




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL


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**MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.28 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before I go to the heart of the bill I want to offer my sincere condolences to the five mineworkers who were seriously injured as a result of a gas explosion at Anglo American's underground Grosvenor mine two weeks ago on 6 May 2020. I am very pleased for one of the miners who has been released from hospital; however, his four comrades are still in hospital in a critical condition and they will likely have a very long road to recovery. I wish them and their families and co-workers all the very best. I also thank the first responders who were there to support those miners after that incident.

I would also like to pay tribute to the victims of the Moura mine explosions and those workers who lived through those tragedies. I know from having spoken to one Moura miner, John Hempseed—who lives in my electorate and who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder after those explosions—that this incident was a serious trigger for him. I recognise that this explosion would have been a very serious trigger for a lot of the Moura miners and their families who experienced those tragic events all those years ago. I want to thank the Moura miners who have worked so incredibly hard to deliver the Moura mines explosions memorial in Moura.

I would also like to reiterate how dangerous mining as a profession is and that miners really do put their lives on the line every single day they go to work. Safety in our mines is incredibly important. Every man and woman who works in our Queensland mines and quarries deserves as safe a workplace as possible. I can report that the collection of evidence and reconstruction of the scene prior to the explosion at the Grosvenor mine is underway and that there are nine inspectors who form part of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate team with specialist expertise in mechanical, electrical, mining and geological disciplines on site.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.42 pm), continuing: As I was saying, this bill will introduce tough new laws under which mining executives could face up to 20 years imprisonment and fines of up to \$13 million if found guilty of criminal negligence. This bill will build upon the toughest laws in the world with respect to mine safety. During our time in government, the Palaszczuk government has been working incredibly hard to introduce and pass reforms to improve mineworker safety across Queensland.

I refer to the comments from the member for Mirani calling for the permanency of all coal workers. Perhaps the member for Mirani should direct his calls to his federal counterpart, the One Nation senator for Queensland. Federal Labor went to the 2019 federal election with this policy, the same jobs, same pay policy. I support the member for Mirani in his plight to have all coal workers out of casual labour

and into permanent work. It is one of the greatest problems with the mining sector. The casualisation of work is something that mineworkers talk to me about regularly. I am a great supporter of the permanency of as many jobs in Queensland as possible but in particular in our mines.

Shamefully, One Nation and the LNP recently voted in parliament to ensure that workers only get 24 hours notice to vote on permanent cuts to their pay and conditions. I table a copy of the latest *Queensland Mining & Energy* bulletin, which says that workers will have 24 hours to respond to COVID-19 related pay cuts.

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from the Queensland Mining and Energy Bulletin, titled 'Workers will have 24 hours to respond to COVID-19 related pay cuts' [789].

I want to thank all of the concerned mineworkers who have contacted me with concerns about these changes. Essentially, this means that workers have absolutely no time to consult or get advice and that the regulation that previously allowed for seven days notice has now been amended to allow for only 24 hours notice. Yet again we see One Nation siding with the LNP and the losers are workers.

In closing, I note the commentary from those opposite regarding current inspector numbers. I would like to advise that the current inspector numbers are at 48, the highest number of inspectors in a decade. With the recruitment of a regional inspector to soon commence, the total number of inspectors will increase to 49. The member for Burdekin's need to play politics and be selective of real numbers speaks to the LNP's approach to mine safety and health in Queensland. That is why these reforms in this bill are so very important. We must ensure that mine site employees feel safe to raise safety complaints and that their employment is secure and protected when they do the right thing and look out for their safety and that of their co-workers.

The member for Burdekin also raised the issue of the mining inspectorate moving to Mackay. Inspectors cover safety in mineral mines and quarries, petroleum and gas and explosives, as well as coalmines. Of the state's coalmine inspectors, 20 of 25 are already based in Mackay and Rockhampton. I urge the member for Mirani to perhaps look at these figures before shooting off in parliament about not having any inspectors based in regional Queensland when, in fact, the vast majority of those inspectors are based in regional Queensland. We looked long and hard at this recommendation in consultation with industry and unions—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, please resume your seat. Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having expired, the question is—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.