




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2017

**COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS SELECT COMMITTEE: REPORT,
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.33 pm): I have had the privilege of being a member of the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee and I endorse this report. As has been mentioned in this House today, in April 1984 the Queensland Coal Board published a report highlighting 75 suspected cases of CWP and no black lung disease was diagnosed for the following 33 years. This never struck a chord with anyone. Consecutive state governments never thought that it was strange that every other jurisdiction that had coalmines still had black lung, yet for some reason or another Queensland was exempt from black lung.

State governments tasked with protecting the health of Queensland miners neglected and ignored the very people whom they should have been caring for and supporting. There has been no regard for the medical records. As the committee has seen, they were stored in shipping containers and broom closets. Could members imagine the outcry of Queensland bureaucrats if their medical records were stored in shipping containers?

Today, the *Courier-Mail* says it the best when it reports—

... the catastrophic failure of every authority charged with keeping the state's miners safe from the preventable but deadly black lung disease.

This is shattering for the families of affected workers and embarrassing for the state government and its departments. The harrowing testimonies of victims of black lung and their families will stay with me and many others. The arrogance of mining executives and the complete incompetence of some of those departmental officials is astounding and virtually unheard of.

I fully support aspects of the motion that was moved yesterday, especially to extend the reporting dates and the terms of reference to include coal port workers, coal rail workers, coal-fired power station workers and other workers who have come into contact with coal dust.

I thank the chair of the committee, the member for Bundamba; the deputy chair, the member for Southern Downs; the research director, Jacqui Dewar; counsel assisting; and my fellow committee members, including the member for Mirani, who knows firsthand what it is like to get your hands dirty through real work in the coalmines, for their hard work. I also acknowledge the CFMEU for its passion and dedication and for never giving up on this issue.

Queensland coal workers deserve better than what they have received. Queenslanders deserve to be safe at work. It is time we stood up for them. I commend this report to the House.