




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.29 pm): Like many in this House, I pay tribute to the committee members who put together this report, *Black lung white lies: inquiry in the re-identification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis in Queensland*. This is one of the most significant reports that we have seen in the parliament for a long time. On occasions I had the good fortune to be a part of the inquiry, which educated me on how bad things are and how we have probably let down many Queenslanders in regard to this issue. I pay tribute to the chair and the deputy chair, the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs, and all committee members: the members for Whitsunday, Barron River, Greenslopes and Dalrymple, as well as the member for Mirani. As I said, I was lucky enough to be a part of the inquiry as well.

I pay tribute to counsel assisting, Mr Ben McMillan, and his brilliance in being able to identify issues and help the committee with its progress and its report. Ben brought to the committee table an absolute professionalism in everything that he did.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. He was able to disseminate the information that we were getting and helped us with how we could act on that information. Ben, thank you very much for being a part of this committee. Certainly, I thank you for all the work that you have done.

The report's foreword by the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs strikes at the heart of the issue. As I said last night in the House, black lung or pneumoconiosis is not like a mine explosion. Black lung is preventable. When our coal workers go to work, they expect to be able to come home safely. They know there are risks in the mining industry, but they are visible risks. They are risks of moving trucks and machinery. However, this is a risk that we need to make sure that we rectify and we need to rectify it now.

The heart of this issue lies in the heart of the electorate that I represent, the seat of Gregory. We have many great mines and great towns built on the mining community. They deserve that we make sure we get this right. I commend everybody involved in this House. It is always good to be able to come together in bipartisanship and ensure that, when we face very important issues such as this, we get it right. Finally, again I pay tribute to the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs who did an absolutely fantastic job in bringing together the report that has been tabled today. We need to act on these recommendations to make sure that this never happens again.