

From: Ian Hope
To: [EESBC](#)
Subject: FW: Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis (Black Lung)
Date: Wednesday, 11 April 2018 11:47:02 PM

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From:
Sent: Wednesday, 11 April 2018 10:59 PM
To: eesbc@parliament.qld.au
Cc:
Subject: Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis (Black Lung)

I thank the committee for this opportunity to put forward my view on this legislation.

My name is Ian Hope.

I work in the mining industry in the Bowen Basin, I have done so since May 1980, in that time I have witnessed the decline of the Mine Workers Health System.

When I started my employment in 1980 Health assessments were conducted in a vastly different way than they are now.

The Nominated Medical Officer would attend the Mine Site to carry out our Medical Assessments during our shift, the X-ray unit also attended site at the same time.

We had dedicated First Aid officers, in most cases they had a nursing background, you could talk to these people in confidence, they would check things like your blood pressure, do Hearing tests in sound proof booths. In general they kept an eye on your basic health, at no time did they offer a medical opinion, other than advising you to see your doctor.

To save money our company removed their own first aid officers and, replaced them with the QLD Ambulance service, these people were well trained but this is where standards started to decline.

Workers like myself had concerns about what type of records were being kept of their visit to the first aid centre.

Then to reduce cost further QLD Ambulance were replaced, and when that happened we even lost the Ambulance, it was replaced by a station wagon set up as an Ambulance.

The company engaged a private contract company to supply First Aid and Mine Rescue services, I have very little faith in the system we now have at our site now.

Many people no longer trust the company with any private medical information, for fear it may be used against you in some negative way.

I gave evidence to the Black Lung enquiry, I talked about my experience as a contractor and as an employee, two vastly different experiences. As a contractor I would speak up about dust issues but many others wouldn't, due to the fact they were labour hire and feared for their jobs if they were to speak up about dust issues or medical problems, by not speaking up about medical problems or minor accidents they may have had, these issues build up into major health problems for themselves.

This then becomes a problem at their next statutory Health Assessment, if they fail that means their employment may be terminated because there is no history of any health problems.

Every company requires any incident's or accident's to be reported , in many cases this is only a fault finding exercise which can and dose lead to disciplinary action by management against the workers concerned.

In the past the company's & Unions worked together to find answers to many of the problems we had with worker Health and Safety issues. But with the introduction of Enterprise Agreement's company's have pushed worker participation into any reviews of Health and Safety matters all the way back to the minimum standard of the Mining Act, where I work the company dose what the Mining Act requires, and that is they use a cross section of the work force to carry out a review of procedures which may be limiting the company's ability to do what they want.

The trouble with this is it is possible to select people who don't understand what is being put forward for review. In my opinion this has the potential to lower standards across the mine site.

I would hope Mine inspectors and Union check inspectors be given grater powers of entry to investigate or carry out inspections with out being hindered by any company executive. We need legislation that requires company's to ensure that the Site Safety and Health Representative's are used and not ignored the way they are now, remember the SSHR's are a part of the Mining Act and are elected by the work force , they are there to help.

The Mining Act should be changed to reflect the hard work the BLACK LUNG COMMITTEE did . remember that some mining company's had to be subpoenaed to attend hearings, to me and many others this suggests there was some thing to hide.

The BLACK LUNG enquiry was about workers health and how the system failed the Mining industry and it workers.

I ask you when drafting the new legislation please think about removing the ability of mining company's from appointing their NMA's this should be done by QLD Health., doing this would remove any possible interference from non medical people in health and safety departments .QLD Health should also appoint any specialists that a mine worker may need to see. The company should not have the wright to have you reviewed by a specialist they appoint. Commercial interests come into play then.

When making your decision on the legislation please think very carefully how you may alter any recommendations the BLACK LUNG committee made. Any decisions you make that the company's don't like they will put forward some type of counter proposal which will sound very plausible but be weary and understand what it may mean for workers health.

Any new legislation should include a swipe card that works on all mine sites to help fatigue management , which would help control worker movements across the industry, this may also help in monitoring worker exposure to dust.

What must be remembered is that both sides Parliament came together to deliver a list of recommendation to address industry failures regarding worker health and many other issues. Don't for get the workers that have BLACK LUNG they are not all older worker , people who work in office towers don't get BLACK LUNG.

Thank you for you time.
Yours Sincerely

Ian Hope

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