



Speech by


**Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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## **MINES AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (4.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). It is widely recognised that the mining and energy sectors are critically important to the Queensland economy and that the sustainability of the mining and energy sectors is critically important to the future prosperity of the Queensland way of life. According to figures from the Queensland Resources Council, in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area, the area which includes the Morayfield state electorate, there are 413 residents employed in the mining and energy sectors earning close to \$54 million a year in wages. According to those figures, the mining and energy sectors generate more than \$173 million in economic activity in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area. Just as the mining and energy sectors are important to Queensland, those sectors are also important to the people of the Morayfield state electorate.

This bill introduces a number of key reforms in the area of energy efficiency for gas appliances, enhanced safety and health measures for the resource industry and clarity around the collection of key royalty revenue estimates information. Whilst I support all the amendments contained in this bill as good amendments I would like to spend a little time discussing the key amendments relating to the enhanced safety and health measures which will flow from this bill.

Our community expects and demands that workers are safe when they are at work. Accordingly, I am pleased that this Queensland government has a strong commitment to ensuring the mining industry in Queensland is one of the safest industries in the world. I also acknowledge the hard work of our colleagues in the union movement in respect of worker safety and their advocacy on behalf of their members and all workers in the mining industry.

The amendments will address some issues which have arisen with respect to the requirement under existing legislation for all mine operators to develop and maintain a fully documented safety and health management system. A safety and health management system consists of a formal consultative approach to identifying hazards and managing safety risks and includes systematic procedures, practices and policies for the management of risk. In respect of this current requirement, it is possible for more than one safety and health management system to be in operation at a single mine site. This means that it is possible for a number of inconsistencies and incompatibilities to exist in respect of the mine's various safety and health management systems. In light of this possibility and in light of a recent recommendation of the Queensland Coroner, it is appropriate that the legislation be amended to make it clear that only one safety and health management system is to apply at any particular mine site. This amending bill gives effect to that proposition and, accordingly, ensures that there is certainty and consistency in respect of a mine's safety and health management system. I understand that key stakeholders in the mining industry have responded very positively to this proposed amendment.

Health and safety in the mining and energy industries will also be enhanced by further amendments which impose obligations on persons designing, erecting or constructing earthworks structures. These new obligations will be similar to those which presently exist for suppliers and designers of plant.

The amendments seek to ensure earthworks are designed, erected and constructed in a manner that, when used properly, ensure the safety risk to any person is at an acceptable level.

Honourable members have heard me speak before in this parliament about my passion and commitment to the concept of the safety net—that wonderful principle of looking after the most vulnerable, most marginalised and most disadvantaged in our community. Accordingly, I am very pleased that under this bill measures will be put in place to ensure that children under the age of 16 years will be precluded from operating or maintaining plant and machinery. This is in response to a recent discovery that a child under the age of 10 years was operating heavy machinery at a quarry.

This amendment is not about being unfair or limiting opportunities for children. This is about the safety of our children and our young people and the safety of people connected to the operation and maintenance of plant and machinery. I make no apologies for supporting an amendment which enhances safety and provides greater protections for young people and children. This amendment is entirely consistent with a proposal being put forward under the National Mine Safety Framework, which sets a minimum age of 16 years for employment on mine sites.

I commend the former minister for this portfolio area, the Hon. Stephen Robertson, for his hard work in ensuring that this bill is before the parliament. But I also commend the incoming minister, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, his staff and departmental staff for their hard work in respect of this bill. I commend this bill to the House and I encourage all members of the House to support it.