

Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024

Report No. 13, 57th Parliament

**Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport
Committee**

September 2024

Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee examination of the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024.

The committee's task was to consider the policy to be achieved by the legislation and the application of fundamental legislative principles – that is, to consider whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, and to the institution of Parliament. The committee also examined the Bill for compatibility with human rights in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

As part of the inquiry, the committee visited Mount Isa where we engaged directly with key stakeholders, held a public hearing, and conducted a site inspection of the Mount Isa Mine. This allowed us to gain valuable insights into the operational aspects and the potential impacts of the mine's closure.

The committee also travelled to Townsville to further investigate the broader consequences. In private meetings with the local council, Sun Metals Zinc Refinery, and the Port of Townsville, we gathered perspectives on the opportunities and challenges that the closure presents. These discussions helped us better understand the regional implications and explore strategies to support affected communities and industries.

The Member for Traeger should be commended for his commitment to delivering certainty and prosperity to his community. It is clear that this Bill is the product of a sincere desire to support the workers of Mount Isa and the broader North West region, one that I share with him.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Member for Traeger, Mr Robbie Katter MP and his parliamentary staff. I thank those individuals and organisations who attended the public hearing, facilitated site visits and private meetings, and made written submissions on the Bill. I also thank our Parliamentary Service staff and secretariat.

I commend this report to the House.



Kim Richards MP

Chair

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 **1**

The committee recommends the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024 not be passed.

Recommendation 2 **1**

The Committee recommends that further work is undertaken to more fully assess how any legislative intervention could provide additional certainty to the local community and workforce.

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee's examination of the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024.

The private member's Bill seeks to amend the *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985* in order to ensure the continuation of mining operations in Mount Isa. The Bill follows the announcement by Glencore, the current agreement holder under the Act, that the company intends to close the Mount Isa Mines underground copper operations in 2025.

The Committee held a briefing on 24 June to assist in gaining a better understanding of proposed amendments contained in the Bill. This briefing was with the Member for Traeger, Mr Robbie Katter MP, who introduced the Bill.

The committee received 4 submissions and held a public hearing in Mount Isa on 6 August 2024, at which 4 stakeholder groups appeared, and the Member for Traeger joined the committee.

The committee travelled to Townsville to gather perspectives on the opportunities and challenges that the closure presents and heard in private meetings about the regional implications on communities and industries.

The committee also wrote to both the Member for Traeger and the Department of Resources seeking additional information on aspects of the Bill.

The committee assessed whether the Bill complies with the Parliament's requirements for legislation as contained in the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, *Legislative Standards Act 1992* and the *Human Rights Act 2019*. The committee has concluded that the Bill does not provide sufficient justification for the restriction of ordinary business activities in this instance. It would be inconsistent with fundamental legislative principles to legislate the proposed interventions in ordinary business.

Based on its examination, the committee recommends that the Bill not be passed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Policy objective of the Bill

The Explanatory notes state that the policy objective of the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024 (The Bill) is ‘to ensure that Queensland’s resources are realised for the benefit of Queensland’.¹

The Bill seeks to amend the *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985* (the Act and alternately referred to as MIMLAA by some stakeholders) to ensure the continuation of mining operations in Mount Isa.² The Bill follows the announcement by Glencore, the current agreement holder under the Act, that the company intends to close the Mount Isa Mines underground copper operations in 2025.³

1.2 Legislative compliance

Our deliberations included assessing whether or not the Bill complies with the Parliament’s requirements for legislation as contained in the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, *Legislative Standards Act 1992* and the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

1.2.1 Legislative Standards Act 1992

Our assessment of the Bill’s compliance with the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* identified issues which are discussed below.

1.2.2 Human Rights Act 2019

Our assessments of the Bill’s compatibility with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HRA) did not identify any incompatibilities. We find the Bill is compatible with human rights.

A statement of compatibility was tabled with the introduction of the Bill as required by section 38 of the HRA. The statement contained a sufficient level of information to facilitate understanding of the Bill in relation to its compatibility with human rights.

1.3 Should the Bill be passed?

The committee is required to determine whether or not to recommend that the Bill be passed.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024 not be passed.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that further work is undertaken to more fully assess how any legislative intervention could provide additional certainty to the local community and workforce.

¹ Explanatory notes, p 1.

² Explanatory notes, p 1.

³ Glencore, Mount Isa Mines operational changes, media release, 18 October 2023, <https://www.glencore.com.au/operations-and-projects/qld-metals/media-and-insights/news/mount-isa-mines-operational-changes>

2 Examination of the Bill

This section discusses key issues raised during the committee's examination of the Bill. It does not discuss all consequential, minor or technical amendments.

2.1 Background

The Bill was introduced as a Private Members' Bill on 1 May 2024, by the Member for Traeger.

The Bill seeks to amend the *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985* (the Act) by inserting a new section 5B '*Special term for formal agreement*' into the Act.⁴

2.1.1 *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985*

On introducing the original Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Bill in 1985, the then Minister for Mines and Energy, Hon. Ivan Gibbs said:

The purpose of this Bill is to ratify and approve an agreement - the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement - entered into by myself as Minister for Mines of the State of Queensland, for and on behalf of the State of Queensland, with Mount Isa Mines Limited.

The company presently holds over land in that region of the State known as the Mount Isa Mining District many different tenures, which have been granted over the years pursuant to both the Mining Act of 1898 and the Mining Act of 1968, each such Act as amended from time to time, for varying purposes and terms and subject to varying conditions.

However, as all these tenures are held for the purposes of the one integrated company operation, merit has been seen in replacing the many present tenures with one tenure which allows for all the existing undertakings and activities of the company's operation plus foreseeable growth. Thus the formulation of the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement which provides for the consolidation of the tenements held by Mount Isa Mines Limited at Mount Isa and allows the company to continue the operations presently undertaken by it thereon.⁵

Glencore is the current operator of Mount Isa Mines, and the agreement holder under the Act. Glencore and its predecessor company, Xstrata, have owned the Mount Isa Mines operations since 2003.⁶

Glencore is one of Australia's largest producers of coal, cobalt, zinc, lead, silver, copper and nickel. They operate 22 mines across Australia as well as several metals processing facilities including concentrators, smelters, and refineries. Last year Glencore's Australian operations contributed \$23.5 billion to the national economy, with metals alone in Queensland contributing \$2.6 billion.⁷

2.1.2 Glencore's 2023 announcement

In October 2023, Glencore announced that the company intends to close its Mount Isa Mines underground copper operations in 2025.⁸ It is estimated that this will result in 1200 job losses in the region.⁹ In their written submission to this inquiry, Glencore stated:

⁴ This new section 5B is outlined further below at 2.2.

