




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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ADJOURNMENT

Mining Industry, Safety and Health

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (9.00 pm): As the opposition representative for our mining sector, I take the safety of our miners and workers in mines very seriously. That is why I am disappointed that after so many serious accidents in this industry we have not seen the minister take greater action on safety. I am calling on the minister to prioritise the safety of miners and appoint at least an acting resources safety and health commissioner. This was the priority on the desk of the minister from day one, but it has not been his priority. He has had lots of other priorities, including travelling to the United States and Canada, but this key statutory safety role has been left to drift.

I have called for action for some time now. I know that unions have also called for it. Some people in the industry are also quietly letting me know that this is just not good enough. I put out a release at the '100 days of inaction' mark, but now we are 150 days on and Mr Last is yet to advertise for a permanent position or appoint someone in an acting capacity. I am calling for that to happen right now.

For the benefit of the House, the commissioner is vital in chairing the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee that advises the minister on key health and safety issues. This committee has not been able to meet. There are agenda items before it that it has not been able to process to give that vital advice. The commissioner also chairs the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee that advises the minister on the safety and health of mineral mines and quarry workers. Again, there are things on the agenda to be put forward at meetings, but with no commissioner to chair the meetings there has not been a meeting for the entire length of this parliament. It is simply not good enough.

These committees give advice and make recommendations about protecting and promoting the safety and health of persons at mines and anyone affected by those mining operations. We know that this is absolutely vital for the safety of our workers but also for the strength of the industry. We saw that when there were failures of regulation and safety in South America and Brazil it was at an enormous cost to the industry. Ironically, the strong regulation within Australia helped keep Australian mining strong. The commissioner chairs those two safety bodies. They are yet to sit. It has been over 150 days. They would have been providing key reports that have not been taken before this House nor put before the minister. Now is the time for action. I urge the minister to get on with it to ensure the committees can meet and worker safety is not compromised. Do it today.