MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Enough’! Lauga slams mining deaths

The Member for Keppel Brittany Lauga has honoured the eight Queensland miners who lost their lives over the past 20 months, and highlighting new legislation aimed at making mine safety a top priority.

Speaking in Parliament Ms Lauga said these deaths and injuries should not be happening and “enough is enough”.

“The family and friends of Adam Malone, Connor-Shaye Milne, Allan Houston, Bradley Hardwick, David Routledge, Jack Gerdes, Brad Duxbury and Donald Rabbitt have had their lives torn apart because their husbands, their dads, their uncles, their fathers, their grandads have not come home from work.

“That is why it is so important we are … today passing legislation which will make a difference to the health and safety of workers in our Queensland mines.”

Speaking in support of the Resources Safety and Health Queensland Bill 2019 — a bill which will set up an independent body to protect the safety and health of Queensland’s 70,000-plus resources sector workers – she said families have a right to expect that loved ones will return home from work.

“It is every mining family’s worst nightmare when their loved ones do not come home from work.”

Ms Lauga said Resources Safety and Health Queensland will include already independent mining inspectors as well as excising safety and health functions currently within the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.
“This separates the job of protecting the workers from the job of growing and facilitating mining and exploration projects and the resources sector as a whole.

“This is something that mine workers have been talking about for a long time and something that mine workers talk to me about regularly.”

She said in recent months she has met with a number of former mine workers who suffer from coal workers' dust diseases.

“It is tragic to hear their stories. Tim, whom I met only a few weeks ago, is only 38 years of age.

“He started his mining career at the age of 17. He has only known working in mines and now has multiple coal workers' dust diseases.

“His career in mining is over. He struggles to find employment. He is struggling mentally to deal with what has happened to him.

“His family has been completely torn apart by having to relocate after he was diagnosed.”

She said the bill is another in the suite of reforms the Palaszczuk Government has put in place over the past five years to protect the safety and health of our resources sector workers.

“Our government has introduced reforms to enable the better detection and prevention of black lung and an improved safety net for affected workers, a $35 million package to deliver reforms to improve the safety and health of our mine workers, and a commitment to tighter controls on mine dust levels.”
Ms Lauga said the Palaszczuk Government has also invested $1.2 million which will see a health service on wheels to help improve the detection of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, silicosis and other mine dust lung diseases.

“I am incredibly proud that the minister has today introduced legislation to make industrial manslaughter an offence as it is in other Queensland workplaces.

“Queensland coalmine workers have told me that this is something that is important that this government needs to deliver on. I am pleased that we are,” said Ms Lauga.

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