

CFMEU

CONSTRUCTION

9 November 2020

The Hon. Kevin Anderson, MP
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Anderson

SafeWork NSW

We write to you out of concern for the safety of our members on construction sites across New South Wales.

The CFMEU has become increasingly concerned about SafeWork NSW's response to notifiable incidents on NSW construction sites. Builders, delegates and workers have reported that SafeWork has not been attending sites where a serious injury, illness or dangerous incident occurs. In fact, when builders call the SafeWork hotline to report an incident, they are frequently told that the scene of the incident is being released and that an inspector will not be attending the site. This decision is apparently being made without a preliminary investigation taking place.

On 21 October 2020, there were two finger amputations on two separate construction sites, and a degloving incident on another. On each occasion, the builder notified SafeWork through the 13 10 50 hotline, and on each occasion the site was released over the phone with the builder being told an inspector would not attend. Last week, a worker suffered a compound fracture to his left tibia when a brick cage hit him. When the builder notified SafeWork, the builder was told the incident was not serious enough for SafeWork to send an inspector straight away.

The CFMEU is concerned about the qualifications, training and experience of those manning the SafeWork hotline who are making the decision to release sites without investigation and not to send inspectors to site. Where builders request confirmation in writing, letters are being signed off by "Customer Experience". It is not clear if these decisions are being made by inspectors or the customer service personnel manning the hotline.

In the last few weeks, the CFMEU has collated a list of serious incidents in respect of which SafeWork has released the site of the incident without investigation and has chosen not to send an inspector to the site. We have also provided these details as part of our submission to the *State Insurance and Care Governance Act* review. By way of transparency we attach those submissions and a spreadsheet collating these incidents.

In June 2020, when you announced the amendments to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, you stated that:

CFMEU NSW
Level 2,63 Miller Street, Pyrmont, NSW 2009
Locked Bag 5015, Alexandria, NSW 2015
Secretary: Darren Greenfield
Ph 02 9749 0400
Fax 02 9649 7100
nsw.cfmeu.org.au

Document tendered to	queries@cfmeu.org.au
Received by	Daniel Mookhey
Date:	5 / 3 / 21
Resolved to publish	Yes / No

ABN: 37 317 397 120

One injury is too many, one death is too many so we are doing everything we possibly can. We will be tightening laws, we will be coming after those that are doing the wrong thing.

SafeWork's current approach is not fulfilling that promise.

We ask that you enquire into operational practices of SafeWork's triage process and investigate why SafeWork has chosen to release sites of serious incidents without investigation and why SafeWork deems serious injuries not to be worthy of their time.

Yours faithfully

Darren Greenfield
State Secretary