

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Submission to the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Dear Secretary,

Firstly, I would like to state that the fatalities in our industry over the past 24mths are absolutely unacceptable. I believe everyone would be in agreeance that there needs to be serious and robust changes implemented to prevent this trend from continuing.

I would like to address the following section **“The Bill amends the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 to clarify that only persons who are employees of a coal mine operator may be appointed as certain statutory office holders. “**

In relation to the paper released by the DNRME I strongly disagree with Section 7, which suggests that statutory office holders do not/may not make safety complaints, raise safety issues, or give help to an official in relation to a safety issue because fear of reprisal or impact on their employment.

In my opinion as a currently practicing statutory official, I in fact do the opposite and have seen other officials do the same without being subjected to any unfair treatment or reprisals. I believe that as a contractor you are doing more to ensure that compliance is high and that anything that is unsafe is made safe whether that be environmentally, procedurally or due to unsafe practices or behaviours. As we know, hitting production targets are irrelevant if someone gets hurt during the process.

I believe the statement is more of a cultural problem which needs to be addressed by the senior management team on site. (Higher penalties which have been proposed will be beneficial in correcting this behaviour.) Simple processes and accountability will ensure that these situations will cease to occur and will also give officials an avenue to manage their issues in a professional manner. Another resource we can employ to help the situation are in the form of SSHR's and ISHR's who can also assist in safety and health related issues.

Just because you are employed by the Operator doesn't make you exempt from the pressure to perform and meet targets. Morally, ethically and most importantly legally our primary obligation is to ensure the safety and health of the people in our district. As a contract deputy you do have the freedom to move around and by doing so gain more experience and knowledge. This also has the added benefit of ensuring you remain on top of legislation and current best practices. A good statutory official will always find work as you are only as good as your reputation. On the other hand, there is the potential for permanent officials to become complacent in their roles and responsibilities.

The changes will also affect people by limiting their:

- **Freedom of choice**
- **Restriction of trade**
- **Career advancement**
- **Ability to provide financial security for their families**

In summary this part of the “Bill” will not be the saviour to fix the safety and health issues in our industry but rather potentially drive statutory role holders away which will be detrimental for obvious reasons. Contract statutory officials will ensure there is a healthy balance in regard to pay and skill levels so we can assist in improving the current situation moving forward.

Lastly, I believe that tougher penalties, continuous improvement in safety innovations and training as well as a significant culture change will be the factors that will initiate change.

Thanks for your time, please don't hesitate to contact me if required.

Steffan Ryder

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