




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the report titled *Black lung white lies*. I have only recently joined the parliamentary select committee. I would like to commend the original committee on the work that it has done in compiling this report. All credit goes to the original committee.

Hearing the pain of the witnesses at the committee hearing I attended in Mackay was emotionally draining, especially knowing that with the due diligence of those responsible for the safety of workers, and those charged with doing the checks and balances on workers safety being carried out, we would not be here today talking about this topic.

The report clearly outlines systemic failures in the system and, more importantly, outlines recommendations that put an end to the working conditions that cause coal workers' pneumoconiosis and for ongoing health care for workers. Recommendation 1 is that there should be a truly independent Mine Safety and Health Authority established as a statutory authority and body corporate with responsibility for ensuring the safety and health of mining and resource industry workers in Queensland. It is important to have that independent body.

Recommendation 5 is that the Mine Safety and Health Authority be established in Mackay, ensuring that the commissioner, senior management, Mines Inspectorate, Coal Workers' Health Scheme and mobile units are all based in Central Queensland. It is really important that those who are overseeing the health and safety of workers live in the community where those workers live so that they understand the problems and they hear what is going on firsthand on the work sites. By establishing this authority in the city of Mackay they will see those people whom they are supposed to be looking after when they go to the supermarket, walking down the streets or having a barbecue with their neighbours. On the streets of Mackay one sees many miners in their hi-vis work gear, so this is the right place for it. With those comments I commend the report to the House.