



Speech by

JO-ANN MILLER

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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MINERAL RESOURCES AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (4.35 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Mineral Resources and Another Act Amendment Bill 2003. As everyone in this House knows, the coal industry is dear to my heart and coalminers have a great heritage in my city of Ipswich.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I am a coalminer's daughter; that is quite correct. Only a few weeks ago the last coalmine in my electorate closed—that is, the New Hill colliery operated by New Hope Mines. I can tell members that it was a very sad day for the city of Ipswich. In fact, I represented the Minister for Mines at the function that evening and all the miners were reminiscing about their wonderful days underground and also those in the open-cuts. I am sure that everyone in this House would wish all the coalminers well in their retirement.

The coal industry has changed dramatically since the first coal was mined in the West Moreton coalfields. Years ago companies simply wanted to mine coal, to wash it, to crush it and then sell it. These days companies are now interested in the gas which is trapped in the coal seams. Some 27 per cent of Queensland's gas is supplied by gas coming from coal seams, and I am sure that the coal seam gas will be crucial to Queensland's future energy resources. The bill will provide rules, rights and obligations for coal and petroleum industries to work together to develop coal seam gas resources. There will be greater certainty for geological companies and mining and petroleum companies who expend great amounts of money in exploration for coal seam gas. I am pleased that a new and integrated safety management regime will be provided for, as the operational safety of existing coalmines is paramount.

Last week I attended the 15th anniversary celebrations of SIMTARS, which is in my electorate of Bundamba, on behalf of the minister. The Safety in Mines Training and Research Station is a world-class facility dedicated to safety in mines, and I congratulate it on its work in safety in mines. I have taken retired Ipswich coalminers through this facility and they are always impressed with the technological advances in mine safety. I also caught up with an old friend of mine, Mr Ieuan Roberts, whom I worked with when he was managing director of Curragh Queensland Mining Ltd. Last week it was the 20th anniversary of the Curragh mine, which I was involved with. I understand that Tom Kuzman hosted a 20th anniversary celebration last Saturday night for everyone who was involved in the Curragh mine. Ieuan Roberts was also a chief inspector of mines in Queensland, and in his retirement he takes an active interest in mine safety. As they say, once a miner always a miner. We had a great morning at SIMTARS—

Mr Briskey interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I am a coalminer's daughter, and proud of it!

I am confident that the contribution of SIMTARS to the coal industry will continue for many decades to come. This bill is obviously very important to the coal industry. I thank the minister and all of the departmental officers, and I commend the bill to the House.