⁵ Queensland Parliament, Record of Proceedings, 28 February 1985, p 3592.

⁶ Glencore, Our history, Significant investments in coal, copper, zinc and lead, <https://www.glencore.com.au/who-we-are/our-history#commodities>

⁷ Submission 3, p 1.

⁸ Glencore, Mount Isa Mines operational changes, media release, 18 October 2023, <https://www.glencore.com.au/operations-and-projects/qld-metals/media-and-insights/news/mount-isa-mines-operational-changes>

⁹ Explanatory notes, p 2.

Every mine has a beginning, a middle and an end. After over 60 years of operation, the economically viable copper ore bodies at Mount Isa Mines have been mined out.

Over the past five years, Glencore has completed several studies to optimise the remaining resource base and has already extended the life of our copper assets through extension projects utilising new mining methods and technology such as the Black Rock sub-level cave. Low grade resources where viable and feasible to extract have been incorporated into the mine plan wherever possible leading to an extension from 2023 to 2025.

The decision to close (Mount Isa Copper Operations) MICO was very carefully considered and not taken lightly. The mine has come to the end of its life and the remanent resources are very low grade and technically inaccessible.¹⁰

One matter in dispute during the inquiry was the continued viability of the mine with the operator stating:

The current economic copper Mineral Resources are depleted, and the copper ore grade has significantly declined making the remaining Mineral Resource uneconomic to pursue today from underground methods.¹¹

Mr Katter conversely believed that the mine continues to provide economic feasibility, if not for Glencore, potentially for smaller miners:

... look at the Ernest Henry mine, which was their second biggest copper operation. Glencore sold the Cobar copper mine a few years ago and Ernest Henry, which was their next biggest copper mine. They repeatedly told the public there were only four years left to run at Ernest Henry. They sold it to Evolution Mining, which is a junior Australian mining company from Tasmania. They said, 'This is a really big mine for us to purchase,' and within a year they had raised extra capital and set a long-term plan in place. Within 18 months of owning it they had added 17 years to a mine that definitely only had four years left to run. Now it has 17 years for a junior miner.¹²

2.1.3 Government response to Glencore announcement

In 2023, the Queensland Government announced that a support package of up to \$50 million, would be available for workers and the community impacted by the closure.¹³ During the committee's consideration of the Appropriation Bill on 30 July 2024 a question was asked about the current status of Glencore's Mount Isa mine and support for the people of Mount Isa.

The Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals, Hon. Scott Stewart MP, advised that the Department of Resources have liaised with Glencore to better understand its decision and to ensure that all necessary legislative requirements were being met.¹⁴

The government support package includes up to \$30 million to accelerate resource project development in the North West Minerals Province over five years, and up to \$20 million for an economic structural adjustment package via the Mount Isa Transition Fund.

Additionally, in June 2023, the Queensland Government launched the Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy, which oversees \$315 million in investment to grow the critical minerals industry. This

¹⁰ Submission 3, p 3.

¹¹ Submission 3, p 3.

¹² Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 24 June 2024, p 3.

¹³ Hon A Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, 'Government supports workers impacted by Glencore mine closures', media release, 18 October 2023, <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/98946>

¹⁴ Minister for Resources, Response to Pre-Hearing Question on Notice No. 3, Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee, Report No. 10, 57th Parliament, '2024-25 Budget Estimates Volume of Additional Information', August 2024, <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2024/5724T1178-0286.pdf>

includes \$75 million dedicated to advancing critical minerals projects within defined zones, including the Mount Isa/Cloncurry area.

Critical Minerals Queensland has also initiated stakeholder consultations and is collaborating with industry and all levels of government to support the region's economy by advancing critical mineral projects and exploring secondary opportunities. The Geological Survey of Queensland has undertaken various initiatives to assist explorers in identifying new mineral deposits in the North West Minerals Province, including scanning drill-core from significant deposits, providing new geophysical survey data, and supporting exploration through the Collaborative Exploration Program.

Further, the Queensland Government has committed to accelerating the CopperString¹⁵ project by bringing forward \$1.3 billion of its \$5 billion funding to expedite the development of mining projects in Mount Isa and the North West Minerals Province.¹⁶

Speaking in support of the Bill, the Mayor of Mount Isa City Council, Cr Peta MacRae added:

I believe the future of Mount Isa is bright and our community and surrounding communities need support to navigate what will be a difficult transition. As mayor I am determined to work with governments, business and our community and regional local governments to lead that transition. I welcome the government's recent announcement to fund the acceleration of Harmony's Eva copper mine in Paradise South both to the north of Mount Isa and Vecco critical minerals projects near Julia Creek.¹⁷

Despite the profound impacts and concerns surrounding the impending closure of Glencore's Mount Isa Copper Operations, a central theme of the inquiry was that Mount Isa will continue to prosper. This is evidenced by Glencore themselves advising of investment and the prospect of future projects in the area.¹⁸ Concerns were nonetheless raised about the impact that would be felt in the time between Glencore's Mount Isa Copper Operations (MICO) closure and future projects starting.¹⁹

2.2 Proposed new section 5B

As noted above, the Bill proposes inserting a new section 5B to the Act. This proposed Section 5B is titled 'Special term for formal agreement', and provides for the continuation of mining activities in Mount Isa.

The proposed new section 5B states:

- (1) (a) the Company must continue to carry out each preserved mining activity -
 - (i) in accordance with clause 12 of Part II of the agreement; and
 - (ii) to the extent the Company was carrying out the activity immediately before the preservation day; and
- (b) the Company may make a change to the extent to which the Company carries out a preserved mining activity (an *operational change*) only with the approval of the Minister; and

¹⁵ Queensland Government, What is CopperString 2032 and why is it important for Queensland's renewable energy future?, <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/news/what-is-copperstring-2032-and-why-is-it-important-for-queenslands-renewable-energy-future>

¹⁶ Minister for Resources, Response to Pre-Hearing Question on Notice No. 3, Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee, Report No. 10, 57th Parliament, '2024-25 Budget Estimates Volume of Additional Information', August 2024, <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2024/5724T1178-0286.pdf>

¹⁷ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 1.

¹⁸ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 20. Discussion regarding the Black Star project was heard throughout the hearing.

¹⁹ See for example, Cr Peta MacRae, Mayor, Mount Isa City Council, Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 1, and Jason Brandon, Australian Workers' Union, Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 26.

