

Eighth case of Black Lung publicly confirmed

An eighth case of Black Lung disease has been publicly confirmed today, making it the second coalmine worker in less than a week to be diagnosed with the deadly disease.

The worker, who has asked not to be named, is in his early 40s and is the youngest coalmine worker to be diagnosed with Black Lung disease.

He has worked as a contractor at a number of mines throughout Queensland and New South Wales.

CFMEU Mining and Energy Division Queensland District President Steve Smyth said the union is aware of at least 12 cases, and the announcement of more confirmed cases was sending shockwaves through the mining industry.

“My thoughts go out to the family of the latest coalmine worker to be diagnosed with Black Lung disease,” Mr Smyth said.

“Diagnoses are coming in more frequently and more cases are becoming public as medical assessments are coming back from specialists in the United States.

“Each diagnosis sends shockwaves through the workers and the community, and we expect more to come. What we are seeing now is just the tip of the iceberg.”

These cases are only coming to light, the union says, due to the application of the strict ILO standards to read x-rays and application of the B-Reader process by experienced, trained and competent radiologists, adding that other mining companies should apply the same process as Vale has done to ensure worlds best practice.

“Miners are still going to work every day not knowing if they have Black Lung disease and it will only be after these records are checked properly by radiologists qualified to the B-Reader level will they have any certainty.”

Despite receiving recommendations from two inquiries into Black Lung disease, the Queensland Government is failing to treat the problem with

the urgency required, with the union calling on the minister to fix the problems plaguing the industry.

“The time for talk is over. Minister Lynham and the Queensland Government need to act,” Mr Smyth said.

“Both the National Senate Inquiry and the Sims Review have provided dozens of recommendations to government, a number of which can be acted on right now.”