




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

MINING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (8.03 pm): I rise to speak to the Mining and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This legislation goes a long way to deliver on our promise to reduce red tape for our business sector, in this instance the mining sector. I have previously stated in the House that I am continuously fielding questions in my electorate of Albert concerning the mining sector and how residents can seek employment in this all-important industry. The introduction of this legislation is another key component of the Newman government's four-pillar economy. Building a healthy economy can be achieved only by promoting business. This bill has direct ramifications for employment growth in our state.

Something that is certainly dear to my heart is fossicking and all of those who participate in this wonderful activity. The Beenleigh Lapidary Club is certainly one association that thrives on the adventure of searching the earth for these elusive natural creations. Last year the member for Waterford and I had quite a substantial visit to the club where we saw some fascinating gemstones.

Mr Latter: Diamonds.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes, we even saw a diamond. I must say the club even had a diamond in their collection. So good on them for their fossicking and for their hard work in finding these elusive stones.

Mr Rickuss: Did you buy her any?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Unfortunately, the diamonds are rather small and I do not believe my wife would have been too impressed.

Mr Kempton: What are we talking about here?

Mr BOOTHMAN: A diamond. I am not taking any more interjections from those individuals over there. When I was a teenager on my father's property I spent a few weekends looking around for these elusive stones and unfortunately I never had—

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I am not taking any more interjections from the member for Broadwater, either. Certainly, I did not have very much luck when it comes to fossicking. This bill goes a long way—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Albert, do you need my protection at all?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly need your protection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, please cease your interjections. The member is not taking any.

Mr BOOTHMAN: This bill goes a long way to allowing small mining operations and fossickers to operate with a greatly reduced bureaucracy. These changes include the reduction of ongoing

administrative processes, compliance costs and fees. Currently, even small scale miners must operate on a mining lease. In this case a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Small mining operations should not be automatically placed in the same class as large mining corporations, such as coalmines. The requirements for large coalminers, logically, should be greater than they are for small mining operations. Under the current legislation, small and large mining operations must adhere to a one-size-fits-all approach, which requires all entities to be subjected to the same requirements. That is clearly an unfair and cumbersome system.

This legislation has the potential to help build two crucial pillars of the Queensland economy, the resources industry and the tourism industry. Unfortunately, the current legislation has driven down participation by small miners owing to compliance costs, fees and red tape. In a number of circumstances small miners, fossickers and potentially tourists are a lifeline for small towns in regional Queensland. They create employment and tourism, which support the economies of those towns. This bill is about diversification. It is about creating industry and building our four-pillar economy.

This bill creates a simplified application process and removes ongoing administration fees and processes for those who operate on a scale between mining lease and activities on a mining claim. The bill also gives the industry a clear definition between small miners and large miners, therefore applying appropriate regulation proportionate to size. The bill also gives eligible persons mining opals and gemstones the option of converting their small mining leases to a mining claim, holding up to two mining claims and 20 hectares for each those claims.

In addition, they will not be liable for an annual payment and are not required to lodge royalty returns if the value of the operation is under a certain threshold. This includes a new process structure for applications, including the removal of engaging in a wider public notification process, with a more simplified system to notify relevant local governments and/or landholders. Protections are also provided for relevant local governments and landholders who retain the right to have their objections heard in the Land Court.

In addition, low-risk small scale miners may be exempt from requirements to hold an environmental authority depending on the location, again further reducing fees and administration. To ensure environmental outcomes, operators must comply with the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and take all reasonable measures to prevent environmental harm.

This bill is great for tourism, it is great for the resources sector and it certainly will help those more remote towns.

Mr Johnson: It will help the great electorate of Gregory.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. It certainly would help get people out fossicking in his electorate. It is certainly developing a strong tourism sector, in turn growing these small towns and our wonderful state. I thank the minister for his commitment to further reducing red tape and aiding small businesses throughout our great state. I certainly commend this bill to the House.