- (c) the Minister may approve an operational change only if -
- (i) the Minister is satisfied the change will not adversely affect the Mount Isa community or the Queensland economy; or
 - (ii) both of the following apply-
 - (A) after making a public call for tenders, the Minister has identified a candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity under a mining tenement to the extent that the Company intends to stop or reduce its carrying out of the activity;
 - (B) the Company agrees to relinquish the Company's rights and entitlements under the agreement and the Lease to the extent needed to allow the candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity under a mining tenement granted to the candidate.²⁰

The Bill outlines three examples of what constitutes an 'operational change' under section 5B(1)(b), including:

- (1) ceasing a particular activity related to the mining, winning, or treatment of a designated mineral;
- (2) reducing the scale of such activities; and
- (3) closing a facility where these activities are conducted. Additionally, the Bill provides three key definitions relevant to section 5B.²¹

These definitions and examples are critical for understanding the operational changes and regulatory framework proposed by the Bill.

2.2.1 Continuation of Mining Operations

The Member for Traeger's Bill aims to ensure the continuation of mining operations in Mount Isa.²² In his introductory speech, the Member for Traeger stated:

- there are enormous copper reserves in Mount Isa
- that Glencore plans to effectively sit on and possibly not mine these reserves for the next 30 years - a period linked to the terms of the Act
- Glencore has decided to stop their mining operations in Mount Isa as it is cheaper for the company to focus on copper mines that it owns in Africa and South America 'where the labour and environmental conditions are not so bad'
- by keeping certain other mining operations open in Mount Isa, Glencore will avoid having to meet environmental obligations associated with ceasing its underground copper mining.²³

Glencore advised that the reason for closure is 'a combination of decreasing quantities of material available, decreasing copper percentage in the ore itself and increasing costs, getting to a point where the mine post July next year will not be making any money.'²⁴

²⁰ Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024, cl 3.

²¹ Preservation day refers to the date the Bill for the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Act 2024 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly. Preserved mining activity denotes any mining, winning, or treatment activity related to a designated mineral that was being performed by the Company, in accordance with clause 12 of Part II of the formal agreement, immediately before preservation day. Public call for tenders involves a gazette notice invitation for tenders for a mining tenement to carry out a preserved mining activity.

²² Explanatory notes, p 1.

²³ Queensland Parliament, Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024, pp 1409-1412.

²⁴ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 14.

Glencore added, ‘the remaining mineral resources are not economically viable due to low ore grades and areas where, due to geological conditions, safe extraction can’t be achieved using current technology, this all coupled with ageing infrastructure.’²⁵

Given the varied perspectives presented by Glencore and the Member for Traeger, the committee resolved to visit the Mount Isa region and surrounding areas as part of the inquiry. This visit aimed to gather firsthand information and develop a well-rounded understanding of the situation. The committee visited Mount Isa, where they engaged directly with key stakeholders and conducted a public hearing to gather input from the community. This visit also included a detailed site inspection of the Mount Isa Mine, enabling the committee to gain primary insights into the operational aspects and the potential ramifications of the mine's impending closure.



Figure 1: The committee during a site visit to Mount Isa Mines

In their submission to the inquiry, The Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Plan contributors (MITEZ) expressed the importance of prioritising copper:

A recent study published by S&P Global describes copper as “the metal of electrification,” adding that “unless the impending supply gap for the metal of electrification is closed in a timely way, Net-Zero Emissions by 2050 will be short-circuited and remain out of reach.” One of the key findings of the study, titled “The Future of Copper,” is the urgent need for copper supply to rise rapidly over the next decade to accommodate the needs of the energy transition. The study finds that global copper demand will roughly double by 2035, from the current 25 million metric tonnes.

Further, copper appears on both the Queensland Government’s Critical Minerals list and on the Federal Government’s Strategic Minerals List.²⁶

However, MITEZ were uncertain as to whether an amendment to the *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985* was ‘the best way forward’ adding:

²⁵ Submission 3, p 1.

²⁶ Submission 4, p 2.

The closure calls into question the future of Mount Isa's 20,000-strong community, whose economy has been primarily driven by the mine ... the Queensland Government must take serious and decisive action in the case of the Mount Isa Mines copper closures. If not, it is not delivering on its Critical Mineral Strategy and as a consequence making the city of Mount Isa more vulnerable than it already is.²⁷

In response to a question from the Deputy Chair at the public briefing in Brisbane, Mr Katter outlined the knock-on effects of MICO closing and the interdependence of the existing chain:

There is a copper smelter and there is also the biggest fertiliser plant in the Southern Hemisphere, the Incitec Pivot fertiliser plant, which is absolutely critical to Australia's fertiliser needs. All the sulphur that comes off the copper smelter is piped a couple of hundred metres away to the acid plant to make sulphuric acid which is in critical shortage in Australia now. There was an inquiry on the supply of acid in Australia. We have acid that comes off the copper smelter that helps keep the fertiliser plant up the road and the phosphate mine viable.

The phosphate fertiliser plant also takes acid from the Sun Metals Zinc Refinery in Townsville and that is a part of their business that keeps them viable. If we lose phosphate we could lose Sun Metals zinc and then you would also lose the copper refinery in Townsville. The copper smelter is a very valuable chess piece in the ecosystem of mining in the north-west and North Queensland, even in port activities, and the copper mine helps keep that viable.

This legislation would play a role in keeping viable the business case for a copper smelter in the long term as well. And Sun Metals zinc and the copper refinery in Townsville. There are about 1,200 jobs in that value chain that are all compromised without the copper smelter. It is about getting volume through that smelter. In the last few years for the first time ever they have been taking everyone else's copper ore from the whole province and processing it for them just to keep the volumes up. There is no question they have dropped volumes underground in Mount Isa.

In my view the government has done a good job of incentivising the copper smelter, keeping them till 2030. They are probably not hitting panic buttons at the moment over this decision.²⁸

The Mayor of Mount Isa explained the relevance of the mine closing for other parts of North West Queensland:

We have an existing skilled workforce that, with support, can transition to other mining operations. We have the community infrastructure, health and education facilities, including our recently opened Country Universities Centre, to support that workforce and their families. We have rail and road connections to Townsville and are a major user of its port, meaning Mount Isa is a major contributor to not only the north-west region economy but also the Townsville economy. So by supporting Mount Isa in our transition you are not only supporting North-West Queensland; you are also supporting coastal communities such as Townsville.²⁹

Following their activities in Mount Isa, the committee proceeded to Townsville to further assess the broader consequences and impacts that the mine's closure might have on the region. In Townsville, the committee held a series of private meetings with the Townsville City Council, Sun Metals Zinc and the Port of Townsville.

²⁷ Submission 4, p 2.

²⁸ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 24 June 2024, p 4.

²⁹ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 2.



