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MEMBER: Mr KING

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.54 pm): I rise to speak to the Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026. At the outset I say that every day, at the end of their shift, workers deserve to go home in the same condition, physically and mentally. That is so important in both the mining and electricity industries in which I spent a fair bit of my previous life. I wonder how many in this place have worked in and not just walked on mine sites. I know there are a few. The members for Mirani, Traeger and Callide have worked in the mines and it is good to see that a couple of the committee members have as well.

The resources industry has hazards that need to be identified and controlled—and we all agree with this—along with the competing interests of production versus profits versus safety. It is always a trade-off. The industry needs a minister who will listen and be guided by independent and expert advice. In this case that has not happened, as the government commissioned Professor Susan Johnston to do the 2025 Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model and then promptly disregarded a lot of the review's findings and recommendations. The review laid out an 18-month reform timeline including four phases of consultation and implementation, but it has been rushed—sadly, like a lot of things that this government has done. That consultation was to be with all stakeholders—the industry, workers, community groups, farmers and other stakeholders—who have now effectively been shut out of the consultative process as the minister appears to have ignored the road map process.

Rushing complex changes in high-risk industries invites mistakes, mistakes lead to accidents and workers and their families bear the brunt of the effects of that. If any members attend Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April or Miners Memorial Day on 19 September each year, they will know how those days bring home what can and sadly does happen in our workplaces and mines. Weakening safety is the first step towards more tragedy.

Professor Johnston's second recommendation was to keep and define the role of the Commissioner for Resources Safety and Health. Stakeholders backed that recommendation. In their submission, the Queensland Resources Council stated—

The removal of the statutory Commissioner role results in the loss of a clearly identifiable, independent safety and health advocate and adviser to the Minister.

The council went on to say that 'the Commissioner provided a direct and accessible point of engagement' and that 'under the new governance model, it is not clear how this independent advisory and engagement function will be maintained'. The Mining & Energy Union stated that a commissioner—

... maintained an outward presence across industry such as mine visits, attendances at safety related conferences, participation in committees and other safety initiatives. A Board will have reduced ability to detect drift in the performance of legislation and other safety matters.

The mighty Electrical Trades Union further described the commissioner as 'a critical safeguard, someone who can speak truth to power, report directly to Parliament and act without fear or favour'. It is clear that the commissioner's role provided accountability and enhanced worker safety. The minister's decision to defy the recommendation to keep the role should show the resources industry and its workers what this government thinks of them.

There seems to be a theme from this government in removing workers' safety rights. Recently, in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, notifications to the QBCC and Workplace Health and Safety were removed. Now, one notifies the other. There used to be a dual notification process that was introduced by our government after the tragic death of Jason Garrels. For the sake of sending a second notification—a second email—that has been removed. I hope nothing tragic happens. Recently, the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill removed the ability for workers to approach the regulator to find historic health and safety data that the person in control of the business may not have. That was never actually tested. They said it was a burden on the department although, because it had never been enforced and never tested, I do not know how. That has gone as well, and now this.

The commissioner was also the independent chair of the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee, CSMHAC, and the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee, MSHAC. Doesn't the industry love acronyms! Both committees provide vital feedback and advice to the minister on industry health and safety, and both committees benefited by having the Commissioner for Resources Safety and Health as the fully independent chairperson. Submitters valued CSMHAC and MSHAC, with the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, AMEC, stating—

Independent advisory bodies representing government, employers, and workers are essential for improving safety and health outcomes in the resource industry.

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I could not say it better. Taking away the commissioner role is like removing a key brick from the bottom of a wall—it weakens the whole structure. This bill also changes the Resource Safety Health Queensland board and gives the minister the power to remove board members without reason. The bill includes no requirement for worker representation on the board.

Workers inform safety. Good managers know that nobody knows the job better than the worker performing it. Not listening to them and removing their representation changes the production, profit, safety equation significantly. If the minister listens to nothing else, he should listen to the stakeholders and Professor Susan Johnston, who was paid to do a review and should not be ignored, and include the workers' representative on the board and retain the commissioner role. It has not been the pattern for the LNP government to listen, but I do live in hope. Labor introduces worker safety—I give you industrial manslaughter as an example—the LNP, in another example, weakens safety.

I also support the amendment circulated by the shadow minister. This bill sets worker safety back, like so many other pieces of legislation rushed through by this government. I wonder how many fly-in fly-out workers in Stafford will be watching their workplace safety go down the drain this week with this bill unless the minister listens.