




Speech By
Darren Zanow

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2024

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

 **Mr ZANOW** (Ipswich West—LNP) (7.03 pm): I rise this evening to support the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 with some reservations. Firstly, I declare that I still own two potential quarry sites. One is a rehabilitated quarry known as the Grantham Quarry. We purchased that post 2011 and we rehabilitated that quarry. I still have another potential quarry site that has a KRA overlay.

The bill contains a package of preventive and proactive reforms that amend the Resources Safety and Health Queensland Act 2020 and other acts collectively known as the ‘resources safety acts’. The principle policy objectives of the bill are to improve the sector’s safety and health performance and reduce the occurrence of fatalities and serious accidents. The bill proposes to facilitate the growth in high-reliability organisation behaviours within the resources sector, modernise regulatory enforcement powers and provide that resources safety and health legislation is contemporary and effective. I currently hold a certified practising quarry manager certificate and I am an SSE.

Let’s think about quarries for a moment. From the quarry side of things which I have been in all my life, unfortunately—and I have come fairly late to the party—there has been a lack of consultation prior to the bill being introduced and stakeholders have not been adequately able to have their say. Might I say some of the smaller quarrymen—there are lots of small quarries right throughout Queensland—live in fear of the legislation that was brought in in 1999 because at a lot of those quarries do not have the ability to hire qualified SSEs to oversee their operations. A lot of those people really do live in fear of this legislation. I do not think any of them were consulted during this process.

The LNP supports a tripartite approach to safety regulations and as such is concerned the government has clearly not followed this process. It has been recommended several times and even those opposite in the government have recognised this. Submitters themselves say their concerns could have been addressed by a genuine engagement process. That is the first thing. Unfortunately, the process has not really happened in the way it could have. I do know that a lot of those smaller operators have a lot to offer the industry.

I turn now to offence proceedings. Commencement of offence proceedings are from one to two years. Whilst during my lifetime we only had some near-misses and we never ever had any proceedings, I do know of a serious incident in one of the best parts of the world—the Ipswich area. Some people ask, ‘What’s good about Brisbane?’ and I say, ‘The fact that Ipswich is only about a 20-minute drive away.’ There is a quarry in the Ipswich area that in the last couple of years had a serious incident. The whole quarry industry knows the staff and people involved in that incident by name and, might I say, it has affected their prospects of getting employment in other quarries because of the way in which the legislation is currently written. Let us talk a little more about that.

We understand it is important that investigations conducted by RSHQ are completed in a timely manner and, for the sake of all impacted parties, with comprehensive communication throughout an investigation. It is imperative for public trust and what is a critical process. We need to ensure that these timely interventions deal with serious safety incidents and that there is an outcome to these safety incidents and that they are reported right throughout the industry. We use those safety incident memos that come out in toolbox meetings all the time. We always make sure that in toolbox meetings our staff understand what has happened at other quarries and sites and we apply that to our own quarries and sites to ensure that does not happen.

When it comes to SSEs on site, there has been some confusion from stakeholders as to the definition of 'readily available'. An SSE could be on the other side of the world, but an SSE in our part of the world was always someone who was on site and who was qualified to oversee the operation, whether it was stripping, whether it was extraction, whether it was load and haul, whether it was plant process, whether it was stockpiling or whether it was load out. It is very important. I understand the consequence of that not being thoroughly thought through in this legislation.

Furthermore, there is the reporting of high-potential incidents. At our sites we have had some high-potential incidents. It is very onerous to report high-potential incidents in the mining and quarry world. It is very much an impost on the SSE. We really need to think through how those incidents are reported. Like I said, at one quarry that I know really well it has affected the culture in lots of ways. When it comes to the compulsion of witnesses, this power has existed for some time. I think that is a step in the right direction.

I think this is a missed opportunity to improve mining safety and ensure the best possible recommendations from the outcome of inquiries. We can talk all night about some of the systems that some quarries and mines have in place to ensure the health and safety of their workers. We had a system at our quarry whereby when someone new started we buddied them up with someone else. The people who train in the smaller quarries and mines end up being fly-in fly-out workers for larger mines, after they have cut their teeth. We are talking about certificates of currency for board examiners and other requirements for certificates and such. We need to be very careful how we bring that in, because once again the smaller quarry operators can be left behind.

On another subject, there is no way in the world we would ever want to inject CO₂ into the Great Artesian Basin. There is no way in the world this side of the House would ever think of that. It is absolutely farcical to think we would say we would do that. In closing, I think this has been a rushed process. I do think this needs to be thought through more carefully. I commend the bills to the House.