Figure 2: The committee during a visit to Sun Metals Zinc Refinery in Townsville

During these discussions, each party provided valuable perspectives, articulating both the opportunities and challenges that would arise from the closure of the Mount Isa Mine. The committee examined how these entities might be affected by changes in logistics, supply chains, and employment, as well as potential economic shifts within the community. This allowed the committee to develop a more nuanced understanding of the regional implications of the mine closure and to explore possible strategies for supporting affected communities and industries.

2.2.2 Existing legal framework

A central theme in the inquiry was that the Bill is unnecessary because appropriate regulation already exists in this area. The proposed new section 5B(1)(b) allows the company to make a change to its mining activity (an operational change) only with the approval of the Minister.

Glencore advised:

The proposal in the Bill is to amend MIMLAA to restrict MIM from ceasing mining activities without Ministerial approval and that such Ministerial approval cannot be given unless the opportunity to undertake the discontinued activity is opened up for tender to third parties. Our principal position is that the Bill is unnecessary because appropriate regulation in this area already exists which provides protection to the State in relation to the realisation of the mining resource.³⁰

The Department of Resources confirmed:

Similar provisions relating to development plan requirements and approvals exist in the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and other resources legislation.

The Special Agreement Act is a statutory agreement made between the State and Mount Isa Mines Limited on 14 February 1985 about the operations of Mining Lease 8058. Under the Act, the agreement can only be varied with the agreement of both parties, or by an act of Parliament.

Please note that the Department of Resources is currently assessing a Later Development Plan that has been lodged for Mining Lease 8058 against the requirements of the Special Agreement Act.³¹

³⁰ Submission 3, p 4.

³¹ Department of Resources, correspondence, 15 July 2024, p 2.

Glencore outlined the existing provisions:

Under MIMLAA we are required to develop a development plan. Effectively that plan sets in play the next five years which is endorsed by the Minister for Resources. Through that process, there are commitments made around production profiles against each of the individual assets located on the Mount Isa Mines lease, so that effectively talks to the production commitment year on year over that five-year plan period ... We made a submission on the development plan in February of this year. As a result of the announcement in October 2023, we submitted what is called the later development plan under MIMLAA. That is still being considered by the Department of Resources. We are responding to some information requests in relation to that plan.³²

Glencore advised at the public hearing that they are in their third iteration of the development plan and that is the one that has been submitted in February 2024.³³ Glencore believe that:

The Queensland Government already has a robust regulatory regime which oversees mining activities and extensive powers and discretion to demand information and action from mining companies, particularly in relation to utilisation of natural resource deposits leased to companies. In effect "Use it or Lose it" conditions referred to in the Bill already exist within the existing Queensland regulatory regime to ensure that companies continue to develop natural resources consistent with their approvals and terms of their mining leases ... Glencore submits that the existing MIMLAA already provides for an appropriate level of Ministerial control and oversight over the activities of MIM and ensures acceptable development at the Mount Isa mines, and it is similar to the regime that applies to many other mines.³⁴

2.2.2.1 Fundamental legislative principles – ordinary activities should not be unduly restricted

Legislation should not, without sufficient justification, unduly restrict ordinary activities.³⁵ The explanatory notes provide context for the Bill's interventions in the operations of Mount Isa Mines Ltd (MIM) following the announcement by Glencore to cease mining copper at Mount Isa.³⁶

The Bill proposes to require MIM to continue carrying out copper mining operations in Mount Isa, and to only make an 'operational change' to the extent it carries out a preserved mining activity with the approval of the Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals.³⁷

The regulation of business is an intervention in the right to conduct business in the way in which the persons involved consider appropriate.³⁸ Although the operator and its controlling corporation may possess significant power and resources, the Bill represents an intervention in the ordinary activities of the business. These changes will have significant impacts on the rights and liberties of the individual employees and other industry workers.

The committee wrote to Mr Katter seeking further information on Fundamental Legislative Principle (FLP) issues. The Member for Traeger advised, 'The FLP that 'ordinary business activities should not be limited by legislation' is not offended by this Bill.'³⁹ Rather, he stated that the changes to the Act

³² Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 14.

³³ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 19.

³⁴ Submission 3, pp 4-5.

³⁵ Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Council, *Fundamental Legislative Principles: The OQPC Notebook*, p 118 (OQPC, *Notebook*).

³⁶ Explanatory note, p 1. NB: In October 2023, Glencore announced that all copper mining operations at its Mount Isa mine would cease in 2025. See 'Mount Isa Mines operational changes', 18 October 2023, Media Release.

³⁷ Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024, cl 3.

³⁸ OQPC, *Notebook*, p 118.

³⁹ Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, correspondence, 12 July 2024, p 1.

as advised by Glencore ‘are not simply ‘ordinary business’, rather it is fundamentally the opposite of ‘ordinary’.⁴⁰

Converse to the Member for Traeger’s response, clause 3 of the Bill reads (emphasis added):

5B Special term for formal agreement

(1) It is a special term of the formal agreement that, despite anything else stated in the agreement, any term or condition of the Mining Lease, or anything stated in a Development Plan for the Lease—

(a) the Company must continue to carry out each preserved mining activity—

(i) in accordance with clause 12 of Part II of the agreement; and

(ii) to the extent the Company was carrying out the activity immediately before the preservation day; and

Subsection (b) goes on to articulate that the Company may make a change to the extent to which they carry out a preserved mining activity (an operational change) only with the approval of the Minister; and subsection (c) states that the Minister may approve an operational change only if:

(i) the Minister is satisfied the change will not adversely affect the Mount Isa community or the Queensland economy; or

(ii) both of the following apply—

(A) after making a public call for tenders, the Minister has identified a candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity under a mining tenement to the extent that the Company intends to stop or reduce its carrying out of the activity;

(B) the Company agrees to relinquish the Company’s rights and entitlements under the agreement and the Lease to the extent needed to allow the candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity under a mining tenement granted to the candidate.⁴¹

Subsection (1)(a) of the Bill thus necessitates and requires continued operation. Subsection (1)(b) of the Bill prevents the operator from making decisions with respect to operations without Ministerial approval.

The Member for Traeger explained:

If the current agreement holder is unwilling to continue to mine, the Minister must ‘test the market’, calling for tenders.

If there is interest, and the current agreement holder still wishes to implement operational change, the Mount Isa Mines Agreement should be offered up to public tender, and after a successful tenderer is identified, the current holder should be made to relinquish their agreement via sale.⁴²

Subsection 1(c)⁴³ of the Bill purportedly grants discretion in Ministerial involvement. However, subsection (1)(c)(i) creates circumstances in which the Minister would opt to prevent operational change because of an objective assessment of the impact on the Mount Isa community or Queensland’s economy more broadly.⁴⁴ It is difficult to envisage a scenario where the closing of a mine like MICO would not ‘adversely affect’ a community or the broader economy.

