

07/08/2018

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

RE: THE FRAMEWORK SURROUNDING THE PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF INDUSTRIAL DEATHS IN AUSTRALIA – REQUEST TO GIVE EVIDENCE AT INQUIRY

Personal story -

On Friday 20th April 2018 my beautiful father Robert left for work and never returned, he was tragically killed in a horrific workplace incident and the heartache and devastation surrounding this event is inexplicable.

Whilst my family and I went about our lives as normal my dad was dying in the arms of a work colleague ten metres up in the air. It took 4 long hours for local police to even notify my family of what had transpired that awful day.

The impact of a life lost at work undoubtedly has immense effects on all involved. Yet everyone went home to their families that day... everybody except my father. There are no words to express the pain and suffering my family has endured since that day, not limited to emotional distress but also financial suffering.

Nobody should ever go to work and not come home; Employers have an ethical duty of care to each and every one of their employees yet somehow in Australia this year to date we have had upwards of 77 recorded workplace fatalities. This number should never ever surpass zero.

The investigation into my father's death is ongoing although the coronial investigation is all but complete, yet it remains an open case until Worksafe complete their inquiries an estimated time frame of 12 months plus.

Why I would like to give evidence –

The law and Legislation surrounding workplace fatalities is so outdated and unacceptable especially in Western Australia. There should be no difference between States and Territories, a life in Australia is a life none the less, regardless of where you reside.

The legislations serve no purpose whatsoever in protecting anybody but the large companies and corporations by whom most of the public are employed by. Who protects the people? Who is held accountable when your loved one doesn't come home?

There is so many issues wrong with our legal system to date and it's not until you have to deal with the unthinkable, that you uncover just how truly backwards and third world some of our acts and legislations are. The common public perception of laws and legislations regarding workplace fatalities is not reflected in what is actually legislated.

Having harsher tougher laws when it comes to workplace safety and fatalities would undoubtedly have a ripple effect within society, which in turn could lead to a safer workplace culture. There should be zero tolerance for negligent behaviours on our worksites for individuals and corporations alike. This cannot be achieved through self-regulation and must be made law.

Having regard to the above, I confirm both my mother Debra Cunico and I would like to give evidence to the Senate Inquiry into the framework surrounding the prevention, investigation and prosecution of industrial deaths in Australia located in **Fremantle on 30 August 2018.**

Please contact me should you require any further information with respect to the above.

Kind Regards

Ashlea Cunico