




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2018

MINES LEGISLATION (RESOURCES SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018. I acknowledge the work of the committee. I will not oppose the bill. The bill includes amendments to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999. These acts establish mining sector specific safety and health obligations which are distinct from the general workplace obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Coal workers' pneumoconiosis, black lung disease, was rediscovered in Queensland in 2015. More than 20 cases have been confirmed recently. Another 54 miners have been diagnosed with some form of mine dust disease. This debilitating disease is directly caused by prolonged exposure to coalmine dust. For 30 years the mining industry was thought to be rid of this disease. It is most important that we return the industry to that status.

The parliamentary committee report into black lung disease, *Black lung white lies*, found catastrophic failings in public administration in Queensland. The committee found that there has been failure at almost every level of the regulatory system. The parliamentary committee recommended that the minister consider amending the bill to require that site senior executives be notified on a confidential basis of relevant cases of reportable diseases to allow them to ensure that the risks to the health and safety of the employee are at an acceptable level. It is noted that the government has not committed to delivering this recommendation; rather, they will look at it. Furthermore, the definition of 'contractor' has not been addressed adequately, leaving some coalmine workers uncertain as to whether they will be covered under these new laws. As a former coalmine contractor, I find this situation unacceptable.

The Callide electorate is home to several large coalmines and many mine proposals. The coal industry generates in the vicinity of \$60 billion to the economy of Australia. It supports our power stations, producing the most efficient and reliable power that we have. Approximately 188,000 jobs in Australia are directly related to the coal industry. It is upon us as legislators to ensure that the health of coal workers in Queensland is given the priority it deserves. Whilst this bill falls short in some areas, it is a step towards ridding the industry of black lung disease.

I note that this morning the honourable member for Maiwar has moved to shut down the coal industry in North and Central Queensland and is asking for the support of this House. I do not support this absurd notion. Coal is king, and it will remain so into the foreseeable future. As I said in my maiden speech—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I will bring you back to the long title of the bill.

Mr BOYCE: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, it is the royalties from coal and the money generated from coal-fired power stations that allow this government to pay its bills. Therefore, it is the health and wellbeing of our coal industry workers that is paramount. I support the bill.