⁴⁰ Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, correspondence, 12 July 2024, p 1.

⁴¹ Bill, cl 3 (inserts new s 5B).

⁴² Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, correspondence, 12 July 2024, p 2.

⁴³ ‘the Minister may approve an operational change only if –’

⁴⁴ Bill, cl 3 (inserts new s 5B(1)(c)(i)).

While the intention of the Bill may be considered justified as it would be in the public interest and supports the local community, the intervention in the ordinary business activities of MIM may still result in job loss or undue hardship on employees and the community.

2.2.2.2 Fundamental legislative principles – clear and unambiguous drafting

Legislation should be unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way.⁴⁵ Terms should be sufficiently defined, particularly when they may have substantial consequences.⁴⁶

There is no proposed definition of ‘operational change’ in the Bill, which is a pivotal term in considering its impact.⁴⁷ In these circumstances, the absence of an explicit definition could lead to inconsistent application of the section with respect to changes at Mount Isa Mines.

Although the intention of the Bill is clear and the Member for Traeger has provided guidance on its intent throughout this inquiry, it is arguable that enhanced detail could be included in the Bill’s approval and decision-making provisions to assist with their practical implementation and operation.

For example, how is the Company to agree to relinquish its rights and entitlements under the agreement and the lease, to the necessary extent needed to allow a candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity? Would the Act be subject to further amendment to facilitate the operational change? Would a successful candidate enter into a new agreement with the State? The Member for Traeger has stated that it would be a matter for the Minister and Department to administer and operationalise the tender process, as well as frameworks for review and appeal.⁴⁸

With respect to subsection 1(c)(ii) The Member for Traeger stated, ‘If there is no interest identified, the Minister may approve the operational change’.⁴⁹ However, nothing in the Bill contemplates the ability for the Minister to grant the change, given that subsection (1)(c)(ii) limits the circumstances in which the Minister may approve changes.⁵⁰ No part of the Bill allows for circumstances in which the Minister may approve the operational change on the basis of a paucity of appropriate candidates to assume the mining operations at Mount Isa.

The Member for Traeger provided that the Bill contains examples of such operational changes which would trigger Ministerial involvement, namely:

- ceasing a particular activity relating to the mining, winning or treatment of a designated mineral
- reducing the scale of an activity relating to the mining, winning or treatment of a designated mineral
- closing a facility at which an activity relating to the mining, winning or treatment of a designated mineral is carried out.⁵¹

However, as these examples are merely guides to assist with statutory interpretation, they are not to be used as a set of criteria in which the Minister would be bound in deciding to intervene.⁵² Such

⁴⁵ *Legislative Standards Act 1992*, s 4(3)(k); QOPC, *Notebook*, p 87.

⁴⁶ QOPC, *Notebook*, p 90; AD 1999/2, p 2.

⁴⁷ Bill, cl 3 (inserts new s 5B(4)).

⁴⁸ Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, correspondence, 12 July 2024, p 2.

⁴⁹ Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, correspondence, 12 July 2024, p 2.

⁵⁰ Bill, cl 3 (inserts new s 5B(1)(c)(ii)).

⁵¹ Bill, cl 3 (inserts new 5B(1)(b)).

⁵² *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, s 14D.

criteria would necessarily be a part of regulations to accompany the Act, as examples contained in Acts are not intended to be exhaustive, nor to limit the operation of the provision.⁵³

The Bill does not provide a sufficient level of detail to inform the process of Ministerial intervention, nor of the criteria or considerations which the Minister would be required to rely upon in making a decision. Further, the Bill does not identify whether decisions made by the Minister may be open to review or appeal, and if so, what process is proposed to review these decisions.

Committee comment

Although it could be considered that the explanatory notes of the bill include ‘a simple explanation of the purpose and intended operation of each clause of the Bill’,⁵⁴ it would have been beneficial for the explanatory notes to include specific commentary and explanation on the operation and limitations of the proposed sections 5B (2) and (3).

Notwithstanding the above, the committee has concluded that the Bill does not provide sufficient justification for the restriction of ordinary business activities in this instance. It would be inconsistent with fundamental legislative principles to legislate a business into contractual relations.

2.3 Tendering provisions - Capacity for practical implementation

Bill, cl 3 (inserting new s 5B(1)(c)(ii)(A)) provides for the Minister to approve an operational change if after making a public call for tenders, the Minister has identified a candidate to carry out the preserved mining activity under a mining tenement to the extent that the Company intends to stop or reduce its carrying out of the activity.

Mr Katter advised:

It is said that in the next 25 years we will have to take more copper out of the ground than has been done in the history of man. The third biggest copper operation in Australia has just announced they are going to shut down their operations ... We do not think that aligns with the federal and state aspirations to build the North West Minerals Province - as Prime Minister Albanese said, our sovereignty over our copper production and our metals; this is pretty much the opposite - and build CopperString. CopperString was predicated on a vision to expand the North West Minerals Province - \$650 billion worth of metals that we know of in the ground and, I am sure, plenty more that we do not know of. There is no point doing that if you let one of the main leaseholders in the region disable one of the bigger producers and let that go.⁵⁵

Mr Katter went on to describe how many people have expressed an interest in taking on the MICO operations:

They have made inquiries saying, ‘Can we talk?’, but the leaseholder has said, ‘We’re not interested in selling.’ It seems a strange set of circumstances in this state where there is a resource that provides 1,200 jobs and copper production to fulfil the aspirations of the government both at a state and a federal level but the person who was granted that lease has said, ‘We can’t be bothered mining that anymore. It is easier to do that somewhere else,’ and the Queensland minister says, ‘There’s nothing we can do about it.’

In response to questioning at the public briefing by the Deputy Chair, Mr Katter acknowledged that the selling part of the mine (the copper aspect) would be:

... difficult but not impossible - and I can only speak anecdotally - to sell separate components of the mine. They are very well integrated because they have all been operated - the zinc operation, the copper operation, the lead operation and the copper smelter and, for that matter, the acid plant that is owned by Incitec Pivot which is onsite as well. I understand it would be problematic but not impossible to

⁵³ *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, s 14D(a),(b).

⁵⁴ LSA, s 23(1)(h).

⁵⁵ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 24 June 2024, p 2.

separate those businesses ... I do not think it would be impossible for them to just sell the copper mine itself.⁵⁶

Glencore, however, advised that the process of the copper operation being taken over would not be straightforward:

The Mount Isa Mines complex is made up of multiple mines and processing facilities which include two mining and processing streams, copper and zinc-lead-silver.

We mine copper at our Enterprise and X4I underground mines and zinc from our George Fisher underground mine in Mount Isa. Mount Isa Copper Operations or "MICO" refers to X4I, Enterprise, Black Rock and Copper Concentrator.

