



Speech By
Linus Power
MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2025

CORONERS (MINING AND RESOURCES CORONER) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 October (see p. 3072), on motion of Mrs Frecklington—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.58 pm), continuing: I want to bring the House to where we were when I had just been called on relevance. Those opposite, including the member for Burnett, said that this bill has nothing to do with the mining warden's court. In fact, the member was right because, although it is in the greens and although it is fulfilling their promise on the mining warden's court, it actually has nothing to do with the mining warden's court. For instance, in hearings we heard from the department that the so-called mining coroner would not in any way be a part of a mining warden's court but instead would be identical to an ordinary coroner except for the sections directing that certain deaths be directed to this new coroner.

In the hearings it was confirmed that an ordinary coronial inquest could not be started until all legal matters had been finalised. Newspaper reports, such as the one that I tabled, note that generally coronial inquests take place after criminal proceedings are finalised, which can take years. The mining minister misled this House when he made reference to a particular family that tragically have waited for a coronial inquest for a long time. The department has confirmed that this is identical; they will continue to wait under these laws. To say otherwise is sadly misleading a grieving family. Those issues are sub judice so I warn all members to be careful where the minister was not careful.

Minister Last confirmed the intention that any inquest be held at the end. In fact, he is promising frustrating years of delays for families. The member for Mackay criticised the existing process, which will continue under this bill, implicitly criticising the minister. He said that having some of these cases sitting and waiting years for decisions is not good enough. The member is right about that. In some cases, this bill will mean that cases can sit for years as other processes are completed. This will not fix the issue of delays for families. It is another Crisafulli broken promise for the mining community and for families that have lost loved ones. It is quite clear that whatever the Minister for Mines was thinking bears no relationship to what is being delivered in this House. Instead, the bill limits the powers of the so-called mining coroner, which has no special powers but instead acts as an ordinary coroner, from examining most deaths that exist in the industry.

The department emphasises that, instead of having increased power, they have identical powers to other coroners. In fact, they are limited because, even if a mine is connected with the death, where the death was self-inflicted it cannot to be defined as a mining related death even where there was a relationship with the mine that helped cause that suicide. We heard that suicide is much more prevalent in the mining industry and miners can face trauma dealing with long shifts, isolation in camps, separation from family and social supports, and being confronted by a serious accident or death on a mine site.

Recently, I spoke to a mine psychiatrist who spoke of a colleague suffering trauma because he came across a work colleague who had been killed. There are amendments in the bill that ensure that deaths from driving to and from work are not defined as mining related deaths. We know that they are mining related deaths. It is a common fact that they are. This bill perversely insists that they are not to be defined as mining related deaths because they were either not on the worksite or excluded by the bill.

We were told by the department that the average coroner has 200 to 300 open investigations at any one time. It would be similar for the Mining and Resources Coroner, who will be asked to do other coronial work when not working on deaths that the act defines as mining related reportable deaths. The department estimates that, on average, there would be two to three deaths—or two to four deaths, as the shadow minister said—that would actually fit the definition of a mining related reportable death. That is the minority of deaths that happen in the industry. For instance, if a miner dies driving or flying to a mining workplace, section 11AAA precludes that from being defined as a mining related death. That is, this bill says that the mining coroner should not look at those deaths. Maybe others can, but it should not be the Mining and Resources Coroner because they are not mining related deaths, according to this bill.

A rail accident that caused the death of a rail worker inside the confines of the mine would be defined as a mining related death. As soon as that same train loaded with the same ore leaves the site—it is connected with the mining industry—this bill perversely says that any death is not to be connected with the purposes of mining and that the Mining and Resources Coroner should not look at that type of death. This is the nonsense that this bill puts forward. This bill should encourage—not discourage—those deaths to be looked at by the Mining and Resources Coroner. The death of a worker or even a member of the public is deemed for the purposes of the Mining and Resources Coroner to be not mining related.

Further, the department told us that, under the practice of the Coroners Act, black lung disease and silicosis would not be defined as mining related. Of course, this is a nonsense. We know that that relates to someone's work in the mining industry. We are told that this is not something that would be defined as something that the Mining and Resources Coroner should look at. This act precludes the majority of mining related deaths from being defined, for the purposes of the act, as mining related.

In conclusion, we see this bill as a broken promise to the mining community of Queensland. There is no mining warden's court, just a renamed coroner with no new powers and a limitation on what the Mining and Resources Coroner should examine. Some 97 per cent of their work will be non-mining related matters—ignoring and excluding suicide, excluding driving to and from work and transporting minerals by road or rail, and not looking into silicosis or black lung deaths. This is not what was promised. It is a broken promise of the Crisafulli government.