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Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

Tasmanian workers and workplaces close to better protections

Tasmanian workers and workplaces are getting closer to having better legal protections with the Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022 being debated in the Legislative Council this week.

This Bill will protect the rights of workers and deter unlawful interference with workplaces, by strengthening the law of trespass and obstruction, making it easier to understand and enforce.

We have been elected at three consecutive elections with workplace protection policies.

We have listened to the needs of workers and business and we have seen the impact of unlawful protests on businesses and their employees. It costs money, it creates risk, and it can cause stress for the workers and in some cases there is potential for physical and mental harm.

Tasmanians can be absolutely reassured that we respect and support the right to free speech, and the legislation will not put in place anything that will limit lawful protesting. Tasmanians will still be entitled to protest and have their say.

This Bill won't stop lawful protests outside hospitals, schools, or restrict those wanted to make their views known on issues like climate change. It will not interrupt our democratic processes and it will not limit people's ability to contribute to the State's political and regulatory decision-making.

We acknowledge Labor's support for this legislation in the House of Assembly, which is similar to laws already supported by Labor across the country, and look forward to that support continuing in the Legislative Council this week.

Tasmanian workers deserve to be protected from intimidating, threatening, and dangerous behaviour in the workplace and this legislation will help stamp this out.