We also undertake metals processing via our copper concentrator, zinc-lead concentrator and filter plant, copper smelter and lead smelter and copper refinery in Mount Isa and Townsville.

The ore is processed onsite at our concentrating and smelting operations, to produce copper anode, lead bullion and concentrates. Our products are then transported to Townsville to the refinery for further processing and export to domestic and international markets.⁵⁷

Glencore state that the bill adopts an 'entirely unrealistic approach to mining in that it doesn't account for changes in circumstances, changes in markets, changes in resource quality and reserves etc. that are inevitably encountered in a mine over time as resources are depleted, different areas are mined, and markets change.'⁵⁸

Glencore further believe that the bill has:

...no regard for how the third party operations can co-exist with the ongoing mining operations of Glencore at the mine. This poses safety, environmental, logistical and commercial risks.

The Bill refers to Glencore relinquishing existing rights but is silent on the issue of obligations (payment of rent, environmental compliance, rehabilitation liabilities etc) on the incoming acquirer of our mining rights, particularly when we would still be operating other parts of the mine. How would the practical aspects of co-existence work in relation to infrastructure, logistics and other facilities? How are safety, environment and other compliance obligations managed where two different companies are effectively mining in the same place for different minerals.⁵⁹

During the hearing in Mount Isa, Jason Brandon from the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) raised anecdotal concerns he had received from workers he represents regarding safety issues at MICO.⁶⁰ He acknowledged that Glencore takes steps to address these concerns where possible.⁶¹

During the committee site visit to Mount Isa Mines, a presentation was shown to the committee whereby the below diagram was provided. This shows the complexity of the mine and the intricacies and difficulties that would be faced should another business take on copper operations from Mount Isa Mines.

⁵⁶ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 24 June 2024, p 2.

⁵⁷ Submission 3, p 3.

⁵⁸ Submission 3, p 5.

⁵⁹ Submission 3, pp 5-6.

⁶⁰ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 23.

⁶¹ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 25.

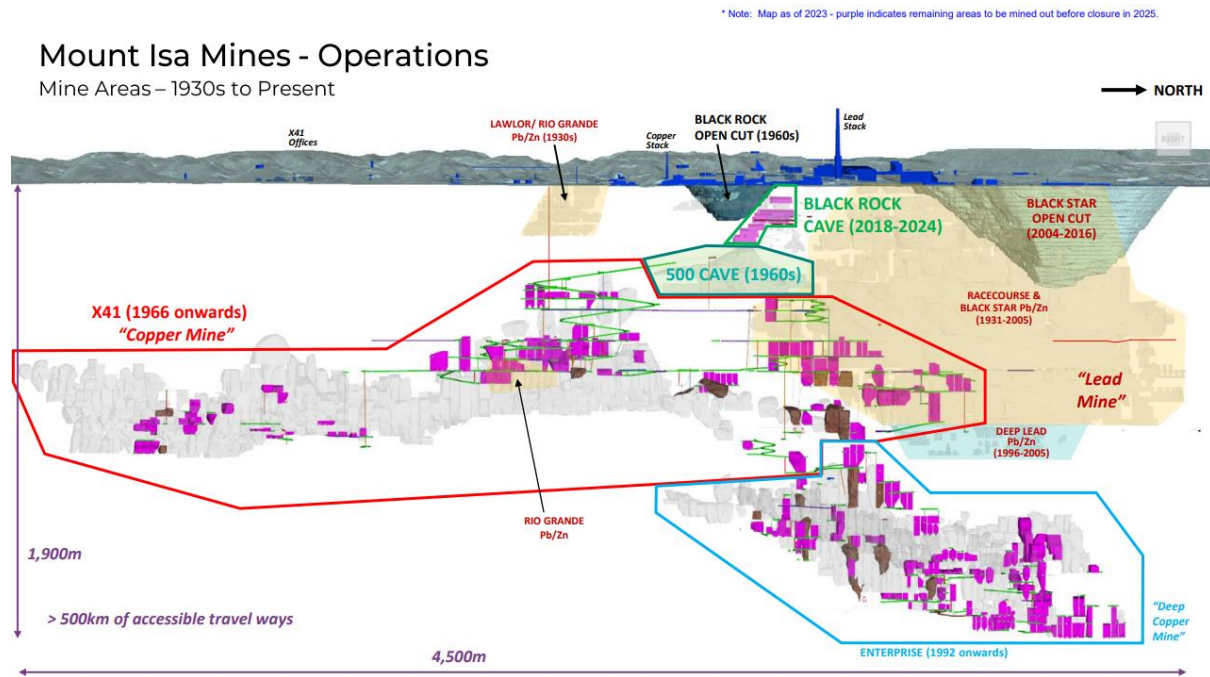


Figure 3: Map of Mount Isa Mines – Operations from 1930s to present (provided by Glencore)

Glencore submitted that the Bill proposals would be unworkable and introduce ‘a level of potential safety and compliance risks which would be unacceptable to any responsible operator.’⁶²

The Deputy Chair, during questioning of the Mount Isa City Council at the public hearing, explored the prospect of opening up the existing mine for competition if it is not going to be utilised. The Deputy Chair asked if Mount Isa City Council had been approached by other mining firms to look to take over the mine. In response, Cr MacRae said:

I understand that there is interest from junior miners to look at that mine because they feel that there is value there, similar to the way that Evolution was able to find value in Ernest Henry once it was sold. I am not a miner. I am not a minerals expert. We have heard for a long time that 2025 could potentially be the life of the mine, and my understanding is that Glencore could eventually move to open-cut mining. The junior miners obviously have a different return on investment expectation from Glencore. If they could find value and continue that underground mine, that would be very helpful for Mount Isa and our economy. That is the \$10 billion question, isn't it.⁶³

Over the past five years, Glencore has conducted several studies to optimise the remaining resource base and successfully extend the life of its copper assets through new mining methods and technology. The decision to close the Mount Isa Copper Operations was clearly carefully considered. Ultimately, the existing lease holder believes the mine has reached the end of its life, with the remaining resources being low-grade and technically inaccessible.⁶⁴

Concluding the session with Glencore in Mount Isa, Mr Robbie Katter MP asked:

Is Glencore totally opposed to anyone coming along? Let's say the government brought along someone who said, 'We think there's still value in that asset that you've written off because you say there's zero value in that underground operation.' Are you willing to talk to anyone who might see some value in that and keep it productive and pay you money to get that lease? Are you willing to have that discussion?⁶⁵

⁶² Submission 3, p 6.

⁶³ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 2.

⁶⁴ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 13.

