



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 15 April 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mining Industry, Temporary Accommodation

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.15 am): Last month I travelled to Blackwater to inspect temporary workers' accommodation for the region's mine employees. I thank the member for Gregory and the Central Highlands Regional Council Mayor, Peter Maguire, for conducting me on that firsthand look at the accommodation. Frankly, I was shocked by what I saw.

The pressures of rapid resource development, particularly in coalmining areas, has resulted in the use of temporary buildings of a poor standard that fail to adequately provide for the health, safety and general comfort of the workers who reside in them. While many providers of temporary accommodation deliver an outstandingly good product, current building regulations do not address minimum standards for temporary accommodation buildings, particularly those in mining regions. As far as I am concerned, that is just not good enough. Those in the industry work hard and deserve better.

After extensive consultation with key stakeholders, the Bligh government has created a new code under the Queensland Development Code, which will be delivered state-wide. This new code will apply wherever temporary accommodation is provided for rent or as part of a workplace agreement. It will also apply to other temporary accommodation buildings such as granny flats or where a person lives on site while a permanent building is being constructed.

The changes will create a limit of 24 months for the definition of temporary accommodation; require compliance with the relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia; and improve the health and safety of the occupants. The state government is aware the Queensland Resources Council has concerns about the changes, which are estimated to cost the mining industry approximately \$18 million per year. However, given the thousands of Queensland workers directly impacted and the potential expansion of the industry across the state, improving conditions is imperative. The Bligh government is committed to improving conditions for mine employees who work hard and deserve better.