




Speech By
Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (12.13 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the consideration of the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee report. We have spoken many times in this House about the fundamental failings of allowing coal workers' pneumoconiosis to go down the path it did. Whether you use terminology such as 're-emergence' or 'reidentification' or whether you say that it was always there, it now really no longer makes a difference. Whether you lay blame with the mines, the workers, the department, the medical surveillance, radiology, NMAs, the Department of Health or whoever, that no longer matters. The evidence is in that, collectively, Queensland has failed its coalminers. We must now work forwards to protect the industry and everyone in it, including the departments, the workers and the companies. We must now stop pointing fingers and accept that it happened—accept that Queenslanders were failed and that it occurred for years. We must fix it.

On 23 March this year in this House I expressed my confidence in our minister to draft legislation to put to this House and that it was expressed in a statement of reservation in an earlier report tabled around the same time. On 23 March this year, this House decided as part of the extended terms of reference for the CWP Select Committee, to include instructions to monitor and review the implementation of recommendations made by the CWP committee in its report 'including the development of a draft bill for consideration of the Assembly'. I repeat: 'development of a draft bill for the consideration of the Assembly.' There has been all sorts of scuttlebutt about this process: a committee-led bill, a private member's bill—what is it, how does it work, does it require a Governor's message, who writes it, who scrutinises it, what role does the minister have and what about the department? It is the will of this House that the select committee develop a draft bill. It is in the motion that this House approved on 23 March this year. There is criticism by some members of this House over this. I say to them: do not make accusations behind my back over my performance on the select committee because you disagree with this process. This is your wish; this is your instruction. You voted for this. Do not criticise me for your process.

Moving forward, I have grave concerns about workers in our coal-fired power stations. I feel that we will see similar circumstances in those power stations as we saw in our open-cut coal mines. We have only just begun to investigate this and time will certainly tell where it goes. In conclusion, I thank the members of our committee: the chair, the member for Bundamba; the deputy chair, the member for Southern Downs; and the members for Whitsunday, Mackay and Dalrymple. I also thank the member for Greenslopes, who was a member of the committee for quite an extensive part of the inquiry, and the member for Mirani, who came on board a few different times and who is very passionate in this area, as we have heard in this House many times.