⁶⁵ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 21.

Glencore responded, ‘Yes, we are open, but not to tyre kickers, Robbie. Yes, we are open to having serious conversations with serious potential people who want to take it on.’⁶⁶

2.4 Possible consequences of the Bill

2.4.1 Impact on the City of Mount Isa

During the site visits in Mount Isa it was apparent how Mount Isa Mines, and the town of Mount Isa are deeply interdependent, forming a unique symbiosis between industry and community. The mine, located in close proximity to the town as illustrated at Figure 4 below, is not only a significant source of employment but also the backbone of the local economy.



Figure 4: Image of Mount Isa Mines Footprint (provided by Glencore)

The town's infrastructure, services, and social fabric are largely supported by the presence of the mine, which provides jobs, stimulates local businesses, and contributes to public amenities. Conversely, the success of Mount Isa Mines depends on the town's population, which supplies a steady workforce and supports the operational needs of the mine. The close physical location of the mine to the town emphasises this interdependence, as the mine's activities directly influence the town's daily life, while the community's well-being and growth are intricately tied to the mine's continued operation.

Whilst visiting Mount Isa and Townsville, the committee listened carefully to the anecdotal evidence and had private discussions with stakeholders, residents and workers from the town of Mount Isa. They recognised the concerns and frustrations arising from the mine's closure and sought clarity that appropriate support measures are being implemented to mitigate the negative impacts and effects associated with this.

Jason Brandon, Australian Workers' Union, advised:

The day after the announcement was made I met with a worker who had renovated their house and was going to put it on the market the day of the announcement. He was devastated to find out that he had done all of that work only for the housing market to plummet straightaway. There is no confidence to buy property in Mount Isa and probably no capacity to get finance even if there is a desire to buy property. Everyone who owns a house has felt the pain and maybe has a property that they will never be able to sell. I was one of those people who went through that when that happened.⁶⁷

Mr Brandon continued:

The North West Minerals Province is the future of the resource industry in this state and Mount Isa is the capital of that province. How is this town in a position of being irreversibly damaged before the industry

⁶⁶ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 21.

⁶⁷ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 23.

has even begun? Workers in Mount Isa have served our state and our nation for a century, labouring to mine, smelt and produce resources that line the coffers of government and fund our vital services. We are being reduced to a number on a spreadsheet in Switzerland, where unnecessary overheads are to be cut and moved to keep a multinational corporation churning out maximum profits.⁶⁸

2.4.1.1 Job Losses

Of paramount concern is the number of job losses associated with the mine closure. Regarding this, Glencore said:

First and foremost, Glencore is focussed on the safety and well-being of our workers. It is never an easy decision to close a mine, knowing that workers and their families will be impacted. Working at MICO does not automatically result in a redundancy - not only will Glencore be investigating opportunities for our people across all our operations in Mount Isa but we have also been in contact with other organisations in the industry in general in the region to minimise the impact to our people.⁶⁹

Glencore shared with the committee that they are providing regular updates to their employees and are actively exploring redeployment of MICO workers to other non-impacted operations, including George Fisher Mine. They are working to redeploy existing staff through vacancies and plan to host several job fairs in 2024-25.⁷⁰

Glencore advised that an expression of interest process is underway, with over 670 people indicating preferences, over 400 have identified an interest in a redeployment opportunity and staying locally.⁷¹ To date, 70 people have successfully found alternative employment within the company. Efforts such as setting up a human resources hub, which allows employees to talk to human resource specialists about their individual circumstances and look at pathways have also been established.⁷²

During the public hearing in Mount Isa the Deputy Chair and Mr Strohmayer of Glencore discussed the Black Star open-cut project, which involves transitioning from underground mining at MICO to open-cut mining. The pre-feasibility study for Black Star is nearing completion, and if successful, the mining could restart by late 2026 or early 2027.⁷³

However, this transition will render the existing MICO operations inoperable due to the overlap in infrastructure. There is concern about workforce numbers during the transition, as the Black Star project will employ significantly fewer people (350-400) compared to MICO's current 1,200 employees. Glencore is working to transition MICO workers to other operations, such as the George Fisher mine, where they are ramping up production and actively moving employees to new roles.⁷⁴

The Deputy Chair made a point during the public briefing that:

Mount Isa is going to remain a very critical town because of all the other mines and opportunities that are going to develop around that area. Mount Isa still needs to be successful while those mines are developing, which is probably what you are saying. We still need to secure the future of Mount Isa and it relies entirely on that mine.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 23.

⁶⁹ Submission 3, pp 3-4.

⁷⁰ Submission 3, p 4.

⁷¹ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 15.

⁷² Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 15.

⁷³ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 15.

⁷⁴ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 15.

⁷⁵ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 3.

Mr Brandon said:

Even I have heard plenty of times, as I have talked to people around town, that there is no future in Mount Isa. I have to point them to the work that the government is doing - spending \$7 billion on bringing CopperString out here. I have to point to the fact that Bunnings just built a nice new facility out here. Once again, you have to really show people that there is actually a benefit and a future in Mount Isa. It is very hard to make sure that people know that.

However, even if you are looking from the outside and all you are seeing is that there is a mine closure, you are looking at this as the death of Mount Isa where the future should only just be starting. We have the critical minerals and North West Minerals Province out here which has trillions and trillions of dollars worth of already found commodity and then we are talking about the death of the major place which would actually make that feasible. It is concerning that some of the rhetoric and what is said is actually damaging the community.⁷⁶

Committee comment

The committee acknowledges the significant impact that the impending closure of Glencore's Mount Isa Copper Operations will have on the community, but remain optimistic about Mount Isa's future.

With its position at the heart of the North West Minerals Province, Mount Isa is poised to play a crucial role in the emerging critical minerals industry. The region holds vast reserves of valuable commodities, and the government's investment in the CopperString project further strengthens its potential.

This major infrastructure initiative will not only bolster Mount Isa's economy but also enhance its reputation as a key player on the global stage, making this a promising and transformative period for the town.

The committee strongly encourages the government to maintain communication with Glencore and other stakeholders to mitigate the impact of the mine closure and address the consequences of both the closure and the time lapse between this and future projects launching.

2.5.1 Sovereign Risk

Sovereign risks arise when government intervention forces a company to continue operations against its economic interests. Such actions can lead to significant concerns for investors and companies, as it creates uncertainty about the stability and predictability of the regulatory environment. This risk may deter future investment in the region, as businesses might fear similar interventions in the future.

Government-imposed continuation of operations could also strain relationships with stakeholders, particularly if the business is no longer commercially viable, and might lead to legal challenges. Balancing the economic and social impact of mine closures with the need to maintain investor confidence is a critical challenge for the government.

