

~~Mr Rickuss: Shame.~~

~~Mr COSTIGAN: It is a shame. I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. I am sure there are farmers in Kelsey Creek, Silver Creek, Crystal Brook, Gunyarra, Lethebrook—all over the place in my electorate in the Whitsundays—who have plenty of issues to deal with as we speak and as we tick up towards six months since Cyclone Debbie. They would say, 'Costo, how come we do not know how much they are spending on maintenance?'~~

019 I know that the mayor has shown some great leadership in terms of the economic plan for the Whitsundays in growing Lake Proserpine and Peter Faust Dam as a tourist attraction. I think it is an underutilised resource. That is a sentiment shared by Karen Vloedmans from the local chamber of commerce who is also a board member of Tourism Whitsundays, whose CEO, Craig Turner, was here on the precinct yesterday looking to get something more out of the Palaszczuk Labor government to drive tourism in the Whitsunday.

Peter Faust Dam is a SunWater asset. Remarkably, the maintenance costs for these dams that are controlled, owned and operated by SunWater, as this report shows, are 'not disclosed', 'not disclosed', 'not disclosed'. It is amazing to see that in print. I look forward to talking to the barflies, the local cockies, about this at the Metropole Hotel, the Grand Central Hotel, the Prince of Wales Hotel—

~~An honourable member: The Reef Gardens?~~

~~Mr COSTIGAN: I will go to the Reef Gateway Hotel at Cannonvale as well. We will chew the fat and say, 'I wonder why we could not find out what the maintenance costs are for these dams that are controlled, owned and operated by SunWater.'~~

~~Debate, on motion of Mr Costigan, adjourned.~~

~~Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I would like to acknowledge another group from Durack State School in the electorate of Inala who are just leaving the gallery now.~~

MINES LEGISLATION (RESOURCES SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2017, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Regulation 2017 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017.

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes.

Queensland's mining safety legislation is considered some of the best in the world, but to uphold our track record we need to ensure it remains current. There have been no substantial amendments to the legislation since 2010. Every worker has the right to go to work expecting to go home safely to their family at the end of the day, and this must hold true for workers in Queensland mines. The Palaszczuk government holds true to our commitment in protecting all workers with the introduction of these amendments to safeguard our miners.

The re-identification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis is a timely reminder that there is no place for complacency in worker safety and health. As I have said previously in statements to this House, any failure by any company to meet their safety and health obligation is not acceptable. No worker in any industry should ever have to feel dread that the workplace they enter each day holds risks that may make them ill or, ultimately, kill them. That is why I am here to do this today, to amend legislation to protect workers in one of the most undoubtedly risky workplaces.

While Queensland's Mines Inspectorate has a range of enforcement actions that they can take to punish wrongdoing, the government is today bringing to the House a bill that strengthens and gives rigour to the enforcement powers available to the regulator. To add to the current powers to audit or prosecute an operator or shut down a mine, the chief executive of the Mines Inspectorate will have new powers to suspend or cancel statutory certificates and other competencies held by individuals if they fail to meet their obligations, and to impose civil penalties on companies to provide for swift action to be taken to address noncompliance. This is particularly important where a breach has the potential to directly and immediately impact the safety and health of persons at the mine.

It is proposed that the chief executive will be able to impose civil penalties of up to 1,000 penalty units, or \$126,000, against corporations who are mine operators or contractor companies and who fail to comply with certain obligations or requirements under the mining safety legislation. These two types of penalties will deter negligent decision-making which potentially results in serious injury or death. We will also require higher levels of competence for statutory positions, such as ventilation officers at underground mines, and require holders of statutory certificates to maintain high standards of professional competence throughout their careers.

The Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2017 proposes changes to the Coal Mines Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 to deliver on the government's commitment to improve safety and health outcomes for mine workers. Unions and industry have been instrumental in the development of the key proposals via tripartite committees.

Across 15 reform initiatives these improvements will provide for greater transparency and accountability, improved safety and health systems, and stronger enforcement and compliance powers within the mine safety and health framework. Seven of the reforms will improve transparency and accountability within the mining industry through initiatives such as higher standards for certification of underground coalmine ventilation officers. Ventilation officers play a crucial role in the health and safety of underground coalminers, and it is absolutely vital that we have rigorous checks and balances in place to ensure they are qualified to an acceptable standard.

Other initiatives include strengthening the accountability of mine operators by implementing proactive executive officer obligations and the expansion of who is responsible to notify reportable diseases. These changes will mean that site managers are required to notify my department when a worker is diagnosed with an occupational disease such as miners' lung dust diseases. Other initiatives include requiring manufacturers and suppliers to mine sites to notify hazardous/defective equipment or substances supplied to a mining operation; improving mines inspectorate representation on statutory advisory committees to balance tripartite membership; providing for a public register of certificate holders; and allowing inspectors to release relevant safety information soon after an incident, where this information will provide important learnings to industry.

Three of the reforms will improve safety and health management systems. These three reforms will improve contractor management safety by providing for the inclusion of contractor safety management systems into a single safety and health management system at a mine site. This is a crucial amendment to protect contractors who currently are involved in over 70 per cent of serious incidents, injuries and fatalities on mine sites. They will include health surveillance of current and former miners as an objective in mining safety legislation and they will upgrade safety and health in small mines by removing the safety and health management system exemption. A small mine is a mine of 11 workers or fewer. Over the years my department has noticed an overrepresentation of small mines experiencing serious accidents onsite. The department is working with these small mines to assist them in getting a safety and health management system in place, recognising some of the constraints they experience in comparison with large operations.

The remaining five of these 15 reforms will provide improved enforcement and compliance powers for the mines inspectorate by requiring holders of statutory certificates of competency to maintain competence for the life of the certificate through continuing professional development; allowing certificates to be suspended or cancelled for noncompliance; increasing the maximum penalties under the mining safety legislation; clarifying the entry powers of inspectors to sites that could reasonably be considered a workplace associated with a mining operation; and providing the power for the chief executive to impose civil penalties on mining companies who fail to meet their obligations.

This bill is needed to ensure mineworkers are supported by legislation that is effective and contemporary. The government is committed to progressing improvements to legislation to keep workers safe. These improvements will play a critical role in rebuilding trust and respect with the resources sector as we take responsibility for the errors of history. I commend the bill to the House.

~~First Reading~~

~~Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.38 pm): I move~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Question put That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~