

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

Reference: Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept the following 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 that 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." May I commend the minister in attempting to take proactive steps to improve the safety of the mining sector in Queensland as it is clear from the fatality and injury rates that action needs to be taken.

Background

I have worked within the coal sector in Queensland since November 2018 and the NSW coal sector since 2011. During that time I have been on the management team of multiple sites as business improvement manager, so it has often fallen to me to help improve site safety and organisational effectiveness. I have worked in many non-mining companies in the manufacturing sector also both in support and direct line management roles, so while I am neither a contractor nor a statutory official, I believe my perspective has the benefit of breadth. A lot of people in our industry haven't had very diverse experiences. So they don't have enough dots to connect, and they end up with very linear solutions without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have.

Context

I have reviewed the Amendment bill and the state priority of improving safety culture in the resources sector through introducing industrial manslaughter provisions and requiring that persons appointed to critical safety statutory roles for coalmining operations must be an employee of the coalmine operator. I would like the opportunity to express some concerns in that the bill proposes to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 in order to protect the safety and health of workers by requiring that persons appointed to critical safety statutory roles for coalmining operations must be an employee of the coalmine operator. Explanatory notes indicate that the intent of this amendment is to give people engaged in the statutory roles a sense of security that would encourage them to raise safety issues without fear of reprisal.

My objections

The coal industry is highly regulated. My observations is that these regulations appear to do little to drive improvements in safety culture and in fact appear to be constraining real improvement in safety. Every one of the manufacturing organisations I have worked for have vastly superior safety performance and culture than I observe in the coal industry. Statistics support this, with the fatality rate per 100,000 hours in 2018 being at 1.4 in manufacturing and 3.7 in mining – mining fatality rates are nearly 3 times higher than manufacturing. Why is this so? There is not a material difference in the concept of a safe workplace between mining and manufacturing. There are equal risks in

