

To: Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural
Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane

From: ERZ Contracting Pty. Ltd.

Mr Andrew Ede

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Dear Committee Secretary,

Please accept my submission to the parliamentary commission regarding the proposed **Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, introduced by the Honourable Anthony Lynham MP on the 4th February 2020.**

Specifically, the section which refers to the following: *"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."*

I have more than 20 years experience in underground mining, of these, I have worked 10+ years in the role of Deputy/ERZ Controller. I have worked as a permanent employee employed by a company, also as a contractor working for myself. In those 20 years I have had the experience of working at multiple mine sites in Central Queensland.

In my experience it should make no difference who your employer is as to how well you perform at your job. At no time, whilst working as a contractor, have I felt under more pressure "not to speak up". As a permanent employee or as a contractor one's work ethics remain the same. I think it comes down to how seriously you take your job and responsibilities. As a Deputy, your work ethic, knowledge and confidence in understanding the Act, Regulations and Mine SHMS are paramount.

I believe that as a contractor moving between mines has made me a better deputy as it has exposed me to many different safety systems and ways of doing things. There are already sections in the Coal Mining Safety Act 1999 to protect people from reprisal – **Part 17 General 275AA Protection from reprisal.** Most mines have available a confidential Help Line that can be used if you feel that the other systems are not working.

In my opinion, making a law that would require Statutory Officials to be directly employed by the company will not change anything nor anyone's behaviour. If a Statutory Official is going to be pressured into making unsafe decisions then the same will happen with a permanent employee (they still have yearly bonuses and still run the risk of being moved to another part of the mine or changed to a different roster).

In my mind one thing that may help is to make the Coordinators job a statutory role. At present people in the role of Coordinator have very little statutory experience and understanding. Their job is to plan

work and achieve maximum results, sometimes very little planning goes into meeting statutory requirements (e.g. Schedule 5 of the Coal Mining Health and Safety Regulations) it is then left up to the Statutory Official on the ground to make up the short fall in planning to stay compliant.

Some changes that I feel could help the present situation in the mining industry are as follows

- 1) The people planning the everyday jobs and shift expectations should be Statutory Officials or at least be required to have statutory knowledge.
- 2) Look into a more efficient reporting system for ongoing issues E.g. An onsite reporting system that is audited by the SSHR and inspectorate.
- 3) More industry wide training, focus being on the Act and Regulations and implementation of such.

I strongly disagree that making it mandatory for all Statutory Officials to be employed by the company, is going to, or will, make any difference to safety. Not only are you taking away our freedom of choice of employer you are also making a statement of sorts: that as a contractor I choose not do my job properly and because I'm a contractor I knowingly endanger the lives of the employees I am responsible for. This is an insult to good, capable, experienced Statutory Officials who make the choice to contract.

Please give my submission due deliberation

Yours sincerely

Andrew Ede.