




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MOTION

Mine Safety, Parliamentary Inquiry

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.14 pm): The Palaszczuk government takes mine workers' safety extremely seriously. Families have a right to expect that their loved ones will return home from work, but what we do not need is another inquiry into something that we are already working towards. We do not need to waste more time sending members of parliament out to regional communities which already know how we can achieve improvements to safety in the mining sector.

My electorate of Keppel is closely linked to the mining community. One of my oldest friends is a miner, and she tells me that the No. 1 thing she worries about at work is safety. In my capacity as an environmental planning consultant I have worked on mine sites, and I have seen firsthand just how dangerous those workplaces are. The opposition is calling on our government to listen to the stories of regional coal workers, but it is the LNP that is not listening to what coal workers are saying about this very issue.

Unlike those on the other side, I represent these workers on a daily basis and I fight for their industry and their safety. There are over 3,855 full-time-equivalent positions filled by Keppel constituents in the mining sector, and the sector contributes \$647 million in gross regional product to the Keppel economy every year.

The recent tragic incidents in mines and quarries in Queensland have been deeply disturbing. I want to offer my sincere condolences to the friends and families of those men who have been taken far too early. It is every mining family's worst nightmare when their loved one does not come home from work. These deaths and injuries should not be happening. Over the past two decades 47 Queenslanders have died in the mining and quarrying industry, and that is plainly unacceptable.

As Minister Lynham stated, Queensland mines and quarries are undergoing a statewide safety reset with a targeted completion date by the end of August. This is a tripartite initiative between our government, industry and unions. This reset has been designed to facilitate discussions between management, operational staff and relevant union representatives on risks and safe practice. Employers and employees alike are reflecting on why they are undergoing a safety reset, discussing site-specific safety history and safety culture, and hearing from senior executives, union site representatives and the inspectorate.

At these resets miners have shared their stories with their colleagues, their employers, their unions and government, allowing for reflection and, more importantly, for commitments to be made to ensure that safety is foremost in all operations. These resets have been tailored to the individual sites and their various rosters and operational requirements and are designed to cover all workers. As of last week, more than 23,300 workers have participated in 549 safety reset sessions across 162 mines and quarries. The ongoing statewide safety reset is a crucial first step in refocusing attention on what should be everyone's No. 1 priority. It is everyone's right to return home after work. It is on all of us—government, industry and unions—to make safety our No. 1 priority and ensure that Queenslanders come home safely to their loved ones.

I am advised that in the wake of these recent fatalities the opposition shadow minister, the member for Burdekin, chose to not even attend the mining industry safety forum on 10 July. He was invited. The insincerity in his actions is palatable and the political opportunism is clear to all. It is the same political opportunism that has ruled out industrial manslaughter even prior to their call for an inquiry. He has already decided what the result will be. The politics are rampant. Never call an inquiry until you know what the answer is, and here is the member for Burdekin following the bible of political opportunism. This is nothing but pure and petty politics. We are working with unions and industry to bring our workers home safely. Our goal is to bring workers home safely, not to spend more time and taxpayers' money sending politicians who really have no idea about the industry out into the sector.

The miners, the industry, the workers and the unions have been telling us exactly what they need. We are working with them. I give credit to the minister for the consultative way in which he has brought all of these sectors and stakeholders together to find a way forward. The workers and their families and the mining communities in Queensland deserve action and they deserve the action that this government is already delivering. We do not need another inquiry.