



Speech By
Donna Kirkland

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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CORONERS (MINING AND RESOURCES CORONER) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (8.49 pm): I rise to speak to the Coroners (Mining and Resources Coroner) Amendment Bill 2025. Mining for resources is a practice that began thousands of years ago and one that has continued to provide essential products that grow and support our economies and the livability within those economies. Throughout time better ways of achieving best results have evolved, including better ways to protect lives within workforces that commit themselves to this risk bound profession along with year-on-year improvements that strive to achieve continued reforms for clearer accountabilities, assessments and recommendations that bring benefit for all within the mining and the resources sector.

As the member for Rockhampton, I represent a community where approximately one-third of our workforce are employed either directly or indirectly within the mining sector and every day families release loved ones to work within an industry that delivers prosperity to our state and our country that brings economic security and sustainability. It is only right that we as a state should continue to assess and bring reforms where necessary that prioritise the safety of these workers.

This bill amends the Coroners Act to establish a dedicated Mining and Resources Coroner. Unfortunately, in regional Queensland we are sometimes touched by tragic losses where our loved one does not return home from the mine site. I would like to pause here and acknowledge the families in Central Queensland who have lost loved ones—four families in 2024 alone. These can be due to accidents caused by varying factors—coal falls, machinery incidents, collisions and even vehicle accidents to and from site—each one deserving of an inquiry, and that is what this bill delivers.

The dedicated Mining and Resources Coroner that this bill establishes will conduct coronial investigations and mandatory inquests for all mining reportable deaths. Within this bill the Mining and Resources Coroner may now also choose to conduct inquests for reportable deaths outside of their scope if it is considered within the public interest, such as deaths whilst commuting and deaths through self-harm. Investigating suicide has not been excluded from this bill. This applies to all mining related injuries on mines, coalmines, quarries and certain petroleum and gas sites.

In Rockhampton we also have at least 11 quarry sites and I am sure that the business owners and the workers at these sites will be pleased to know that they have a government willing to continue bringing improvements that will ensure any loss of life is not in vain and that proper and timely inquiries are made into deaths to assess practical measures that will help prevent future deaths from occurring. That is why the Mining and Resources Coroner will also be able to make public findings and recommendations to assist in the prevention of similar incidents occurring.

The aim of this bill is to provide more timely answers and certainty to families that mining related deaths will be investigated and an inquiry conducted to determine the cause of the death, prevent similar deaths and keep mining companies accountable. The Crisafulli government will continue to put people

over politics. In that vein because of this bill, a position will be established within the Coroners Court of Queensland to provide family and liaison engagement throughout the coronial investigation and the inquest process, acknowledging the needs of families who have suffered great loss.

Within the bill are further enhancements that improve transparency and accountability with respect to the findings of a coroner related to mining and reportable deaths. The coroner will be able to hold pre-inquest conferences, even whilst court proceedings are underway. The coroner will be able to conduct preliminary examinations once the death has been reported to the coroner without being limited to circumstances where a police officer reports a death to the coroner.

The Jobs Queensland report has estimated that there will be 72,958 workers employed in the mining sector by 2027-28. That does not include those workers within the indirect supporting industries and the communities surrounding those employees. I am pleased to be a part of a government that recognises which side its bread is buttered on and that time and effort has been put into this bill to ensure the continued improvement of working standards for employees and employer accountability for an industry sector that keeps this state moving. I commend this bill to the House.