




Speech By  
**Meaghan Scanlon**

**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

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**MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES (FINANCIAL PROVISIONING) BILL**

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.22 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018 because it is sensible reform. As the youngest member of this parliament I feel a deep sense of responsibility to ensure that my generation's future is protected. I distinctly remember visiting a Queensland mine site when I was studying biology and chemistry in year 10. We learned about not only the process of mining minerals but also the importance of minimising the impact of these operations by rehabilitating the site. This was a concept that I understood and supported as a 15-year-old and it is a concept that I support now.

It is simple: if you make a mess, you need to clean it up. Mining companies should not be able to leave taxpayers the bill after abandoning mines. Unfortunately, we have all heard of recent cases where resource companies have been unable to complete their rehabilitation activities, resulting in a large financial burden for the Queensland government and Queensland taxpayers. What this means for Gold Coasters is that, if we have to foot the bill for mining companies that do not comply with their obligations, there is less money that we have to spend on road upgrades, schools and hospitals.

We all acknowledge that the resources industry contributes significantly to the Queensland economy by creating jobs and supporting local communities. I have spoken to a number of FIFO workers in my electorate while out doorknocking and I have family who have worked on mine sites, so I absolutely appreciate the importance of this industry. That is why it is so important that these issues are addressed, to ensure the long-term sustainability of this important sector. The department has travelled far and wide and listened to community groups, industry and the public. Stakeholders from environmental groups and industry groups have engaged throughout the process to ensure that we strike the right balance.

We have made a rock-solid commitment to the resources sector that this reform will not be applied retrospectively. If a mine has a current environmental approval, that environmental approval will stand. What this bill sets out to do is set up a financial assurance scheme to require mining companies to make an annual contribution to a pooled fund which will be used if a company is unable to deliver on its environmental obligations. The amount will be determined for each project by applying their assessed risk based on the total cost of rehabilitating land disturbed by mining activity. This scheme will provide government with access to funds where a company does not comply with this obligation. Companies that contribute to the fund will have small annual payments rather than the need to provide very large bank guarantees.

The other part of this bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to implement rehabilitation reforms. This reform will ensure land disturbed by mining activities is rehabilitated to a safe and stable land form that does not cause environmental harm and can sustain an approved postmining land use. The bill will require mining companies with site-specific environmental authority approvals to develop a progressive rehabilitation and closure plan for its current operations which will be assessed and approved by the environmental regulator. By requiring these companies to plan for closure from the very start, progressive rehabilitation can be factored into day-to-day operations. This will encourage more regional job opportunities in the growing mine rehabilitation industry.

These reforms have been designed based on the extensive review by Queensland Treasury, the Department of Environment and Science and the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy of the existing financial assurance laws and has benefited from the independent research and financial modelling undertaken by QTC. I would also like to acknowledge the committee for its work on this bill.

I know that there are many people in our communities who have mixed feelings about mining, but I think most people acknowledge that we are reliant on many of the products that we mine and that this sector does contribute significantly to the Queensland economy. I do, however, know that my community does not support the government having to foot the bill to clean up the mess made by mining companies. Queensland's abandoned mines equate to almost 10,000 Suncorp Stadiums in size. This bill aims to stop that from happening while creating an economically and environmentally sustainable mining industry. It is sensible reform that plans for the future, and I commend this bill to the House.