




Speech By
Hon. Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Resources Industries, Safety and Health

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (2.28 pm): Today I am pleased to announce two important steps we are taking to restore integrity, leadership and accountability to Queensland's resources safety framework. Firstly, I am initiating a comprehensive review into Resources Safety & Health Queensland and the regulatory model that underpins it. Secondly, I have appointed Mr Ken Singer as the Interim Commissioner for Resources Safety & Health. The former Labor government left the position of resources safety and health commissioner vacant for nearly a year. Then when they finally filled the role their appointee resigned within weeks, putting the safety of resource workers in limbo. I want to remind Queenslanders of the timeframes we are talking about.

The former commissioner, Kate du Preez, left that position in November 2023. That was over 16 months ago. Then the former Labor government announced her replacement in—wait for it—September last year. Forty-four weeks—that is what Labor thought of worker safety. They left workers hanging for 44 weeks, but it gets worse. Having left mineworkers in the lurch for 44 weeks, the person Labor appointed on 19 September, Heidi Roberts, resigned on 9 October. Just 14 working days—you could count it on your fingers and toes. That is not a serious appointment process; that is chaos, and it put worker safety and public confidence at risk.

Queenslanders elected the Crisafulli government to fix the failures of the former Labor government, and filling this position has been my priority since day one. Unlike those opposite, the Crisafulli government has conducted a thorough and diligent appointment process to restore stability at the top of RSHQ. Ken Singer brings almost four decades of experience in the mining sector, from underground coalmines to senior regulatory and safety leadership roles. He has served as deputy chief inspector of coalmines, chaired industry forums and advised governments across Australia and internationally on mine safety and regulatory practice. Ken is highly respected across both industry and the workforce, and his appointment puts experienced, credible leadership at the helm.

Alongside this appointment, we are getting on with the job of reviewing the broader resources safety and health regulatory model to make sure it is working as effectively as Queenslanders expect. The review will be led by Professor Susan Johnston, who has worked for more than 25 years in Australia and overseas to improve mine safety outcomes. The review will examine whether RSHQ, the commissioner and the supporting advisory committees are structured and functioning in a way that delivers the best safety outcomes for workers in the resources industry. It will look at the role of the regulator and whether any modifications to the existing model or any alternative model would be more effective in ensuring and improving resources safety and health outcomes. It will hear from industry, safety experts, government agencies and unions. I expect to receive an interim report before the end of the year, followed by a final report with clear recommendations, timelines and accountability measures.

Every worker deserves to come home safe; that is not negotiable. The Crisafulli government will deliver a regulatory model that is modern, accountable and laser focused on outcomes. This is an important reset that puts safety, credibility and trust back at the heart of our resources safety system. We are proud of the drillers, the diesel fitters, the engineers and the mineworkers of this state—the high-vis heroes who keep the lights on in Queensland. With this appointment and review those workers can have confidence that the Crisafulli government is doing the hard work to keep them safe—responsibly, transparently and with real results.