




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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RESOURCES SAFETY AND HEALTH QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.06 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Resources Safety and Health Queensland Bill 2019. This is an omnibus bill that covers three main areas: industrial manslaughter offence provisions; mine rehabilitation and financial assurance reforms; and regulatory efficiency improvements. Everyone in Rockhampton knows a miner. They are our sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends. They deserve to come home safely at the end of each day. It is totally unacceptable that we have had eight fatalities over the past 20 months.

The health and safety of our 50,000 mine and quarry workers is paramount for the Palaszczuk government, and that is why we secured a commitment from mining and quarry chiefs to schedule a safety reset for workers. Last year, all workers across the state were required to complete extra safety training. Two independent reviews were also conducted, now recommending a number of changes. At the time of the safety reset, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy said that the safety reset signalled the start of a number of legislative changes to come, and this is what the bill is about.

The Queensland government has been working closely with the unions and mining companies on a new offence of industrial manslaughter. In mining, we have worked together on these reforms to strengthen the safety culture on mine and quarry sites. There are a lot of mining families in my electorate who deserve to have their friends, family and loved ones come home safely after each and every shift, and that is why I support this bill. Industrial manslaughter offence provisions will ensure the consistent process of serious breaches of health and safety obligations by employers, corporations and senior officers that result in the death of a worker on a Queensland work site.

The inclusion of industrial manslaughter into the resources sector will ensure that senior officers and corporations put the safety of staff at the forefront of their operations. Constituents who are contractors at the mines talk about their fear of reporting health and safety issues. They are concerned that if they raise issues they will not get any more shifts and will become unemployed without severance pay.

How difficult would it be for contract statutory office staff to report safety concerns when they are in fear of not getting further shifts? This bill requires statutory office staff for the mining companies to be employees of that company. This will ensure the staff members can raise safety issues and make reports about dangerous conditions without fear of losing their jobs. The health and safety of all workers is paramount for this Labor government. I commend the bill to the House.