




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES (FINANCIAL PROVISIONING) BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (2.12 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018 as the shadow minister for the environment. I have obviously engaged the Deputy Premier, who looks like she is calling for the third umpire, but I think she is signalling a billboard. I say to the Deputy Premier: when your side of politics comes up with three issues you are going to do something about, put up a billboard yourself. I am going to make a contribution about the RTI component—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Treasurer, you will have your turn when we wind up the bill.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will talk about what started as a farcical response regarding the RTI provisions. It was a complete and utter overreach to the point where what was offered was over and above what industry sought. Industry was quite rightly seeking the protection of individual details—predominantly financial details—which would affect their commercial transactions. That is fit and proper and reasonable. To go a step further and somehow exempt this entirely, as was originally put forward, was wrong and it did not make sense, and that is why the opposition stood up without fear or favour. I read with interest some of the advice, particularly from the Office of the Information Commissioner, who, along with the opposition, said that in their view there was a complete and utter lack of transparency. That point of view came across very, very strongly, and I note that this amendment does address those concerns. We have seen this amendment, as my good friend the member for Burdekin highlighted, with all of about half an hour's notice; nonetheless, I think it has gone a step towards what we were seeking to achieve, and that is to enable a bit of transparency.

Let me repeat: I do not want to see one figure from one project that would cost one job. That is not what this is about. It is about making sure that the taxpayers of Queensland, who want to see good, sustainable long-term mining operations, know that if the state needs to step in and assist in rehabilitation those figures are done in a transparent way without compromising any commercial realities.

I want to use this opportunity to address why rehabilitating old mines is so very important and why the opposition will support this. During the estimates process in this place I raised the issue of Baal Gammon mine. That was three months ago. I have written to the minister. We raised concerns nationwide on 7.30. The best response I have received is a letter that I would describe as paltry. It is one thing to talk about the environment, but you have to live it. Living it involves holding people to account, so let me tell you a little bit about Baal Gammon mine.

Since the beginning of this year the department of environment has known about run-off that is occurring in this part of the world, which is represented by the member for Hill. I will tell you about the water run-off and the tests: aluminium, copper, zinc and cadmium. Some of them are thousands of times the acceptable level—not one and a bit, not half a dozen but thousands of times. There may only

be a couple of hundred people in the little community of Watsonville and they may not matter a lot when it comes to electoral power, but when they cannot drink their water anymore, when they cannot go for a swim in their local creek and when a guy on dialysis cannot get treatment because the water in that town is so bad, and the best response I can get after three months is a half-baked letter, there is something seriously wrong. I am going to keep raising it in this place and I am going to keep raising it publicly, because eventually we are going to see what happens when a government fails to keep its community safe.

This goes back to the issuing of licences—albeit this is a debate for the future—and a two-word term that means so very much. That term is ‘suitable operator’. Before somebody can take over a mine they need to prove that they are a suitable operator. I am asking questions about that. I have put in a few right-to-information requests about what it is to be a suitable operator, what responsibilities they have and their track records.

The other thing I want to know is, since this suitable operator provision came in, how many people who have applied across both sides of politics have been denied the status of suitable operator? I do not know the answer, but I reckon it is somewhere around zero. That is about where I have it. It is somewhere less than one. That rings alarm bells. In the case of Baal Gammon, I would not be surprised if there is a bit of correspondence that points to what a suitable operator looks and feels like. I look forward to seeing that.

The opposition will be supporting this legislation to have a quantum of money that can be used in an open and transparent way, subject to all the questions people can ask. I hope that the changes foreshadowed at the eleventh hour go far enough to ensure that the opposition and the community can ask questions without compromising a single job or a single dollar of mining investment. I hope that the changes to the RTI provision allow that to occur.

I want to ensure that when a mine goes into care and maintenance the people of communities like Watsonville can be protected. At the moment, there is not a lot of care and there ain't no maintenance. That is happening in many places. They might be miles away from the building we sit in—

An opposition member: Off the beaten track.

Mr CRISAFULLI: They might be off the beaten track indeed. There are people there who rely on that water for their way of life. I ask the Deputy Premier in her reply speech to assure us that she is confident this enables us to take a step in the right direction. If it is as I suspect it is then it will be a good step forward, but legislation without intent will be useless.

Let me tell members what intent looks like. Intent looks like the Department of Environment and Science getting serious about holding people to account when mines close. Intent looks like, if a quantum of money will be set aside, people having the right to know that it will be spent where it was collected and for the purpose it was collected and that the rehabilitation occurs. Intent looks like, when people apply in the future for a licence, operators in fact being suitable to operate in these precious environments.