




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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**RESOURCES SAFETY AND HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL;
MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.40 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill and the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I want to thank all those who made submissions. I note that the constituents from my electorate made very in-depth submissions to these bills. The consultation also coincided with a very busy cotton-picking season and landholders were already under a lot of pressure. I feel their frustration at the process when they learn that the sections on subsidence have been removed from the bill and there are further amendments introduced which they have not had time to examine. These are two very significant bills that have far-reaching outcomes, and it is disappointing that they are being debated in cognate because it halves the time for debate. There are substantial amendments that were provided to the House this morning. These were done with no consultation with industry and bypassing committee processes.

Given the time constraints imposed by the Labor government on this debate, my contribution will focus on the MEROLA Bill. Whilst the shadow minister foreshadowed that the LNP will not be opposing the bill, I want to make it clear that the LNP does have significant concerns around the original provisions that related to subsidence. I note that the government has now withdrawn those sections relevant to subsidence, no doubt because of LNP and stakeholder concerns.

Cotton Australia stated that there was only two weeks for landholders and their representatives to digest this critical piece of legislation. Australian Energy Producers stated the reforms, while encompassing important areas such as subsidence management, have been introduced without adequate industry consultation. The fossicking industry, which is particularly important in my electorate, were blindsided by some of the changes relating to their industry. Kev Phillips stated that the Small Miners Council member groups only received some of the consultation from the state at one minute to midnight just a day before the closing date for submissions. Whilst the department said that many of the issues raised would be addressed in the regulation, this is of little comfort for those who have concerns regarding the finer detail and the implications of this legislation. It seems that the Labor government is intent on crueling the small mining industry with a lack of consultation and compliance paperwork. Labor does not seem to understand the value of the small mining industry to regional and rural communities, in particular to places like Yowah and Quilpie in my electorate.

I will now turn to the self-assessment and subsidence framework. I note that a number of submitters have said that when the resource proposals fall on prime agricultural land they should go through a full RIDA process rather than being able to self-assess, which is currently the case. Although not part of the bill, the lack of a RIDA process is particularly relevant in areas where subsidence may occur. I note that the LNP committee members in their statement of reservation say that they believe there should not be the ability to self-assess if on prime agricultural land in order to address any potential issues prior to them arising.

Subsidence has been known about for over a decade, if not longer. A number of submitters stated that subsidence should be removed from the bill and sent back to consultation, reworked and brought back in a standalone bill. It appears that this will now happen. There were many concerns raised in relation to data reliability, definitions for CSG subsidence, how compensation is agreed and the concerns over the resource companies bypassing the RIDA process. It is important to note that both resource companies and primary producers and landholders are united in this approach.

The baseline data and what is agreed on as baseline data is particularly important when dealing with subsidence. There are already CSG wells on tenures and in some cases directionally drilled under neighbouring properties. Working out the baseline is a complex issue where development has already occurred. Given the time lag that has occurred, I hope the opportunity for capturing reliable baseline data has not been lost.

I will now turn to comments on the amendments that were provided to the opposition this morning. The LNP has never supported carbon capture and storage in the Great Artesian Basin. I was one of the first to call out the project near Moonie on EPQ10, which is in a large area of my electorate. I want to thank the many constituents and local governments who contacted me about the concerns. Many of those who actually own property in EPQ10 only found out at the last minute and were only just able to make submissions. Many of the landholders in EPQ10 did not know about this process.

Carbon capture and storage should not be in the waters of the Great Artesian Basin. There are alternative uses for that CO₂. In fact, I am advised that there is a shortage of CO₂ for industrial use. The Great Artesian Basin sustains the water supply for many local communities and towns as well as for agriculture.

I note some comments earlier. I have had numerous conversations with many mayors in relation to this matter. Whilst the LNP will not be opposing these amendments, the process on how these have been brought into this parliament has been very disappointing. The Labor government has not consulted with industry or the community on these amendments and they have bypassed the scrutiny that goes with the committee process. Unfortunately, due to the lack of process any unintended consequences, if there are any, will not become evident until this legislation is in force. The Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan states a minimum of 12 weeks consultation on any changes that have material impact. It is clear the government has walked away from that.