




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.38 am): I support this legislation. I would like to start by responding to what could generously be referred to as a hissy fit by the member for Condamine yesterday. He started out by having a very large swipe at the committee system and the process in this fine parliament. It should be noted that when the member for Condamine's party last had control of the parliament, with about 90 per cent of the votes in this House, they made absolutely no changes to the committee system. It seems fairly extraordinary that the member for Condamine would come into this place and criticise a system that his side of the parliament was very happy to work in when they had the absolute chance to change it if they had so desired.

The member went on to take a very large swipe at the mining minister. I think he accused the mining minister of doing nothing, which is really quite misleading for the parliament. A quick and short summary of the things that the mining minister and the Palaszczuk Labor government have achieved is worth consideration: better detection and prevention of black lung disease and an improved safety net for affected workers; increased maximum penalties for offences to \$4 million and powers for the regulator to issue fines without going to court; statewide safety reset sessions for mine and quarry workers; \$35 million to deliver reforms to improve the safety and health of our mines; a commitment to tighter controls on mine dust levels; the establishment of an independent resource health and safety authority; and extra mines inspectors. To describe that as nothing is really quite extraordinary. It can only lead me to think that perhaps the reason that the member for Condamine was having such a hissy fit is that he had seen the flyer that had gone around his electorate—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Member, I let it go on the first occasion, but that is unparliamentary. Would you please withdraw that?

Mr KELLY: I withdraw. Perhaps the reason that the member was upset was that he had seen the flyer, which had gone around his electorate, that led him to believe that he would be in opposition for a long time. The flyer I am referring to—

Mr MICKELBERG: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118 on relevance. The member is well away from the bill as he is talking about a flyer in the electorate of the member for Condamine. I am not sure how that relates to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a valid point. Member, please come back to the terms of the bill and the terms of the standing orders.

Mr KELLY: Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker. Clearly no-one likes it when we point out the fact that their leader's picture did not get onto the flyer.

I fully support the extension of industrial manslaughter provisions to this industry. When one of your co-workers or someone in your industry dies, for any reason, it really impacts on everybody in that industry. Sadly, at the moment my profession is experiencing that in droves. I note the minister is also a member of my industry.

Over the past six months we have watched in horror as around the world nurses and other health workers have died as a result of caring for people with COVID-19. There have been over 300 such deaths in six months. We know that some of those deaths would have been preventable with proper training and equipment and that in other countries both governments and managements failed to act in those instances. The workers in my industry with whom I speak expect that, where deaths could have been avoided or worse involved putting profits before safety or involved criminal negligence, people should be held to account. The workers in the mining industry with whom I have spoken have exactly the same view.

I believe that these provisions are critical, they are necessary and they will save lives. I have little direct experience of being in the mining industry. However, I have spent a considerable amount of time as a member of the pneumoconiosis black lung select committee and that provided me with a great opportunity to meet with and speak to people at all levels of the mining industry—all levels.

In my own community I meet many people who work both directly and indirectly in the mining industry. I know from my work on that committee and from speaking with people in my own community that we all want workers to go home safely. We all want things to be safe. I believe all of those people would support these provisions, because they simply demand a higher standard from mine owners and operators and, ultimately, we will get higher standards from workers, as well. That is something that we should welcome because it will lead to safety for workers. I am sure that the mine operators would welcome it and I am sure that the CFMMEU would welcome it. The majority of people already do the right thing, but this legislation will raise standards even higher and bring them into line with other workplaces across the state.

As I have already said, this legislation is just one of many things that this government has done. At times I have had the opportunity to speak to the minister following incidents involving injuries or deaths in the mines. As a decent human being and as a doctor who swore an oath to preserve human health and wellbeing, the minister takes every injury and death personally and seriously, and recommits himself to improving things further. Therefore, the provisions in this bill are brought with nothing but good intent.

One of the provisions that I really like about this bill relates to the requirements for statutory office holders to have permanent jobs, and that means that those in critical safety roles need to be permanently employed. During the lengthy black lung inquiry, frequently the committee heard from workers about the impacts of a casual workforce on the mining industry generally. Time and time again, we heard specifically about issues related to the casual workforce and the impacts on safety, particularly for those in the critical safety roles. There were two LNP members on the committee at that time. I would encourage those officers to go and chat with them. It may be difficult now as one is out of parliament and the other has his own party and may no longer be talking so much to folks opposite. However, at the end of the day, time and time again committee members heard from workers about how critical this issue is. I listened carefully to the contribution of the member for Hill, because he was also a member of that committee. He spoke passionately about this very same issue. In mining communities around this state people will be overjoyed about this one provision, because it will save lives.

Finally, another provision in the bill that I particularly like relates to the process of mine rehabilitation and site clean-up. From a very young age I was taught by my dear old mother that if you mess up you clean up. While mining brings a lot to this state, the people in my community and others around the state with whom I talk expect that once a job is done the area will be cleaned up and rehabilitated. This bill certainly brings that to the fore.

I thank the minister, his staff and the department for their hard work on the bill. I thank the committee and all of the submitters, particularly the CFMMEU. The minister should be very proud of this bill. It is a huge step in the right direction of keeping workers safe. I commend the bill to the House.