



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

##### **Appropriation Bill**

##### **Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee, Report**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals) (9.41 pm): I welcome the tabling of the Clean Energy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee report into the proposed budget appropriations for 2024-25. I acknowledge the committee's recommendation that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the budget bills, be agreed to without amendment.

The resources industry is definitely the powerhouse of Queensland's economy, employing more than 78,000 workers directly. We are seeing real investment and confidence in the industry right now. I am disappointed in what the opposition had to say in their statement of reservation about investor and regulatory confidence. These are the facts: exploration in the coal industry right now is at its highest since 2014. The latest ABS stats show that coal exploration expenditure was up 41.9 per cent year on year to \$239.3 million. We all know that exploration is the lifeblood of the resources industry because it is a precursor to the big finds of tomorrow. It shows there is confidence in the future of the industry right now.

These numbers come after our progressive coal royalties began and show that, despite the opposition talking down the industry, there is huge confidence in the sector right now. We know what the opposition thinks about our progressive coal royalties. They have claimed these changes have impacted investor confidence in the broader resources industry. Clearly this is not the case and the numbers speak for themselves. It is our progressive coal royalties that mean as a government we can invest in building nation-changing infrastructure like CopperString and unlock the next boom in the resource industry through critical minerals. We have also launched our Critical Minerals Prospectus and our investor hub to connect people with opportunities in the critical minerals sector. Since being launched less than a month ago the hub has been viewed almost 6,800 times and we have had interest from the USA, Canada, India and Singapore, to name a few. This shows tremendous interest from around the world about investing in Queensland's resource industry.

I have said it before and I will say it again: safety is my No. 1 priority, and it is on everyone involved in the industry to make sure it is top of their mind as well. As we have always said, there are always improvements we can make. As a government, we will not stop looking at what can be done. What I will say is that the opposition should stop trying to politicise this. They have claimed there were six safety inspectors lost by the independent health and safety regulator Resources Safety & Health

Queensland. As was made clear during estimates by the regulator, an additional seven people joined RSHQ during the same period. I am an old maths teacher. I reckon if you lose six and gain seven there has to be an increase. I do not think that has changed since I left teaching. Even physical education teachers can get those numbers right; we have fingers.

Regarding RSHQ's reporting system and the claim of time delays, Dr Sean Brady's recommendation was that the regulator develop new and greatly simplified incident reporting that is user-friendly and encourages open reporting. There is no off-the-shelf product that can be instantly implemented to meet that recommendation. Timeframes for the implementation of the system do not exceed usual expected timeframes for a custom developed system. The latest phase in this process has been the recent soft launch of the system, which includes testing and training to maximise ease of use and user acceptance.

I would also like to correct some RSHQ operations matters the opposition chose to misrepresent. There is no logic to the found in the opposition's argument equating suspensions of operation to a decrease in safety. The apparent argument that the number of suspension directives considered in isolation as opposed to a rate is a measure of improving safety is unclear, to say the least. Directives to suspend operations may be issued where an inspector considers risk is at an unacceptable level or the mine's safety and health management system is not effective.

Regarding PMAV changes, we continue to engage with landholders when it comes to vegetation management. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to correct the assertion made in relation to this matter in the statement of reservation proffered by the LNP members on the committee. I can assure the House that changes to vegetation management maps do not affect landholders with an existing PMAV, nor do they affect landholders covered by category X.

The 2024-25 Queensland budget is backing all Queenslanders. The resources industry employs thousands of people, supports so many businesses, particularly in regional Queensland, and generates billions of dollars in royalties.

*(Time expired)*