




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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**PROGRESSIVE COAL ROYALTIES PROTECTION (KEEP THEM IN THE BANK)
BILL**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (11.37 am): On the last day of the 57th Parliament, it is a great pleasure to speak on the Progressive Coal Royalties Protection (Keep Them in the Bank) Bill 2024—and what a good piece of legislation this is. In my opinion and also the opinion of a lot of people in my electorate—

Mr Last: Here we go: the world according to Bruce.

Mr SAUNDERS: I hear the member for Burdekin talking. This will be his last time in the chamber because Anne is coming after him. He will not have to worry about coming back. I will tell the Clerk not to book an airfare for him because he will not be back.

This bill is important. The coal belongs to us, to Queenslanders. That is why it is so important. As I have said in the House before, we can imagine the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Burdekin with their cigars, talking to the Zurich bankers. We can picture them leaning up against a wall with a \$400 bottle of champagne, saying, 'In Queensland, we looked after you'—the mining giants with their Bentleys and their private jets. However, they are not looking after Queenslanders and we know what is at risk. People are getting \$1,000 off their electricity bills, which is amazing. People are coming into my electorate on Transit buses because of the 50-cent bus fares. The member for Hervey Bay and I have never seen so many people on buses around Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

The people of Maryborough are saying that we need these progressive coal royalties. I am not saying that; the voters right around the Maryborough electorate are saying that to me in droves. They are coming to me and saying, 'Why shouldn't these overseas companies pay? It is our coal.'

We heard from the Treasurer earlier—and what a great budget we had from the Treasurer. It was a fantastic budget. No wonder the polling numbers are going down for the LNP—they know that everyone in Queensland is happy with the budget from the Miles Labor government. We are miles ahead—that is what we are—and we will be miles ahead if this mob opposite try to stop this coal royalties bill or if they get back in. That is my opinion.

Let's look at what could be cut. The Fraser Coast is the fastest growing area in Queensland, from Augustus Estate to Burrum Heads, Howard and Torbanlea. It is a great area and it is growing at a rate of 1.9 per cent per year, but the satellite hospital is at risk. The \$1,000 electricity rebate is at risk. We heard the Treasurer talking today about upgrades to schools. All these things are at risk because, in my opinion—and it is also the opinion of a lot of people in the Maryborough electorate who come and talk to me—the LNP will be propping up these multibillion dollar mining companies.

The coal mining industry employs 40,000-odd people in this state. We are not attacking them. We are just saying that the Queensland people should get their fair share of royalties from the resources that belong to them. That is what we are saying. The benefits of those resources should be spread right around Queensland, and this Miles government is doing just that from the Cape right down to Coolangatta. Everyone is getting a share of the royalties, which is very good.

The member for Burdekin is sitting there today and talking about looking after the mining giants. We know what he said. I will table an article from the *Courier-Mail*, but I will read from it first—

Burdekin MP Dale Last attends the 2022 QME exhibition in Mackay. ... Mr Last said the opposition would 'consult' with industry on coal royalties if elected.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, featuring photo of the member for Burdekin, Mr Dale Last MP in 2022 at QME Exhibition; and document, undated, titled 'Queensland's Coal Royalty Structure (From July 1, 2022)' [1830](#).

We know what that 'consulting' means. In my opinion, they will cut it. This is my personal opinion. They will cut it. That is what will happen. They will cut it and, once they cut the coal royalties, they will come back and cut the other services because they will say, 'We've got this black hole in our budget.' The 2012 budget from the Newman era was a horrible budget. I was in Maryborough and I saw people lose their jobs and I saw services cut. We ran SOS rallies—for those on the LNP side, the SOS stood for 'save our services'—because we were losing services.

The member for Bancroft yesterday said that the Maryborough Hospital was the only hospital on the east coast of Australia without a pathology department. It was the only hospital on the east coast of Australia, in an area with a population of over 25,000 people, without a pathology department. Guess what the staff did—they took the blood and put it in a taxi to be delivered to a pathology lab. When we came to government, we reinstated the pathology unit which meant Maryborough's A&E got built. Those opposite talk about health but do not get me started. You cannot have a good A&E if you do not have a pathology unit. They go hand in hand. Those opposite took the pathology unit away, and that is what they will do again.

We know that they will say, 'We will look after the Zurichs and miners. We will give them their big cigars, Bentleys and overseas flights,' but the people of Maryborough, Thuringowa and Bancroft will lose services, health services and jobs in their communities. That is exactly what they did.

Who can remember the pooper scooper? Remember the pooper scooper? That is what the former premier Newman called them. He got the pooper scooper out. He did not have to sit there when public servants were talking about suicide. It is R U OK? Day today. I wonder how many of those public servants are worried about the future under the LNP. They have lived through the man or woman coming in saying, 'You're next.'

This is what they will do with the progressive coal royalties. They will say, 'There is a black hole in the budget so we have to cut.' This bill is crucial to the development of Queensland. We need this bill. We need these coal royalties because they are educating our children, giving us health care and giving us better roads. They are helping working people in this great state to put a roof over their head also.

That is what we do on this side of the House, but it is at risk. We do not want to be a slave under Dave. That is something workers do not want to be. We want to make sure that everyone is looked after in this state, and this is what this bill does. I would like to thank the Treasurer, the Premier and the cabinet because this is what a good Labor government does. This Labor government is looking after Queenslanders.