




Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.31 am): The opposition will be supporting the bill. Before I give some feedback in my portfolio responsibility area, I make the point to the minister that the shadow minister in this regard has sought to be anything but political. He has put forward what he believes to be fair and thoughtful ways that we can keep our mineworkers safer. The offer of a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry, in my mind, was the first of a raft of very good suggestions that the shadow minister has put forward. Instead, what we have had, particularly in the media, is somehow a suggestion that that is a foolish process that can bear no fruit. The minister scoffs and says, 'Why would you want politicians looking at this?' The answer, is that it is what we get paid to do. One only has to look at how detailed and effective *Black lung white lies* was as a process to know that these inquiries can bear fruit. If both sides of politics go into these debates with open minds and are willing to get to the bottom of the issue, there can be successful parliamentary inquiries.

I respect that the minister believes that there is another process to go down, but to scoff at that suggestion in my mind was, in fact, wrong. It is wrong because we have an issue we have to deal with. Eight deaths in less than two years is clearly not good enough. We, as a parliament, owe it to every man and woman who goes onto these mine sites to give them the best chance of going home at the end of each day to their loved ones. In the end, the responsibility of any parliament lies with keeping its people safe. That safety sometimes takes the form economically, sometimes it takes the form socially and sometimes it takes the form in a workplace, but the laws that we debate have to ensure that that is the case.

I will now turn briefly to the area that I wish to raise—that is, the section that relates to abandoned mines. There has not been much debate on this as yet. It is great to have a former environment minister here in the chamber. I will particularly talk about section 19B of the bill which allows the department to make sure that mines are not just left and that the environmental rehabilitation gets done. That is something that all of us should strive for. If people are going to make money from an industry, it is the responsibility of those people to do the right thing by the environment. What concerns me is that we are using the provision under the Environmental Protection Act of the transfer to an eligible person. Let me tell members what I have discovered about that. There have been over 2,000 applications to the department for a suitable operator application. In the last four years there have been none that were not recommended—not one! Every application for a suitable operator has been approved.

I have walked on the site of the former Baal Gammon Copper mine in Far North Queensland where a community has been ripped apart by an entity that did not rehabilitate that mine. That entity remains a suitable operator today. I say to the minister: if the department is of the view to get tough on abandoned mines, the opposition supports it wholeheartedly, but, if the process remains that a suitable operator can be deemed on the same classification through the same act in the environment department, I would suggest to you it will not bear the fruit that you seek it to bear.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McArdle): Through the chair, please.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I believe the minister is acting in good faith in wanting to get a result out of this, but if the same provisions exist that have allowed 2,127 people to be deemed a suitable operator and not one to be deemed unsuitable then that is a concern.

I am a big supporter of mining in this state. We should all be big supporters of mining in this state. It has kept the lights on, particularly in recent times. We also owe it to our children to make sure that when people finish at these sites they carry out rehabilitation and that communities have the most basic of rights—that is, to clean drinking water—and can let their children go for a swim in the creeks, which generations have enjoyed. There have been times when that has not been the case. If this legislation can bring about a better environmental outcome, I support it wholeheartedly, but I would suggest to the House that we need to have a good, hard, long look at the terms for dealing with the suitability of people to operate.

Finally, I conclude by saying that why the shadow minister has been so supportive of this, why we will continue to put forward our support for changes to make life safer for the men and women who go to work there, is not because one in eight jobs rely on resources in some form or another and therefore we owe it to them and the economy to make sure that the resources industry can continue. It is not because it is worth north of \$60 billion to our economy. It is because if we do not ensure that people look to our mines as being the best and safest in the world, one of our competitive advantages of attracting people to work in Queensland will be lost. We owe it to them to provide a safe workplace, we owe it to their families to provide a safe workplace, and long term we owe it to our economy, as a state with great resources that can offer a safe working environment for men and women to go to work to every day.