



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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#### **MINERAL RESOURCES AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (4.36 p.m.): Being born at the Ipswich General Hospital one month short of 40 years ago and having spent my childhood in north Ipswich, I can honestly say that I appreciate the value that mining, especially coalmining, has had both in the past and will have in the future for this great state of Queensland. As a baby in my father's arms, we would join my great-uncle Gordon Oldmeadow as he drove a steam locomotive at the back of our home in Allen Street to the coalmines. I am led to believe that it was a B18 and a quarter, but that could be debated. I was but a baby in arms. My father would get into trouble for coming home with coal dust all over us. But in those days, underground mines were all through north Ipswich and Tivoli, which is now heavily populated. As children, that was our entertainment—to go and play in the old discarded mines around the area.

**Mr Robertson:** It doesn't get any better than that.

**Mr CUMMINS:** It does not get any better that. Nowadays, kids say that they have nothing to do. There are no coalmines to play in. Ipswich, Ebbw Vale, Bundamba, numerous areas around Ipswich, Rosewood and further up the country were very well-known coalmining areas. The product was very valuable to the lifeblood of Ipswich—obviously, not only the mines but also the power stations and the railway workshops.

It is a fact of life that a lot of the mines in and around the south-east corner have closed. We are very heavily reliant on the coal industry in central Queensland and other areas. Years ago, I remember many men who would be involved in either soccer or football who were coalminers. I grew up with their families. Other men worked part-time at the mines. Even my father at weekends as a second job would drive a coal truck pulling coal, stone and chitters and all the other by-products that made the big coal hills around Ipswich that are still seen today.

Ipswich was built and was very heavily reliant on the coal industry. That is one of the reasons I agree with one thing that the member for Callide said: Queenslanders have a great deal to thank the mining industry for. A lot of the wealth of this great state has come from out of the ground in products that not only we use but also we export.

In my mid-20s I left Ipswich for Gladstone, where I was an indirect recipient of some of that coal money because I worked for Queensland Railways on the electric locomotives that used to pull the coal from central Queensland to the port of Gladstone. Again, areas were reliant on the offshoots of those products because the workers would benefit and there were flow-on costs. The coal trains would pull the wagons hundreds of kilometres from central Queensland to Gladstone, Mackay and other areas. Some Queenslanders probably would not be aware of the vast amounts of coal and other minerals exported from all ports north of Brisbane. It really is incredible to see the amount of coal that goes through that area and the amount of wealth generated not only for the big mining companies but, through the Queensland government, for the people who live across the state. Hundreds and thousands of people rely on the associated industries and hundreds of towns and communities rely on the industry. The Beattie government ensures that we maintain a viable economy to assist these industries. Queensland has billions of dollars invested in areas through public infrastructure and similar. Many residents of various and far-flung communities are probably our modern day settlers or explorers because often they live in areas that do not have what we would class as modern day luxuries.

The Mineral Resources Amendment Bill is another step in the right direction. I commend the minister and his department, the Mines Department, realising that the Beattie government within this legislation will reduce to 15 per cent the rental penalty rates for applicable mining tenements granted under the Mineral Resources Act 1989. This amendment fulfils a commitment to this change made by the former Minister for Mines and Energy, the Hon. Tony McGrady, following representations from sections of the mining industry. The bill also reflects that interest rates have gone down since the late 1980s. Again, this government has delivered on a commitment that we gave to the industry. The amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 will ensure that land ceasing to be subject to coal exploration permits is treated in the same manner as the current arrangements for land ceasing to be subject to a non-coal exploration permit. This obviously is a more effective and equitable arrangement. We are aware that all relevant parties have been consulted. The amendments are obviously supported by the industry. I hope they are supported by the House. I commend the minister and the department in commending the bill to the House.