

A strong voice for our future

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FOR EDUCATION**



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mine, quarry workers gain free lung health checks

Past and present Central Queensland mineral mine and quarry workers will soon have free lung health checks for life to protect them from mine dust lung diseases like silicosis.

The Member for Keppel and Assistant Education Minister Brittany Lauga said the mandatory free checks would apply from 1 September.

"Every Queensland worker has the right to safe working conditions and peace of mind," she said.

"And mandatory screening is critical for early detection."

Ms Lauga said CQ's mine workers make a massive contribution to Queensland's economy, and particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic.

She urged mine workers to alert friends and colleagues who may have left the industry to contact the mine dust health support service on 1300 445 715 to also access their free health checks.

Under the changes that take effect from 1 September, every worker will have a chest X-ray that is read by at least two qualified radiologists as well as a lung function test.

This will happen when they start in the industry, at least once every five years during their career in the industry.

And after they leave the industry, they can continue to have free respiratory health checks for life, if they want to, said Ms Lauga.

The measures provide mineral mine and quarry workers with the same health checks as their 37,000 coal mining counterparts who already have free mandatory respiratory health screening.

The reforms include:

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- a mobile health service, scheduled to start by the end of 2020, that will provide lung health checks to past and present regional mine and quarry workers across the state.
- a confidential mine dust health support service (1300 445 715) that helps current and former mine workers access the information and services they need.
- voluntary access to the health checks for retired or former coal, mineral mine and quarry workers.
- creating industrial manslaughter as an offence, with executives facing up to 20 years' jail if Queensland mine and quarry workers die because of their criminal negligence.
- \$35 million to deliver reforms to improve the safety and health of mine workers.
- increased maximum penalties for offences to \$4 million and powers for the regulator to issue fines without going to court.
- establishing an independent resources safety and health authority.

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