

# “The families deserve much better”—Readers demand continued investigation of Pike River mine disaster

2 August 2021

*The World Socialist Web Site is publishing more statements from readers in New Zealand and Australia, calling for a full investigation into the 2010 Pike River mine disaster, which killed 29 people.*

*The majority of the victims’ families are seeking to stop the Labour Party-led government’s plan to permanently seal the mine. Work has already begun on installing the first of two seals in the drift (the mine’s entry tunnel). This would prevent the forensic examination of evidence that could be used to prosecute those responsible for the disaster.*

*More than a decade after the explosions at Pike River, no one has been brought to justice. Successive governments, union bureaucrats and state agencies have protected the company’s executives and managers, whose negligence turned the mine into a death trap.*

*To read previously published statements from readers around the world, click [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Former miners in the UK have contributed statements [here](#). Workers in Sri Lanka have contributed statements [here](#).*

*We also draw readers’ attention to the Pike River Families Group’s online petition: “Help stop critical evidence in Pike River Mine from being locked away forever!”*

## **Glenda Felts, New Zealand:**

The tragic loss of 29 good men at Pike River Mine has left a deep scar on NZ’s history. With the benefit of history, how could a tragedy on this scale happen in modern times?

Without critical regulation and oversight, the errors of poor decision-making compounded, and gained momentum. Healing those scars starts with bringing full transparency to those errors rather than keeping

them in the dark, or viewed from a distance with blurred vision.

Without full understanding there is no growth. There is no making any real sense of this disaster. Truly learning these lessons is the best way to honor the lives lost. This will go some way to making up for being so badly let down by management, politicians, unions and impotent inspectors.

The government tells us they have only so much money, refusing continued mine recovery. Yet they had enough for an election-enhancing win. How serious were they about finding answers, if Minister for Pike River Mine Re-Entry, Andrew Little had already made his decision, in March 2020, when only in the early stages of recovering the drift? International mining expert, Tony Forster, believes it is safe and feasible in order to gain access to physical examination of key evidence such as the fan and the broken compressed air line.

Over the years, collective free market forces dimmed and diminished the workers’ voices, be it through union dilution and amalgamation, job insecurity, repealing prescriptive coal legislation, through to dismantling the intellectual strength of mining inspectorates.

The voices of capitalism consumed centre stage, rendering the disempowered workers’ voice to a whisper. 29 men paid the ultimate price, while politicians still quibble over money. Meanwhile managers and directors remain oblivious to the consequences.

May the voices of those so sadly lost be stronger than governments (past and present) and agencies, who now care more about saving face, than taking ownership for uncurbed forces, unleashed over many years.

The families of the lost miners and NZ deserve much better.

**Linda Dalgiesh, New Zealand:**

With the independent reports saying that it is safe to continue the investigation, to go just that little bit further, I don't even see how they can just walk away from it. You've got one independent report that says it's safe, and a government that says it's not safe. In any kind of business undertaking you get a variety of quotes. If you've got two quotes that are saying different things, you go and get a third.

There seems to be a very definite cover-up. We've got a member of parliament who was responsible for allowing this to happen. He was the person they were supposed to trust to stand up for their rights and their safety, the union leader. Instead, he ended up being the company man. How are we supposed to trust this guy?

He's probably got a lot to lose if the investigation uncovers more evidence, so it does stand to reason that he's trying to actively cover it up. It's a total conflict of interest. He should not be allowed anywhere near the investigation. He should be one of those being investigated.

Why has nobody been taken to court? It's disgusting that not one person has been brought to trial. Not one.

**Peter Moore, New Zealand/Australia:**

Well, maybe [Ardern] will seal her fate too, when the election comes around. To all those families, I believe you deserve better from your government, but that's what happens when those who are ultimately responsible for the safety of mines, and by that I mean the law makers and enforcers, get to control the investigation and information. Bit like police investigating police. To all the families involved, you might never know the extent of the support you have around the world. I can assure you that, almost without exception, you have the support of every miner—surface, underground, coal and hard rock—and decent people everywhere.

**Rosco Will, New Zealand:**

I find it appalling what National and Labour have done; zero accountability. 20 years ago, in the States, they had a similar explosion in an area with similar geographical conditions and it took them 12 months to re enter the mine and complete the investigation and provide those findings to the families who lost loved ones. Here in NZ it's a bit like living in the past and the

government just doesn't care enough to do the right thing.

**Alex Safari, Australia:**

I fully support the Pike River Families Committee investigation into the 2010 Pike River mine explosion. All those involved, including the mine manager, union bureaucrats and government officials must be held accountable. The investigation should be allowed to continue.

**Gisela, New Zealand:**

An investigation may end when the facts have been established and remedied. Recovery of victims must be completed, and the fullest truth about cause and effect established, and published, for justice and trust to be restored. It is the government's duty; and the times demand proof that citizens can trust. Courageous workers deserve courageous governments! Kia kaha!

**Hayden, New Zealand:**

The families deserve justice for what transpired at the mine, as they were the ones that lost loved ones through total mismanagement at the mine, and it has been ignored through lack of accountability.

**Sharon Hawkins, New Zealand:**

Please keep fighting. Those poor men lost their lives because of greed.



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