

High praise for Manildra's safety following explosion that shook many homes

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FULL TEXT

There has been high praise for Manildra's safety systems following an explosion on Sunday night that shook houses as far away as Worrigee, West Nowra and North Nowra.

The explosion in one of the gluten dryers at the Shoalhaven Starches factory just before 11pm was heard far and wide, with many in Bomaderry reporting their homes and windows shook.

A volcano discovery website even listed it as a seismic-like event.

Emergency services were called to the site and "effectively contained the incident in cooperation with our onsite team," according to a Manildra spokesperson.

"Our primary concern is the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and the local community," the spokesperson said.

"Emergency protocols and safety measures were enacted immediately, with no employees injured.

"All on-site health and safety equipment performed according to industry standards."

The spokesperson said the Manildra Group was cooperating with SafeWork NSW to conduct an investigation into the cause of the incident.

"The Shoalhaven Starches site production has not been impacted," the spokesperson said.

"We remain committed to maintaining the highest workplace health and safety standards for our employees and the Bomaderry community."

Meanwhile Fair and Rescue Far South Coast Inspector Phil Eberle said the incident could have easily been far more serious had it not been for Manildra's safety systems.

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"I'm very happy that for such a potentially large event, that all the working systems did exactly as they were meant to." They included isolation and deluge systems that ensured there was no damage outside of the once building, Inspector Eberle said.

"It was, by all accounts, quite a large explosion for all the neighbouring people of Nowra and Bomaderry, but all the safety systems in place, and the building design, operated exactly as it was meant to, and prevented anything further happening," he said.

"They're definitely well organised, well prepared, which was demonstrated by fact that their deluge systems and their safety systems kicked in and kept everyone safe."

Inspector Eberle said seven Fire and Rescue appliances, including two Hazmat units from Shellharbour, attended the incident and worked closely with Manildra's management and the on-site emergency response team.

CREDIT: Glenn Ellard

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