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Byerwen coal mine worker Chris Schloss mourned after crane death

By [Danielle Jesser](#) and [Liam O'Connell](#)

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In short:

Ben Hannant and his mining colleagues are mourning the death of their safety-conscious mate Chris Schloss.

Mr Hannant says his friend changed his life.

What's next?

The death is being investigated by the Resources Safety Health Queensland.

Central Queensland coal miner Chris Schloss is being remembered as a much loved husband, father and best mate after his death in a crane incident at a mine site on Saturday.

Mr Schloss, 48, died after an [incident involving a pick and carry crane](#) at the Byerwen Coal Mine near Glenden, about 160 kilometres west of Mackay, on Saturday.

He is mourned by his QCoal colleagues, wife Amanda and his five children Magan, Thomas, Kate, Memphys and Zara.

Friend and colleague Ben Hannant said he was in disbelief the "safest bloke" he knew had died.

Mr Hannant said he and 'Schlossy' "hit it off straight away" when they met last year while he was working for the NRL at the Broncos v Panthers grand final.

"I was keen to learn more about the mining game, so I got his number," he said.

"He's not just a best friend, he's become family and a massive mentor for me and my big career change into the mining."



Chris Schloss was a long-serving QCoal employee. *(Supplied: QCoal)*

Mr Hannant said he was numb after learning of Mr Schloss's death in a phone call while travelling in Papua New Guinea on Saturday.

"I'm so grateful I've known Chris Schloss ... a brother who changed my life for the better," he said.

"He was the heart and soul of the Byerwen mining camp and the safest bloke I know.

"He's someone who does everything right and I still can't believe my good friend's gone."

Mr Hannant said their families enjoyed trips away together and had become inseparable.

"We were excited to spend more time together, but unfortunately this tragedy has occurred."

Mr Hannant says his friendship with "caring, hardworking, intelligent" Schlossy had made him a better man.

"He was always willing to help and for someone like myself who was only new into the mining game ... any question I asked, he'd answer."

Mr Hannant said Mr Schloss was passionate about improving the mining camp facilities and made sure everyone was looked after on site.

He said the Schloss family and QCoal colleagues were hurting.

"We're all one big family. When one hurts, we all hurt.

"All we can do is honour and celebrate the great man's life and how much the great impact he's had on all of us."

Died where he fought to live

QCoal group executive James Black said Mr Schloss's death had shocked everyone.

He said Mr Schloss was a passionate advocate for workers to have the [right to remain living in the onsite camp](#) and not move into housing in Glenden.

"His family is coming to terms with the worst news you can possibly hear, and we are helping them through this tragedy," Mr Black said.

Support programs have been set up for Mr Schloss's colleagues, some of whom witnessed the incident.

Accident investigators on site

Resources Safety and Health Queensland (RSHQ) has brought in ground-scanning technology to help understand how the incident happened.

Chief executive Rob Djukic said the investigation was continuing with the Safety In Mines Testing And Research Station (SIMTARS) division deployed to the site.

"The team will use scanning technology to capture the scene and those images may be used throughout the investigation and to inform leanings," he said.

Mr Djukic said the regulator's thoughts were with Mr Schloss's family, friends and colleagues.

"We are committed to a thorough investigation but as that is now underway, we will be limited in what we can say going forward."

Crane safety in the spotlight

RSHQ said there have been 10 separate incidents since 2021 involving cranes in the resource sector.

A RSHQ safety bulletin in August last year said they included several episodes where cranes had rolled over while the operators were still inside, and three serious incidents where the crane operators were hospitalised with a range of injuries.

The industry regulator has placed a heavy focus on the safety around pick and carry cranes, particularly in the past 12 months, through industry talks, safety alerts, and an educational animation.

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