




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2021

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.37 pm): I agree that this is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that has come to the parliament since I was elected in 2004. I acknowledge the role that our first responders play in emergency services, in attending on accident victims in the quickest possible time. There is an increasing awareness of the impact on mental health from the acute and cumulative trauma experienced by many first responders and the importance of supporting their mental health and wellbeing. The bill meets the objectives of introducing the presumption of workers compensation for our valuable first responders and eligible employees who are diagnosed with PTSD by a psychiatrist.

I acknowledge the member for Thuringowa. I think this is very important. My best mate was a paramedic who had worked in the areas of Normanton, Black River and Thuringowa. He was very strong. We would go pig hunting together. He was used to attending a lot of accidents. I stress this fact as it is so important. He attended an accident scene where the car looked like his wife's car and the person killed in that car accident looked like his son. That fellow has never recovered from that. He resigned from the Ambulance Service and has never recovered. He is one of my best mates. These are the sorts of issues that many first responders face. I think if this legislation were around in his time 20 years ago, it would have helped him.

I note also that mine site accident first responders will be eligible for workers compensation under the bill. This is certainly welcomed by those working in the mining industry throughout the state. The strain on first responders has been amplified over the past 12 months because of COVID-19. That has to be acknowledged. We have seen the deadly result of mental health issues affecting armed services personnel. This has led to a royal commission into defence force and veteran suicide. I believe this legislation goes a long way to recognising and addressing the mental anguish our first responders are subject to when they are exposed to the horrific accidents occurring every day. I support the bill and commend the bill to the House.