




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019

MOTION

Mine Safety, Parliamentary Inquiry

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to support the private member's motion put forward by my colleague the member for Burdekin, Dale Last, that directs the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to inquire into the effectiveness of the mine safety regime in Queensland.

There have been six workplace fatalities in the mining industry in the last 12 months. This is six too many and it is absolutely unacceptable. There is something wrong with the way the workplace safety systems are operating, and that must be plainly obvious. That is why we must have this inquiry. The coal industry alone accounts for approximately \$5 billion worth of resource revenue to the Queensland economy. There are some 50,000 people who gain employment in this industry. Royalties from the resource sector are what pays the bills in Queensland. The biggest coalmining town in Queensland is Brisbane, and it would suffer an economic catastrophe without it. This is why it is imperative that our mining people arrive home from work safely every day.

There are serious questions that need to be answered. Why did the Palaszczuk government dissolve the mining safety advisory committee due to their policy about gender representation, and what impact has that had on mine safety? There are many women employed in the industry from operators to mining executives. This does not cease operating because of a lack of gender representation, so why dissolve an important safety group for this reason?

I note that the honourable member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard, has recently travelled to London to discuss the gender representation issue. I wonder whether mine safety and dissolving mine safety committees was talked about. I suspect the member spent more time shopping at Harrods than she did arguing for effective mine safety. Anyway, the papers have awarded her the gold medal for junket trips for her efforts. This is further evidence of the Palaszczuk government's incompetence and lack of understanding of a very important issue.

Very recently a young man tragically lost his life at the Baralaba coalmine. He was operating a large mining excavator and became entangled in the retractable ladder which gives access to the operator's platform. I have spent countless thousands of hours operating earthmoving machinery in my lifetime. I have been an earthmoving contractor in the resources industry, and at one time I had all of the necessary black coal tickets to operate machines such as the one involved in this tragic accident. I wonder about this and I ask myself how this possibly could have happened. I have spoken in private and at great length to another operator who drives this machine. Whilst he was not there at the time, he has in detail explained the circumstances in advance and the reasons why this accident happened.

The first question that comes to mind when you have this knowledge is why would an operator have access to the mechanism that operates the retractable ladder whilst still climbing or descending the ladder? It seems to me that, from what I have been told, this anomaly could have easily been identified and fixed. The mechanism that operates the ladder could be relocated somewhere else on the machine so it would be impossible to activate it whilst still on the ladder.

This particular incident is an absolutely avoidable tragedy and highlights why we need effective, practical and bulletproof safety procedures to protect our mining community while they are at work. I agree with the minister, Dr Anthony Lynham: no politics. This is why I respectfully ask that he and his colleagues in the Labor Party support this motion and have this inquiry. We are dealing with people's lives here. The mining industry and its working people deserve our support to make sure they are safe at work.