Glencore stressed that one of the key risks arising from the Bill is 'the retrospective encroachment on existing rights of the lease holder which in turn increases the level of sovereign risk and jeopardises private investment.'⁷⁷

The QRC submission acknowledged that the Bill's goal is to enable continued mining operations, but that:

... it also fuels concerns about the State's sovereign risk. Investors and interested parties will likely be very concerned about how these changes affect contractual commitments, stability, and the predictability of regulations. Companies operate on a commercial basis and the QRC is concerned that this legislation

⁷⁶ Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, p 26.

⁷⁷ Submission 3, p 4.

could create more uncertainty for companies wanting to do business in Queensland. Fundamentally, the Queensland Government should be encouraging investment by providing a stable policy environment.⁷⁸

QRC added:

Resources companies operating in Queensland carefully discharge their obligations under the law, however sudden changes to the policy requirements that govern an existing mining operation significantly erode the ability of mining companies to appropriately plan for projects that can span several decades.⁷⁹

QRC are ultimately concerned that approving the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024 as proposed, would likely further raise concerns about the State's attitude towards the mining industry and have a negative impact on rebuilding international confidence.⁸⁰

This sentiment was shared by an individual who submitted their views to the committee in a private capacity:

Government intervention in the financial sustainability of a business sets a very dangerous precedent. To force a company to operate at a loss will destroy Queensland's credibility as a favourable jurisdiction for mining; a second blow following the royalty increase. To think that a company such as Glencore would intentionally, or through lack of effort, close a profitable part of a business they aim to continue to operate (Zinc and Lead mining, Copper smelting is to continue) defies logic.

Forcing the company to continue to operate a part of the business that is not mining economic material (regardless of prices) would threaten other parts of the business and risk more jobs. As a former employee of the Copper Operations I am disappointed that the asset life is ending and that it is no longer viable to operate. That mine has given an amazing amount to the state, the town, the company and the employees - it is sad it has come to an end. But the decline in grade simply means the orebody is no longer able to support the extensive and aging infrastructure and be viable.⁸¹

At the public hearing QRC reiterated their concerns that the bill could signal to investors that critical financial decisions are being taken away from companies, undermining their ability to manage long-term projects. They said that contractual commitments must be respected and stable, predictable regulations ensured. QRC are concerned that 'policy instability' can erode mining companies' confidence to invest in projects that require substantial financial risk.

QRC believes the Bill disregards the established regulatory framework that governs the mining lifecycle, including planning, approvals, operations, and rehabilitation. By interfering with existing processes, they believe that the Bill risks damaging Queensland's reputation as a reliable destination for mining investments.⁸²

Committee comment

The committee acknowledges the profound impact news of the closure has had on the community.

We understand that this impacts people's lives, livelihoods, and the wellbeing of families who have long relied on the mine for their income and stability. The committee has listened to the concerns raised and has sought to best understand the challenges faced.

The committee urges the government, Mount Isa Mines and the Member for Traeger to continue working towards practical solutions that will help support the community through this transition.

⁷⁸ Submission 1, p 1.

⁷⁹ Submission 1, p 2.

⁸⁰ Submission 1, pp 2-3.

⁸¹ Submission 2.

⁸² Public hearing transcript, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024, pp 9-10.

Appendix A - Submitters

Sub #	Submitter
1	Queensland Resources Council
2	Name withheld
3	Glencore
4	Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone Inc

Appendix B - Public briefing, Brisbane, 24 June 2024

Member for Traeger

- Mr Robbie Katter, MP

Appendix C - Witnesses at public hearing, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024

Mount Isa City Council

- Cr Peta MacRae, Mayor
- Tim Rose, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Resources Council

- Nicole Duguid, Policy Director Resources
- Julie Nielsen, Policy Director Health and Safety

Glencore

- Sam Strohmayer, Chief Operating Officer
- Maryann Wipaki, Zinc GM HSEC
- Cass McCarthy, Corporate Affairs

Australian Workers Union

- Jason Brandon

Appendix D - Abbreviations and acronyms

Act	<i>Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985</i>
AWU	Australian Workers Union
Bill	Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement (Continuing Mining Activities) Amendment Bill 2024
FLP	Fundamental Legislative Principle
HRA	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
MICO	Mount Isa Copper Operations
MIM	Mount Isa Mines
MIMLAA	<i>Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985</i>
MITEZ	Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Plan contributors
QRC	Queensland Resources Council

Appendix E - Document tabled at public hearing, Mount Isa, 6 August 2024

I am one of the daughters of Thor Halvorsen an MIM Miner who began as a Timberman and left as a Foreman/Superintendent at X41 Production. He was named Thunder by MIM employees during his tenure.

He came for 6 months work, a common story amongst Mount Isans. Mount Isa was a rough and tough town but being developed into a more family orientated town.

If you made the decision to stay your character would develop and you could survive anything such is the way that it tests you..

The community looked after each other the Mount Isa Mines and the town-side were interwoven fabric. Each one existed off the other. In a time when FIFO was banned in our state. There was security, freedom and financial benefits as there was always work available that was provided by Mount Isa Mines and supporting businesses and it was always well paying being called “danger money”..

In addition to this the licences, fees, royalties, company and payroll income tax paid by the city/region has been in the billions of dollars each year for decades.

Respected the world over and a world leader in mining and even a stop-over for the reigning monarch Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip in 1970. The largest company in Australia in 1980. Mount Isa Mines/Mount Isa has given much to the nation including building infrastructure in the region Lake Moondarra of Mount Isa, the Port of Townsville and in the nation, the inland rail network. The wealth has also paid for thousands of homes throughout as workers built their financial future and paid for it from their earnings that anywhere else they would have been mortgaged for life. The security has also enabled many children to be born in the Isa as there was little to no financial stress and families had more time to enjoy living. Many of us only exist because Mount Isa Mines/Mount Isa existed, that’s generations...

There have been Olympians, national and international sports men and women. The small and silver screen has had Mount Isas representation including a Logie winner... There’s been many doctors come out of Mount Isa including a world renowned neuro-surgeon...

The most expensive, the longest, the tallest, the biggest, the largest, the most successful.. in the world.. including many heritage listed buildings. Mount Isa Mines/Mount Isa has the mantle.. This is merely a summary of the phenomenal Mount Isa Mines that no other mine anywhere in the world can equal. They even built their own underground machinery..

Mount Isa Mines/Mount Isa is too important .

This is one of the richest mineral provinces in the world. There’s plenty more copper, gold, silver, zinc and lead in the hills.. and there’s an increase in world demand for all of these minerals... Mining companies need to run mines..

Re-boom! The boom-times 2.0.

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. Isaiah 54:10