

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Q 4000

Via email: eesbc@parliament.qld.gov.au

16 April 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

Together thanks the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee for the opportunity to make submissions regarding the *Mines Legislation (Resource Safety) Amendment Bill 2018*.

Together is the union that represents inspectors and other staff employed by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. As a union, members continue to be concerned about matters of health and safety regarding frontline staff in mines. Together acknowledges that mining is a high risk industry and it is imperative to prevent future fatalities, permanent impairment or injury.

Together supports the proposal that the competencies for ventilation officers should be updated. This will enable fresh opportunities for existing officers to be upskilled; this must occur through departmental funding for necessary training. Current employees should not be disadvantaged or displaced in their current permanent positions, rather supported through training and mentoring to meet desired competencies.

The expanded powers of right of entry for inspectors is supported. However, should these expanded powers cause an increase in workloads, an increase in resources needs to be commensurate. More government vehicles, and home garaging arrangements, and overtime payments will likely be required.

Together agrees that the amendment to impose an obligation on designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers to notify both the mines inspectorate and mine operators of any identified hazards or defects with supplied equipment and substances that they become aware of is likely to improve the day to day lives of workers.

The amendment to ensure an acceptable level of risk, which articulates that contractors and service providers will be required to provide a copy of their safety and health management *Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018* plan to the SSE for consideration and integration (as appropriate) into the mine's single SHMS; is well received by union members.

An increase in the number (by one) of departmental representatives compared with industry and union representatives on the advisory committees (Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee (CMSHAC) and the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee (MSHAC)), will provide fair representation of departmental views. However, given that several unions represent members at these Committees, it seems fair and reasonable that legislation is amended so

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that each union can have three representatives, to include organisers, delegates and advocates.

Together members express concern that this legislation would enable the Minister to have discretionary power to appoint a person even if the person does not have experience in mining operations. The minutia and subtlety of mining safety could be lost on one without mining operations experience.

Together agrees with the proposed amendments to be made to the CMSHA and MQSHA to allow the board of examiners to keep a register of certificates of competency, SSE notices and notices of registration given by the board under the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992*. Adequate record keeping is an imperative to enable expedient audit and review.

While a similar health assessment regime currently does not exist under the MQSHA, Together members agree that such an amendment would future-proof the MQSHA in terms of emerging health issues. Therefore, health assessment and health surveillance (for prospective, current and retired industry workers) should both be included in how the objects of the MQSHA are to be achieved. Similarly, the timely release of safety information by regulators (e.g. safety alerts about incidents) enables industry to implement key learnings in practice in a timely manner.

Together again thanks the Committee for this opportunity to provide a submission on this bill. Should the Committee require any clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lead Organiser, Dee Spink on [redacted] or [redacted]

Sincerely



Kate Flanders
Assistant Secretary
Together