury's family had requested their privacy be respected as they worked through this difficult time.

"Our thoughts remain with all those who have been impacted by this tragedy," Mr Polwarth said.

Police and other authorities, as well as representatives from the miners' union have travelled to the site to conduct investigations.

Mr Polwarth said the company was cooperating with investigators and was unable to make further comment on the incident.

He said the company had made counselling services available to the mine's workers.

Operations at the site have been suspended while the Queensland Mines Inspectorate investigates and will not be resuming on Wednesday.

A preliminary assessment by the chief inspector of coal mines, Peter Newman, found Mr Duxbury was killed by a fall of coal from the longwall face.

Mr Newman said the cause of the coal fall has not yet been determined.

Industrial manslaughter laws need to be expanded

CFMEU mining and energy president Stephen Smyth said it was time to expand the state's industrial manslaughter laws to cover mining and quarries.

"Industrial manslaughter is no longer negotiable, industrial manslaughter needs to come into place," he said.

"I'm not saying [it had] anything to do with this accident, but just generally I think statutory officials in these coal mines ... they need to be employed by the coal mine operator, not in contractual roles.

"There needs to be an overhaul in the level of supervision, both experience and knowledge, and obviously ability to do the job needs to be certainly looked at and put into legislation because this comes far too often, the inexperience.

"These multinationals and the people they employ need a deterrent there so they're making the right decision on behalf of the workers, not an economic decision."

Mr Smyth said the Carborough Downs fatality was a tragedy.



PHOTO: Police and other authorities have started investigations into the cause of the accident. (AAP)

Key points:

- Brad Duxbury, 57, had been a long-term Carborough Downs employee
- Operations at the site have been suspended
- The union says the death was the fifth coal mining fatality this calendar year

"It has a ripple effect for those directly involved who worked with the gentleman — obviously the family and friends, but particularly those in the workplace," he said.

"Sometimes some people, to be perfectly blunt, don't ever recover from something as tragic and traumatic as this. They just can't. They make a decision not to work in the industry."

Mr Smyth said it was the fifth coal mining fatality this calendar year.

"It's five too many along with the serious accidents," he said.



PHOTO: Stephen Smyth says industrial manslaughter laws must include mining.



PHOTO: David Routledge was killed in June at Middlemount coal mine in the Bowen Basin. (Facebook)

Queensland Resources Council chief executive Ian Macfarlane said the organisation was "deeply saddened" by the news.

"Our thoughts are with the worker's family and friends and the entire community which will be affected by this tragedy," he said in a statement.

"The resources industry will work with the Queensland Mines Inspectorate and other authorities on the investigation into the circumstances of this tragic event."

Minister avoids question on 'safety reset'

In Parliament, Queensland Mines Minister Anthony Lynham expressed his sadness over another fatality.

"My sincere condolences go to family, friends and colleague of the worker so tragically taken," he said.

But Mr Lynham deflected a question on the State Government's mining safety record and whether "safety resets" had been successful.

"I don't intend to further answer this question because of the implications it will have on family and friends of this worker," he said.

"I'm happy to address this issue later on in the week when its more appropriate."

Opposition mining spokesman Dale Last said authorities must get to the bottom of what happened in order to make mines safer.

"In August, I moved a motion to establish a Parliamentary Mine Safety Inquiry and I stand by that call," he said.

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