



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2021

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **New Economy Minerals Initiative; Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry, Findings**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.12 am): I too acknowledge the passing of Duncan Pegg, or Peggy as he is affectionately known. He will be sorely missed by everyone in this House and in the broader community.

I rise to talk about the importance of new economy minerals and the opportunities they present going forward for Queensland and our economic recovery post COVID-19. Last week in my hometown of Townsville the Palaszczuk government announced we will expand our \$500 million Queensland Renewable Energy Fund into a \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. That means more opportunities for Queensland to secure investment in our North West Minerals Province that has over half a trillion dollars in known resources. You cannot have a renewable energy industry without a strong resources industry. Queensland is blessed with fantastic deposits of minerals that will be required to power the clean energy revolution, including vanadium, copper, cobalt and rare earth elements, which is why the Palaszczuk government is investing \$13.8 million in our New Economy Minerals Initiative to help explorers discover new economy minerals and future jobs across North Queensland.

We back the resources industry for the 71,000 jobs it supports. It will be a crucial part of Queensland's economic recovery plan. However, we know the most important thing to come out of any mine at the end of each shift is its workers. On Monday I tabled in this House the final report of the Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry that my predecessor, Dr Anthony Lynham, established to inquire into the explosion that occurred at the Grosvenor underground coalmine on 6 May last year seriously injuring five coalmine workers. I fully support the work the board has completed to identify improvements within Queensland's coalmining industry and I am committed to consulting with workers' representatives and industry to protect workers' safety.

The board of inquiry's report makes for some disturbing reading: about the consequences of placing coal production ahead of safety; about failing to recognise the gravity of precursor incidents and the failure to properly account for and report them both internally and to the regulator. In making its findings and recommendations regarding production and safety bonuses, the board highlighted what appears to me to be a potentially significant factor which can drive behaviours that put production targets ahead of the safety of workers. This is an issue our government intends to scrutinise further. As such, I am calling upon industry to fully investigate the extent and nature of these bonus schemes and whether they place appropriate focus on managing safety risks to workers.

Across its two reports the board makes findings and recommendations for industry, unions, Resources Safety and Health Queensland and other stakeholders, all of which must and will be given deliberate and thoughtful consideration and acted upon to protect our workers each and every shift. I am advised that work has commenced on recommendations from Part I relating to Resources Safety and Health Queensland. The government is continuously engaging with all stakeholders, including

workers' representatives, when it comes to mine safety. At my direction, the Commissioner for Resources Safety and Health Queensland has worked with the Queensland Resources Council and mining companies on an industry action plan to address recommendations relating to industry. It is my full expectation this will occur for recommendations and findings in Part II of the report. I am advised the Queensland Mines Inspectorate's separate investigation into the nature and cause of the incident, led by the Deputy Chief Inspector of Coal Mines, is nearing completion.

I hope that the five injured workers continue to recover from their injuries and wish them the best in doing so. Anyone who saw the compelling evidence of Mr Wayne Sellars would know that what they went through is truly life-changing and something no one should go through in the workplace. That is why every effort must be made by industry, the regulator and us to protect workers from events like this ever happening again.