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Worker killed in industrial accident at Olympic Dam

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BHP Billiton's Olympic Dam mine.

Source: Supplied

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A FATHER killed during a rockfall at Olympic Dam was a four-time premiership footballer renowned for being a larrikin and a popular community member.

Brian Partington, 47, of Tumby Bay, died after he was struck in the chest by falling rocks in the underground mine about 6am on Tuesday.

His death was the first workplace fatality this year following 13 deaths in 2014.

Police will prepare a report for the State Coroner while SafeWork SA has launched an investigation into the incident.

BHP Billiton suspended work at the mine and said it was doing what it could to support Mr Partington's family and friends, as well as other employees and contractors.

Mr Partington was a life member of the Olympic Dam Football Club, which he joined in 1990.

A biography on the club's website describes Mr Partington as a "lean, dashing, blonde player", who played on the ball but excelled on the wing.

He played in 109 games and won four premierships in 1992, 1993, 1996 and 1997.

"His larrikin style around the club is legendary and his trade as a "chippy" proved very useful as he committed countless hours in the construction and maintenance of the clubrooms," the website states.

"A true clubman, Brian is never short of offering his services to help out the club in any way."

Olympic Dam FC president Cameron Green said the club was devastated about the death of Mr Partington and had cancelled training on Tuesday night as a mark of respect.

Tumby Bay mayor Sam Telfer said the tragic accident had shocked the small Eyre Peninsula community, which would unite to support Mr Partington's family.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the whole family during this heart wrenching time," he said.

"The many different connections the victim's family have throughout the community mean this is something that will touch so many.

"A husband, father, son, brother, friend and community man who will be sorely missed."

SafeWork SA executive director Bryan Russell said it would investigate whether there were breaches of safety laws and who was responsible for Mr Partington's safety.

"We are ever mindful of the tragedy this man's death brings to his family, friends and co-workers," he said.

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union state secretary Aaron Cartledge said workers extended their sympathy to the family and friends of Mr Partington.

Mr Cartledge said it was too early to know what had caused the accident.

"Mining is constantly high risk. You have to be on top of the game all the time," he said.

"I can't say we have had people complain to us about safety at Olympic Dam but BHP Billiton is a tough place to work."

Olympic Dam is Australia's largest underground mine, producing copper, uranium and gold.

In 2009, mechanical failure caused a 38 tonne loaded skip to fall 700m in the mine's Clark shaft.

No one was injured and SafeWork SA cleared BHP Billiton of any liability.

That accident cost BHP \$US455 million in lost production and repairs with \$US297 million recovered from self-insurance.

The shaft has since been upgraded and become an essential component in record production.

Originally published as **Father, footballer, killed in mine** (<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/worker-killed-in-industrial-accident-at-olympic-dam/story-fni6uo1m-1227214320004>) **Comments** ([#social-comments](#))

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We don't go to work to die.

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Sorry but this should not happen. We strive for zero harm. Full support to family and friends.

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R

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Tragic news. Heartfelt condolences to his family.

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RIP. Condolences to the man's family. Hope the Emergency Services crew are holding strong.

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My deepest sympathy to the man's family - my daughter works there - such a terrible accident

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Damn, that is absolutely terrible.

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