




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2024

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

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.25 pm): To put it in perspective, cognating these two bills means we have 10 minutes to talk about over 1,000 pages of material in relation to this legislation and submissions to this legislation. That is what we get under the Miles Labor government.

Mrs Frecklington: The new one or the old one?

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection. The government is trying to say that there is some new government here, but this is the same tired old Labor government we have had for nearly a decade. With well over 1,000 pages of material to debate on two different bills, I will start with the MEROLA Bill. The member for Condamine and the shadow minister for resources, the member for Burdekin, both gave great contributions. In response to subsidence, the committee recommendation is pretty damning. It outlines a clear failure of the government to consult with the communities that are impacted by coal seam gas induced subsidence. I thank the committee and everyone who gave their time and fronted up to hearings to be heard in that process. While the government might finally be revoking this bit of legislation, if they had actually done their job in the first place and worked with communities and consulted then we would not be here; we would have had a good piece of legislation before the House to begin with. I ask the question: is this ignorance, is it incompetence or is it just sheer laziness? This is what we are getting under the current Labor government.

New South Wales has been conducting reviews and talking about coal seam gas induced subsidence since 2013. This has been a known problem for nearly 20 years. It is 2024 and the government is finally talking about it and doing something about a problem that has been going on for a very long time. Because of their failure to act we have missed a great opportunity to capture good baseline data and other information and ensure the science is properly tested in measuring coal seam gas induced subsidence.

I table some correspondence from one of the producers in an area that is impacted by coal seam gas induced subsidence. It is in response to some of the committee process and some of the comments that were made by OGIA and the department in the final hearing. This particular farmer did not have an opportunity to put in another submission in response, because the process to review this legislation was so short. Now it is on record for the future, when this comes back to the House. The response outlines some of the information that has been missing along the way and highlights how much the government has been sitting on its hands when this has been a known problem for a very long time.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 10 June 2024, from a representative of Glendon Farming Co, Ms Liza Balmain, to the members for Callide, Condamine and Toowoomba North, Mr Bryson Head MP, Mr Pat Weir MP and Mr Trevor Watts MP, regarding matters raised in the public briefing of the Inquiry into the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 on Friday, 24 May 2024 [1052](#).

In response to the establishment of Coexistence Queensland, certainly we need to do something about this. Across rural and regional Queensland we are seeing an expansion of renewable energy projects. There is a lot of community angst because many of the companies involved in those projects are not acting in good faith.

Mr McDonald: They are damaging the roads.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection. They are damaging the roads, the environment and prime agricultural land and there is not a good framework around renewable energy in Queensland. We are seeing projects approved with very limited environmental assessment and very limited community consultation. I have had councils tell me that they have no choice but to approve solar farms because they know that if they do not approve them the state government will just overrule them. That is the state we are living in here in Queensland at the moment under the Miles Labor government. It is an absolute disgrace.

In talking to constituents and collecting some data recently, I know that across Callide as many as three-quarters of parts of my community are opposed to wind and solar farms. That outlines the challenges for this new body. Some of that is because of the damage done by companies not acting in good faith in this space in Queensland. The LNP absolutely supports restrictions being put in place that align with other rules and regulations that we have for primary industry in this state. We cannot have one rule for the agriculture industry, one rule for the mining industry and another rule for the renewable energy industry. At the moment there are next to no rules for renewable energy and it is simply not good enough.

Another aspect of this bill relates to an increase in environmental bonds for mining projects across Queensland to \$10 million. That sounds like a small figure, but in the critical minerals space we will see a lot of micro projects to extract the minerals and resources needed for Queensland's future. Unfortunately, this fixed fee will jeopardise a lot of micro projects and, in turn, reduce Queensland's ability to extract these critical minerals into the future. Yet again, there was not good consultation on this. We know that the government does not consult with the mining industry and, in turn, sovereign risk has been used in relation to investment in Queensland.

The shadow minister for the environment touched on the amendment relating to the Great Artesian Basin. I absolutely support protecting the Great Artesian Basin and ensuring it is there for generations to come. It is an incredibly important resource. We need to ensure we look after it. A lot of work has been done to look after it. We need to continue doing that. It would have been great for the committee to have more time to look at this piece of legislation. I know that it deserves a lot more time than what it is getting. Ultimately, we know that Labor granted licences for this activity only a matter of months ago. It is clear that Labor is more worried about the politics rather than the facts when it comes to protecting the Great Artesian Basin and working with rural and regional Queensland.

I now refer to mine safety. I meant to get onto this a lot sooner than I did. Frankly, it is a disgrace that this issue is being debated in cognate. This is how the Labor government treats the mine workers of Queensland: we have a cognate debate and members have five minutes to talk about mine safety legislation in this state. It is a disgrace. Lives are a lot more valuable than this. The last committee report on mine safety mentioned 29 times the need for tripartite working groups. Did the government listen? Apparently it did not, because in the committee hearings both the unions and industry said they could have done better if they had actually sat at the table with one another and the government to go through the legislation. It is clear that the government did not do its job ahead of time. They might say in terms of all the legislation, 'Look at all the work we have done.' It is one thing to write legislation; it is another thing to write legislation that is good for Queensland and will actually improve safety outcomes in this state. Once again, I ask the question: is this ignorance, incompetence or just sheer laziness?

In relation to the clause about the SSE needing to be at or near the mine, throughout this process it was again clear that the government did not consult. There was a lot of confusion about this clause. Initially, RSHQ referred to this clause as being similar to a clause in New South Wales legislation, but it absolutely is not as far as how the clause can be interpreted. There was reference to it being written in legislation in 1999. I note that the minister touched on that in his earlier contribution. That is just one clause. This addition is significantly different to the previous clause. Once again, the minister should have worked with industry to clear that up. At this point, we have a new piece of legislation with an amendment that industry does not understand and we do not know how it will work in practice. It was suggested by people who have spoken to me that it means that SSEs cannot leave the vicinity of the mine unless they are on formal leave. If they have to travel for something to do with their duties but not at that site, it poses a lot of questions. I ask the minister to address that in his summing up.

In relation to decisions on the time for prosecutions, under this amendment there has been no change in the total time for prosecutions. I welcome the changes with regard to compelling witnesses under the P&G Act. In Queensland, we need a risk-based legislative framework and we need to do a lot more work to get that right. Tripartite working groups are key in mine safety regulation.