



Preventing black lung remains our priority

Sydney (Australia), 1 July 2016 —

Despite recent media reporting new cases of coal workers pneumoconiosis (black lung disease) in Queensland this week, Lucy Flemming, Managing Director/CEO of Coal Services, reaffirmed that in NSW there have been no new cases of black lung disease for decades amongst current coal mine workers.

‘The robust nature of the legislation and diligence of the dust monitoring and environmental standards in NSW coal mines has allowed us to help protect mine workers’ health and keep occupational diseases such as black lung disease at bay,’ Ms Flemming said.

Yet despite the collaborative efforts of industry, Coal Services, government departments and an unwavering commitment to improve safe work practices and employ effective preventative controls, Ms Flemming warned against complacency.

‘The re-emergence of this horrible disease is frightening for workers and their families,’ she said. ‘Black lung disease generally takes a long time to appear – in most cases 20 to 30 years – so it is possible that some cases of black lung could still emerge from those working in the industry before dust mitigation and health surveillance was enforced.’

‘We encourage any worker, current or retired, who has concerns about their health to contact their nearest Coal Services office. Even after leaving the industry, workers are entitled to attend for health assessments at CS Health where they may be referred for a chest x-ray.’

The re-emergence of black lung disease in Queensland has heightened the call for further rigour at a national level regarding prevention and control strategies.

‘As an industry we must continue to be vigilant. We must ensure that protecting our workers from occupational illness and disease is at the core of all decision-making, policy and actions,’ she concluded.

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About Coal Services:

Coal Services is an industry-owned organisation committed to providing critical services and expertise to the NSW coal mining industry.

We operate a Specialised Health and Safety Scheme that provides an integrated suite of services aimed at preventing injury and illness in the workplace. These services help employers to identify, assess, monitor and control many risks inherent in the NSW coal mining industry.

Our preventative and responsive services in the areas of occupational health and safety, workers compensation, mines rescue and training help to deliver on our purpose 'to protect'.

We are jointly owned by two shareholders, the NSW Minerals Council and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). Our purpose, vision and values are aligned to focus on the safety and health of our industry and its workers.

Please visit: www.coalservices.com.au