



Speech by

## Hon. Andrew Cripps


MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2012

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Mine Safety

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.27 pm): Sadly, I must report to the House that there was a fatality at a quarry in Central Queensland overnight. A full Queensland Mines Inspectorate investigation into the nature and causes of the incident has begun this morning. While the Queensland Police Service was in control of the scene last night, a mines inspector did attend the site following the incident. I would like to extend to the employee's family and friends our heartfelt sympathies during this very difficult time. I am sure that I speak for all members in this House in that regard.

This very sad news once again highlights the hazards inherent in the day-to-day activity undertaken by workers in the resources sector and the critical need to maintain the highest of mine safety standards in Queensland. The Newman LNP government is absolutely committed to ensuring that all mining activities are conducted as safely as possible to ensure that the 57,000 Queenslanders who work in the industry return home safely to their families at the end of each shift. Queensland is currently participating in discussions with other states and the Commonwealth about the prospects of developing nationally consistent mine safety laws. However, it must be said upfront that I am not convinced that the proposed national framework is in the interests of Queensland's 57,000 employees in the mining and resources sector. The Mines Inspectorate is working through the COAG national mine safety framework to ensure that any new model laws introduced are at least as effective as Queensland's current mine safety and health laws.

Today I am releasing for industry consultation a discussion paper on options for new mine safety legislation in Queensland. I table the discussion paper for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Natural Resources and Mines discussion paper, dated 2012, titled 'Nationally consistent mine safety legislation—Queensland's proposal for a nationally consistent legislative framework' [246].

Industry stakeholders have until 23 July 2012 to provide the Queensland government with their views on these important issues. In a nutshell, the Queensland government does see the merit in greater consistency across jurisdictions. However, as the responsible minister, I will not allow Queensland to be disadvantaged by adopting model national legislation that dilutes Queensland's already admirable mine safety standards. Nor will I allow Queensland to be disadvantaged by national model legislation that diminishes the quality of mine safety training or causes additional ongoing costs for Queensland in the regulation of mine safety.

Although the shadow of the tragic death of an employee last night in Central Queensland is a sad reminder of the need for continual improvement, the reality is that Queensland has one of the best mine safety records in the world and demanding state based mine safety laws. These laws have been developed in partnership with industry and the unions and they are internationally recognised. The improvement in the safety performance of Queensland mines as a result of this framework is without equal. The Newman LNP government sees no justification for Queensland to change for the sake of administrative harmonisation with the national model legislation as Queensland is leading the way on mine safety.