



Mine Dust Victims Group  
info@blacklungvictims.asn.au  
PO Box 2096 Wandal QLD 4700

Patron: Greg Combet AM

Dear Member

On behalf of Black Lung and other Dust Disease Victims in the Queensland coal mining industry, we are asking for your support to help end a terrible injustice that has been inflicted on us and our families through the negligence and callous disregard of employers. The death toll throughout the Queensland coal industry due to Black Lung is rising and the number of new Victims suffering from other Dust-related diseases, such as silicosis is growing. Up to 100 mineworkers are already paying an horrific price with deteriorating health and substantial associated costs we have to pay out of our own pockets for diagnosis and treatment.

Our families are suffering through our trauma and while this greatly concerns us, so too does the fact that many present and past coal mineworkers who have Dust-related Diseases are going undiagnosed and untreated because of the high medical, travel and treatment costs associated with it.

There are no proper services or medical specialists or equipment in regional Queensland to help us. Dozens of mineworkers are now suffering from debilitating and often deadly industrial lung diseases because we were systematically failed by:

***The Mining Companies***– who failed to provide a safe workplace.

***State Governments and their Departments*** – who did not enforce proper standards and regulations.

***Medical Professionals*** – who failed to detect or diagnose our diseases over decades.

We are paying through ill-health and increasingly death. Despite our trauma and that of our families, there is no counselling available to us. We are further paying through increased medical costs for diagnosis and treatment from our own pockets. Our future is insecure. Many of us are paying through loss of jobs and reduced incomes. The welfare of our families has been plunged into a spiral of insecurity.

As elected representatives of the Queensland people, we now turn to you for support following our latest rejection by the Queensland coal operators.

We have written to every coal operator in Queensland proposing a simple and modest payment of one cent, per tonne, per week on coal produced by mining operators to establish a transparent tripartite Victims Fund administered by employer, employee and State Government representatives.

We see this as an opportunity to provide mobile testing units that can regularly travel throughout regional Queensland and be available to not only working mineworkers but former and retired coal industry employees as well. The Fund can also be drawn on to provide qualified medical personnel and equipment in regional Queensland hospitals. The Fund could also be used to meet out of pocket expenses incurred by Victims as we travel down a hard road not of our choosing. And, importantly, it should be used to provide counselling services for Victims and our families and this critical time.



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These are only some of the issues we are raising on how the Fund can be utilised. We are sure that industry, employee and State Government representatives would be well qualified to expand on the Victims Fund's role and administration.

We point out that we are not asking for something radically new or unreasonable.

For instance, the James Hardie Fund has distributed more than \$1Billion to asbestos Victims so far. In the United States, coal companies pay a \$US1.10 per tonne levy on each tonne of coal produced to assist Black Lung Victims.

Our proposed one cent, per tonne, per week payment on coal produced in Queensland is very modest.

Last year alone the Queensland coal industry exported some \$36.3 Billion worth of coal. Some of Queensland's coal operators are among the biggest and most profitable mining companies in the world. Our proposed modest payment to establish the Victims Fund is hardly a blip on the radar of Queensland's rich coal operators.

We believe it is time that these companies showed some concern for Black Lung and other Dust-related Victims and our families.

We are all constituents of yours in Queensland. As our democratically elected political representatives we ask you now to show your support for our proposal. Will you stand with Dust Disease Victims and our families in your communities for a Fair Go? Or, if not, will you tell us why you put the greed of wealthy coal mining companies ahead of us?

We eagerly await your earliest possible reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Stoddart".

Keith Stoddart

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Mellor".

Steve Mellor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T Trewin".

Tim Trewin