




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2022

**COAL MINING SAFETY AND HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.14 am), continuing: As I was saying yesterday, this bill will strengthen the safety and health culture in the resources sector through the facilitation of direct employment requirements for coalmining statutory positions. Secondly, the bill will progress amendments to enable the implementation of a key action in the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan as well as make amendments to resources acts to address an operational issue and correct clerical errors.

On 25 May 2020, changes were made to the mining safety legislation so that only persons who are employees of a coalmine operator may currently be appointed to certain statutory positions, such as SSEs and OCEs, which are responsible for safety. These are known as the direct employment requirements, and they come into full effect on 25 November 2022, when the transitional period ends.

Mine safety is about making sure that the organisation operating the mine owns the risk of its operations. Mining is incredibly important to Central Queensland, to our economy and to our families. I have hundreds of mining workers and families in my community, and I will always stand up in this place for mineworker safety. Since I have been elected, dozens upon dozens of mineworkers have contacted to raise fear of reprisal for reporting safety issues at work. Some have lost their jobs, usually by stealth of the big mining companies, because they have raised issues about safety on site. These people are usually on contract or labour hire and after they have raised issues they do not have any hours allocated anymore. They are basically told just to go home and not come back—sadly.

This bill strengthens the safety and health culture of the resources sector through the facilitation of direct employment requirements, which require a person to be an employee of the coalmine operator to be appointed to certain statutory positions. I know that there have been some SSEs, deputies and others who have already been appointed to the permanent, full-time positions directly employed by the mine as a result of previous changes to the act. From talking with those people I know that they feel so much more confident in making decisions on site and raising safety issues because they are directly employed by the company and are not a labour hire or contract worker.

The amendments to the act that are already in place are working, and this bill further strengthens these requirements to ensure the holders of statutory roles at coalmines can make safety complaints, raise safety issues or give help to an official in relation to a safety issue without fear of reprisal. These amendments being debated today provide practical ways of implementing the direct employment requirements that do not unreasonably disrupt current corporate structures and employment arrangements while upholding the intent of the original legislation.

It will ensure the coalmine operator—the entity ultimately responsible for the coalmine and safety of its workers—remains the central point of responsibility. It will ensure responsibility for safety is not fragmented across multiple employers with their own structures, systems and cultures. It is our

government's expectation that those who undertake coalmining operations must make the safety and health of coalmine workers their ultimate priority.

Industry advocated for these amendments; workers advocated for these amendments. We on this side listened to workers, and we are delivering. All workers—especially coalmine workers—deserve to go home to their loved ones at the end of their shift. I commend the bill to the House.