



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2023

**TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (3.41 pm): It is only right that I follow the member for Gregory. I acknowledge the heartfelt comments he has made today. I share a lot of his sentiments. A couple of times I have had to ring the member for Gregory to inform him of a fatality in his electorate. They are not easy conversations; nor are the conversations with the families. I never want to make those phone calls; I have had to make too many in my time as minister.

Last year, following discussions with them, I asked the Transport and Resources Committee to consider initiating this inquiry. I thank members from both sides of the House for their work. It is outstanding. I have always said, and I will say it again: safety is my No. 1 priority, and it must be for every single stakeholder and every single person involved in the industry. This inquiry was about investigating what the coalmining industry has done and plans to do in response to the Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry's recommendations. It was about making lasting changes to improve safety culture in the mining industry.

Let me make this plain and simple: the resources industry must make safety—not production—its No. 1 priority. Time and time again onsite I have heard from workers regarding the day-to-day effects of decisions made by companies. What they say to me is not always what I am always advised is happening in the industry. Industry must make sure there is no higher priority than a worker's safety. Safety in the resources industry is everyone's responsibility. As a government we will continue to work with the independent health and safety regulator, Resources & Safety Health Queensland, worker representatives and industry to make sure workers are kept safe.

I carefully considered the recommendations relevant to government with a focus on the matter of production being prioritised over safety. I have written to Mark Stone, CEO of RSHQ, asking how he considers the recommendations can be applied to hard rock mining as well. However, companies such as Anglo American, Peabody, BMA, Bravus, Kestrel, Middlemount and Coronado must continue to implement the recommendations from the Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry and must consider this parliamentary inquiry as well. Every person—we all say this, on both sides of the House—should go home safe from work, regardless of what industry they work in. People are our greatest resource in Queensland.

I have worked and will continue to work with the industry, through peak industry body Queensland Resources Council and its chair, Ian Macfarlane, to make sure it is addressing the recommendations of that board inquiry. I will also continue to work with the Mining and Energy Union and other worker representative groups.

The board of inquiry made 65 recommendations for improving safety and health in the coalmining industry, Grosvenor Mine, the Miners and Energy Union, Resources Safety & Health Queensland and the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee. I am advised that 30 recommendations made

to RSHQ either are completed or have work underway as part of proposed legislative changes detailed in RSHQ's *Facilitating high reliability organisation behaviours in Queensland's resources sector and modernising regulatory enforcement* regulatory impact statement. The remaining recommendations are for industry. This inquiry was about ensuring they are continuing to implement them, and that is incredibly important.

Let me be clear: it is incredibly fortunate that none of those five men died during that terrible incident at Grosvenor. I heard the shadow minister indicate that he is going to Grosvenor next week. I say to him: well done. When I was underground at Grosvenor on 5 April this year, I had the ability to talk directly with workers and listen to their safety concerns. That is where these recommendations from the board of inquiry have come from and why industry must continue to act on them.

Every person deserves to go home safe from work, regardless of what industry they are in. 'Safety is everyone's responsibility' are words that roll easily off the tongue but it is hard to put in place. It is everyone's responsibility, from cleaners all the way through to our SSEs onsite. Everyone has to look after their mates and themselves when it comes to safety. As we have said, the most important resource to come out of our mines is our workers. There will always be improvements to make and we will continue to work on those improvements. I expect that industry will continue to work on that as well. We will remain vigilant.