



Speech by

JO-ANN MILLER

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Hansard 19 June 2002

NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (1.14 a.m.): I rise in support of the Natural Resources and Mines Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. I am a coalminer's daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter, and it is a great privilege to be able to stand in this parliament today to support legislation that improves the safety and health levels in the coalmining industry. The Coal Mining Safety and Health Act was passed in 1999, and the amendments in this bill are aimed to finetune the legislation. The amendments simplify some provisions, clarify the intent of the legislation and extend the scope of some sections of the act for practical implementation purposes. The bill also contains amendments to the Explosives Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999.

My father, George Pringle, my uncles, my cousins—indeed, nearly all the men in my family—were underground coalminers at Ipswich. My father worked at Southern Cross No.10 alongside my uncle, George Kitching, who worked in another Southern Cross tunnel. They were underground miners. They were injured on occasions and worked in absolutely disgraceful conditions. As children, we always lived in fear because we never, ever knew if or when our fathers would come home. We did not know if they would be injured or, indeed, blown up. This was very real for us as children, and I can still recall the morning that Box Flat blew up in Ipswich and the pain on the faces of other students at Bremer State High School. Indeed, my friends' fathers died in that explosion, but miners' kids stick together—even to this day. One of my friends, Haywood, wore his father's grey flannel underneath his school uniform for years after the Box Flat explosion.

The happiest day of my life was when my father retired from mining in 1985. It was like a cloud had lifted over our family because he would be 'on top' for the rest of his life. Mining is in my blood. On behalf of the families of coalminers, I thank the minister for this legislation to ensure that coalminers work in a safer and healthier environment. One miner lost or one miner injured is one too many. Prevention is paramount. I support the member for Fitzroy in his concerns. I commend the bill to the House.