




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2015

HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, in particular the restoration of Labour Day to its rightful place in May. I know those opposite remain obsessed with my own and my colleagues' relationships with unions, and I will say it for the record again: I am a proud union member—always have been, always will be. Labour Day is an important opportunity to celebrate the achievements of dedicated women and men who worked tirelessly to improve working conditions, keep workers safe and create a better community. We do not just march to thank union officials and celebrate the achievements of Labor governments; we march to celebrate the countless stories of workers and their families fighting for what is right.

Today, I want to talk about some lesser known women—the women who are holding it all together in many of our mining towns that are struggling. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with Vicky, Kathleen and Sallee—three strong and tenacious women from Blackwater. They had come to Brisbane that day to meet with senior executives of BHP to demand a better outcome for the town that they love. In their words, they came to look them in the eye and tell them what they had done to their families and their community. I seek leave to table the letters that these women wrote to BHP executives, because their own words are extremely powerful.

Tabled paper: Letters, dated September 2015, from Vicky Hamilton, Kathleen Miller and Sallee Collins, to the Chief Executive Officer, BHP Billiton, Mr Andrew Mackenzie. [\[1372\]](#)

These women spoke about their home town of Blackwater—a town that has given so much to support an industry that they thought would support them back. Their husbands all worked in some capacity for BHP and they have all been swept aside by the decision to move to a non-permanent workforce. It is wrong and these women, whose husbands have been worn down by the fight, are standing up to it with the support of their union.

Next May, when Labour Day is back to where it belongs, I will be marching for these women and I know that thousands of my friends and colleagues in the labour movement will be right there alongside me, because every one of them has a story like these women from Blackwater. We show them all the respect they deserve by restoring Labour Day back to its rightful place.