



**Dale Last MP**  
**Member for Burdekin**

Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Shadow Minister for Fire and Emergency Services  
Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Affairs

**Burdekin Electorate Office**

Shop 30 Centrepoint Arcade

AYR QLD 4807

Tel: 07 4767 0500

Freecall: 1800 817 594

Email: [burdekin@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:burdekin@parliament.qld.gov.au)

September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **Media Release – Stewart shirks resources responsibility**

Queensland’s Minister for Resources has shirked “one of his most important responsibilities” and has tried to mislead miners and their families according to Member for Burdekin and Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Queensland, Dale Last MP.

After he called for the release of Resource Safety and Health Queensland’s (RSHQ) final report into the North Goonyella mine fire, Mr Last was accused by the Minister of “being disingenuous and deliberately misleading” but Mr Last has fired back.

“If Minister Stewart wants to accuse people of being misleading, he needs to check his facts first,” Mr Last said. “No matter how he tries to wiggle out of it, the buck stops with Minister Stewart and, if he is not prepared to take responsibility, he is not suitable to be Minister.”

“Clause 13 of the Resources Safety and Health Act<sup>1</sup> provides for Ministerial discretion and for the Minister to give a written direction to RSHQ in the public interest. If Minister Stewart believes that saving lives and avoiding injuries is not in the public interest, then he should resign.”

“The Committee Report into the establishment of RSHQ refers to the need to record directions given by the Minister<sup>2</sup> and includes a diagram clearly showing reporting lines for RSHQ directly to the Minister<sup>3</sup>. In his speech introducing this very legislation, the former Minister for Resources said that RSHQ ‘will report directly to the Minister’<sup>4</sup>.”

Mr Last said that Minister Stewart had not only reneged on his responsibilities as Minister, but that he had also turned his back on Queensland’s miners.

“If there are people or companies who have done the wrong thing and contributed to this incident they need to be held to account,” Mr Last said. “When you have a respected former union safety inspector referring to a veil of secrecy that should ring alarm bells, not trigger mud-slinging.”

“There are laws in place to address negligent actions that must be used and there are powers granted to the Minister that should be used. I cannot think of any more important reason to invoke Ministerial discretion than, literally, ensuring Queensland’s mines are as safe as possible.”



“The Minister’s Charter Letter<sup>5</sup> makes a priority of improving safety in the resource sector and the only way to achieve that is to learn from previous incidents. The Minister has the power and, if he is genuine about making mines safer, he will use it.”

**ENDS – Media Contact:** David Cooper (07) 4767 0500 or 0427 834 844

Sources:

- 1 <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2020-010#sec.13>
- 2 <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2019/5619T1870.pdf> Page 19
- 3 <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2019/5619T1870.pdf> Page 16
- 4 <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/bills/2019/3018/resources-ef85.pdf> Page 2
- 5 <https://cabinet.qld.gov.au/ministers-portfolios/assets/charter-letter/scott-stewart.pdf> page 4