




Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate of the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 and the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. At the outset I wish to condemn this minister and this Labor government for once again stymieing debate on these two important bills by debating them cognately, which does not do justice to either bill. Once again, under Minister Stewart we see bills having to be significantly amended on the fly in the House. This has become a regular occurrence. Every time this minister introduces a bill into this House we all wait to see what sort of a shambolic result eventuates and is debated, and the MEROLA Bill is no different. We are not talking about simple corrections and amendments; we are talking about the most significant aspect of this MEROLA Bill being withdrawn. The section regarding coal seam gas induced subsidence is being completely withdrawn.

The decision on this issue will be welcomed by all sides of the debate and was called for by both the resource industry and landowners who are dealing with this issue currently or those who will be dealing with it in the very near future. It was very apparent to the committee in the very early days of the committee process that this bill raised more questions than answers and only added to the confusion on this issue. Why this minister ever thought there was enough detail in this legislation and it was ready to be presented to the parliament defies belief. The committee did not hear from one submitter who thought the bill was fit for purpose. Lack of any meaningful consultation was a common theme during the committee hearings on both bills. The minister seemed to only take on board feedback that suited his agenda. This flies in the face of statements in the minister's own industry development plan regarding consultation, as we heard from the member for Bonney.

The surprise is not that this shemozzle had to be withdrawn from the bill; it is that it was ever included in the first place. The minister should be aware of how much time and effort to which submitters went in order to respond in the short timeframe for this proposed legislation. Committee members saw firsthand the distress that some of the submitters were undergoing during this process, and to hear about that all he has to do is talk to members on his side. This was causing serious mental health issues to some affected landowners. My question to the minister after all this is: what now? What is next? After all the trauma you put these landowners through, what now? I know what should be next, and that is an apology for the unnecessary trauma and distress this botched process caused. I look forward to hearing that during the minister's second reading speech. As members would know, this issue more than any other is why I stand in this House. I talked about this issue in my maiden speech and to see landowners so distressed, as they were during this process, has been personally upsetting to me.

Whilst the minister is on his feet issuing an apology he also needs to issue one to the small-scale miners for the distress and confusion they have been subjected to. They have been subjected to the same lack of consultation which leads to uncertainty, particularly for the gem miners and the fossickers.

The gem miners and fossickers play an important role in the economy of regional Queensland yet seem to find themselves under constant regulatory pressure for reasons that are not clear. I would suggest the minister go and spend some time with this sector in some meaningful consultation as I have, along with the member for Gregory and the member for Warrego. These miners are willing to be part of the solution but, instead of trying to work through some of the unique challenges, the government continues to try to find a one-size-fits-all approach which simply does not work.

The government has included another significant amendment in this bill which would place a permanent ban on greenhouse gas storage and enhanced petroleum recovery in the geographical area of the Great Artesian Basin. This is another significant piece of legislation that will bypass the committee process. The LNP has called on the Miles Labor government for action on this issue for many months. Indeed, it was only during a very recent sitting of this parliament that the Premier would not be drawn on this issue when responding to a question without notice from the member for Gregory. While the LNP members will be supporting this amendment, how can we have faith that there are no unintended consequences with this legislation given the debacle we are seeing before the House at the moment? Any potential issues would have come to light if put through the committee process.

We all remember this minister slipping the Glenden amendment into a child safety bill. Well, here we are with an amendment to the Corrective Services Act being slipped into a resources bill! Legislation under this minister is like that box of chocolates that Forrest Gump used to refer to—you just never know what you are going to get! Let us look at some of the pieces of legislation that have actually survived somewhat unscathed. I will start with Coexistence Queensland. Whilst most submitters supported this transition from the GasFields Commission to Coexistence Queensland, there were some concerns regarding the board. Several submitters suggested that Coexistence Queensland board membership should represent a range of agricultural businesses to improve diversity, including graziers, intensive cropping and irrigators who have experience across all resource activities. Submitters also suggested that experience in land management should be considered a prerequisite for membership.

The QREC supported the provision to include that a member of the Coexistence Queensland board have knowledge of or experience with the renewable energy industry and suggested that members should have experience in Queensland policy settings. The QREC also suggested that the Coexistence Queensland board should have equal representation between resources and renewable energy industries. I note that the minister will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail stage regarding this feedback. Submitters also raised concerns regarding amendments to the role of the Land Access Ombudsman, including how this expanded role would be funded by means of a levy. The QRC suggested that given the royalties that have been collected by this government the government could pay this levy itself. There were also issues raised around the critical minerals sector regarding the environmental rehabilitation fees that are going to be imposed on them, with up-front environmental bonds of up to \$10 million. There were real concerns that this could jeopardise the very industry that we are depending on for renewable energy transmission.

Given the little time left, I will quickly touch on a couple of aspects of the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill. The Brady review was mentioned in terms of high-potential incidents. The reporting of high-potential incidents is a sign of something that is working, so that is to be encouraged. We need workers with the courage and the support to report those incidents. Another part of the bill refers to incidents at mine sites and the time limitations by RSHQ. This is a bit questionable because the length of time it takes to report a finding is still far too long. We have seen these investigations drag on and on whereas if those findings were presented earlier we could prevent that incident from happening again or something like it. Whilst we support these bills, the process and the trauma that those landowners were subjected to is deserving of an apology.