




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.58 pm): Today I rise to support the Progressive Coal Royalties Protection (Keep Them in the Bank) Bill 2024. This is a critical piece of legislation that safeguards the interests of Queenslanders and ensures that our state continues to receive a fair return for its invaluable natural resources. Queensland is home to some of the world's richest coal reserves and our mining industry has thrived due to the global demand for that vital resource. It is only right and fair that in periods of high global coal prices Queenslanders benefit from the extraordinary profits generated by this industry. This bill ensures that any further changes to coal royalty rates, specifically decreases, must undergo full parliamentary scrutiny and debate, protecting the integrity of our royalty system and the interests of all Queenslanders.

The progressive coal royalty rates, introduced in the 2022-23 state budget, have proven to be a game changer for Queenslanders. The six-tier structure was designed to ensure that, when coal prices soar, the people of Queensland see a fair return for their natural resources—the resources that they own. These royalties have allowed the government to invest more than \$16 billion in critical economic and social infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and roads, benefiting every corner of our state.

The importance of this revenue cannot be overstated. Not only does it support our coal-producing regions; it uplifts communities throughout Queensland. These royalties provide essential cost-of-living relief, improving infrastructure and creating jobs, especially in our regional areas. In fact, approximately 70 per cent of our infrastructure investment, amounting to \$15.9 billion, has been directed to the regions outside of Greater Brisbane, supporting 50,000 jobs.

Currently, coal royalty rights are prescribed under subordinate legislation, meaning that they can be amended by regulation without requiring parliamentary debate. This allows for the potential lowering of royalty rates without proper scrutiny, putting billions of dollars in revenue at risk. The progressive coal royalties protection bill amends the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to prevent any decrease in coal royalty rates from being made by regulation. Instead, such changes must be made through a bill, ensuring full transparency and debate in this parliament.

This amendment is necessary because of the enormous benefit these royalties have to our economy. The impact of royalties to state revenue is set to moderate over the medium term. The additional revenue generated by the progressive royalty tiers has been crucial for funding essential services and infrastructure. In 2022-23 alone, an additional \$5.8 billion in revenue was raised, which has gone towards electricity bill relief, 50-cent public transport fares and school food relief programs.

In my electorate of Mansfield, we have benefited from a new satellite hospital and more than \$300 million invested in our local schools. We have also seen 112 extra beds at QEII Hospital and an extra 249 beds at the PA Hospital, along with a new nurse-led clinic. Of course, there are many additional services for our local ambulance and police.

The bill protects the interests of my community as well as the broader Queensland community by ensuring that any proposed reductions in royalties that could potentially benefit a few at the expense of many—and we know that the LNP focus on the few rather than the many—must be thoroughly examined by this parliament. Let us not forget the clear and present danger posed by the Leader of the Opposition, who is yet to release the LNP's tax policy. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition has publicly criticised our progressive coal royalty rates. He has called them 'a bad plan' and 'dishonest'. He said to the coal lobby that the industry could 'take his policy to the bank'.

The opposition has held numerous meetings with local industry representatives. Are they discussing the LNP tax policy? Any change to progressive coal royalties would have devastating consequences for the people of Mansfield and the people of Queensland. A rollback of these royalties would not only reduce the revenue available for critical public services but also weaken our ability to invest in the future of our state. I commend this bill to the House.