

Mine safety in WA



Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore has rejected calls by the Greens and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) for a Federal inquiry into Western Australia's mining industry.

The push for an inquiry came in response to the mining-induced rock fall incident at a Leinster mine this week which trapped a miner in a refuge chamber for about 16 hours.

Mr Moore said he was appalled that the unions had politicised the issue and more calm and rational thinking was required at this time.

These events are viewed with great concern and a full investigation has begun, but we must be careful not to blame lax mine safety for an incident which was the result of a seismic event, he said.

We have a district inspectorate engineer conducting a preliminary investigation and, subject to his findings, a geotechnical engineer will assess the situation prior to the event. With that information we can make informed decisions on how to proceed further if it is required.

The Minister said resources safety in WA had been reviewed under the previous Labor government and a suite of recommendations had been provided in the Kennett Report, which he was considering.

Our State's resources industry is currently regulated by what the previous government has established. The Liberal-National Government has inherited that and must now try to identify what is required to improve it, he said.

It is interesting to note however, that the unions did not complain during the time the State ALP was in power.

We intend to make changes to the way mine safety is administered in the near future.