



Speech by

Hon. Geoff Wilson

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Hansard Thursday, 19 April 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mine Safety Audits

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.27 pm): The early findings from a series of targeted mine safety audits are a wake-up call for the mining industry. Last month I informed the House that the Mines Inspectorate would undertake a series of unannounced safety audits at a number of coal and metalliferous mines across Queensland over the next three to six months. This is about improving mine safety. I said at the time that it was not to be a naming and shaming exercise.

These early findings hang a lantern on serious safety issues and that is exactly what they were designed to do. I expect more safety issues may emerge from the further audits to be carried out over the next few months. The sole purpose of these audits is to identify potential hazards and for mining companies to fix them. If they fail to act, they will face the full consequences.

Mining is a dangerous occupation and therefore it is vital that vigilance be applied mine by mine, employer by employer, worker by worker. We owe it to the men and women who work in the mines. They know more than anyone of the terrible consequences of a mining disaster.

As well as the audits, last month I also requested an independent review into the way in which annual mine safety figures are collected. I took this action following representations from the member for Fitzroy, Jim Pearce, and others after concerns were raised directly with me by the member for Fitzroy, the unions and workers themselves. It was felt that some of the data in the report did not accurately reflect the number of safety incidents at some mines.

This review will be led by two highly respected academics, each with many years experience in the mining industry. The review team will work with key stakeholders and will closely analyse the data with world's best practice as the benchmark. I expect to receive a report within three months.

It is my intention that the data be truly transparent so that everyone can clearly see what is actually happening on the ground. The government, the community and the men and women who work in our mines would expect nothing less.