

PIRC - Submission - Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 009

Submission By: Electrical Trades Union

Publication: Making the submission and your name public

17 March 2026

Committee Secretary

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

By email: PIRC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee

**Committee inquiry into Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2026**

The ETU represents over 15 000 electrical workers across Queensland. The ETU is best placed to provide expert advice on electrical safety because electrical workers are the most vulnerable and susceptible to inadequate safety (including electrical safety) legislation.

The ETU represents many coal mine workers, and in particular, a current worker representative on the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee (CMSHAC). Mr Lichos' experience includes frontline experience, statutory responsibilities, and direct involvement in the advisory committee system that this Bill seeks to significantly alter. Mr Lichos and the ETU hold serious concerns about aspects of the Bill that may unintentionally weaken the very protections it aims to improve.

The Bill removes the independent Commissioner for Resources Safety and Health and transfers all statutory functions to a newly created RSHQ Board. The Committee's own inquiry overview confirms this objective. For ETU Members in minerals and coal, this is a fundamental shift away from independent oversight.

The Commissioner has been a critical safeguard, someone who can speak truth to power, report directly to Parliament and act without fear or favour. Replacing that role with a Minister appointed Board risks diluting independence at the exact moment when Queensland's mining industry needs more transparency, not less.

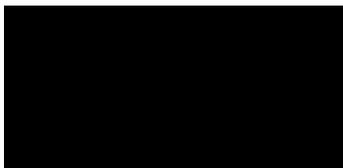
The Bill significantly expands Ministerial discretion over appointments and removals of key safety roles. This includes the CEO of RSHQ and members of the new Board. When safety leadership can be removed "for any reason or none," it undermines transparency and independence. Regulators must be free to make tough calls, even when those calls are unpopular with industry or government.

The Bill also restructures the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee. Under the amendments, the chair must be a member of the RSHQ Board and not an independent statutory officer. This is a backwards step. Advisory committees exist to bring worker and industry expertise to the table. They are meant to inform the regulator and not be overseen by it. When the Board chairs the committee the independence of that advice is compromised. Workers lose a critical avenue to raise concerns, influence standards and ensure that lived experience is reflected in safety policy.

From a frontline perspective, these structural changes matter. When oversight is weakened, when independence is reduced, when worker voices are diluted, the risk profile in mine's increases. We have learned these lessons the hard way in Queensland, through disasters, fatalities and coronial findings. The Bill's stated aim is to "strengthen governance" of RSHQ , but the practical effect is the opposite. It centralises control, reduces transparency, and weakens the checks and balances that keep workers safe.

The ETU looks forward to discussing these matters, and the balance of its recommendations in detail with the Committee with a view to advancing these reforms in a more productive manner.

Yours faithfully



Peter Ong

DIVISIONAL BRANCH SECRETARY