




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES (FINANCIAL PROVISIONING) BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.02 pm): I rise to speak on the Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018. As we have heard from other members here today, this very important bill came before the House in 2017, was considered by a committee and was due to be debated in December 2017. Unfortunately, the election got in the way of that. The bill came back and was rushed through the committee stages in only four weeks. One of the big issues before the House now is that we are being asked to consider legislation that we have not even seen. That is what is happening.

Ms Trad: Amendments—they have been circulated.

Mr HART: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. These amendments change the legislation before the House. They are called amendments because they change the legislation before the House. In this place there are 93 members and in our areas we represent 36,000 electors who all have concerns about mining, the health of the economy and the way forward for all of those things in Queensland. One would think it would be very important for us all to have a full understanding of the legislation that we are debating and to fully understand what it will mean for the mining industry, especially when we consider the ramifications that it could have in terms of sovereign risk.

Therefore, it is surprising that the Deputy Premier would come into the House this morning and put the amendments in front of us all with very little notice. We are expected to read through these amendments and understand how they will impact the legislation. Over the weekend, I read in the newspapers of the concerns that the resource industry has with this. Over the weekend I saw a couple of front-page articles that stated that the Resources Council thought that if these amendments were in fact retrospective—and I understand the Deputy Premier has been talking to the resource industry and the environmental movement about that—the impact on the resource industry could be something like \$22 billion. In fact, I also saw—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I am sorry, member. There is far too much audible noise. If you are having conversations, please take those conversations outside.

Mr HART: Over the weekend I read another article that said that the impost on the mining companies might be as much as \$100 billion. Mining companies put together plans for their mines based on the laws and the rules at the time. Of course, to be financially viable you do not want anything much to change. They take into account changes in the value of whatever it is they are pulling out of the ground, whether that is coal—a word that we do not like the other side to hear—gold, silver, nickel or any of the other minerals that are taken out of the ground. They understand that those prices fluctuate over a period and, of course, they take that into account. However, they do not take into account the changes that governments may make, especially Labor governments, at the last minute and the impact that may have into the future on their businesses. The sovereign risk that this sort of legislation could possibly have is too great to even consider.

I understand that these amendments were brought in this morning. The opposition sought to have access to the amendments, but we were not given access. We were given a briefing, but we were not given access to the written words, so we did not have the opportunity to look at the amendments overnight, digest them and fully understand them. Today we are here debating this legislation without the full knowledge that we should have and that the members of our electorates want us to have.

Various things in the legislation worry me. One of them is the exemption to the right to information that has been put forward. Parts of this will be exempt from the RTI Act, which is another example of the Labor Party hiding information that could embarrass them and that they do not want made public. They have put an exemption in place to exclude from the operation of the RTI Act documents created or received by the scheme manager under part 3 of the bill. They have excluded that whole section, which I do not think is appropriate.

The other thing that concerns me is that they have put a public interest test into the amendments. I understand that will be controlled by an external contractor. I ask the Deputy Premier to explain that, because from what I have read in the explanatory notes it is not quite clear whether the company or the government will appoint that external contractor. Is there a panel that the external contractor can be approved for? Will they be Labor mates? What will happen here?

Ms Trad: It won't be Michael Caltabiano.

Mr HART: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. If you are offering him a job, I am sure he would be happy to have a job. There are 61 amendments—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock, please. Minister for Education, you need to be in your own seat if you are going to interject. Manager of Opposition Business, there will be no further conversations across the chamber.

Mr HART: The member for Condamine or somebody else this morning mentioned that they had had a look at the New Acland mine. I went out to the New Acland mine when I was the deputy chair of the committee that was looking at the changes to regulations around mines. Those who have been there would know that the New Acland mine has done a fantastic job of rehabilitating that mine. They have filled in the holes. If people walked through the grass one would not see them. There are cows feeding on the grass. They have done a wonderful job. I would encourage other mining companies to have a look at what they have done at the New Acland mine. They have done an excellent job when it comes to rehabilitation.

Then we go to other parts of Queensland and we see ugly holes in the ground that should be filled in. To that extent, it does make a lot of sense to have a combined fund to take care of that. Mines run for 30, 40 or 50 years. After that time, the amount of money that might have been set aside or might not have been set aside for rehabilitation more than likely would not cover the cost of filling in the holes, growing grass, planting trees and getting animals in—putting it back to the way it was. I fully support that part of the legislation around having that fund in place, but there are a number of things that concern me. If the Deputy Premier could take on board a couple of the things I have said and give me some feedback on them that would be great.