




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE COMMUNITIES BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Strong and Sustainable Communities Bill 2016 before the Queensland parliament. This bill was introduced to ensure that regional communities in Queensland, which are in the vicinity of large resource projects, benefit from the operation of such projects. The bill will limit the use of fly-in fly-out workforces and ensure that local workers from nearby regional communities are employed in the operation of large resource projects.

On this side of the House, we have always opposed fly-in fly-out mines here in Queensland. The LNP has always understood the importance of continuing strong partnerships between regional communities and resource companies. These partnerships must be shaped through respect, sharing economic benefits, creating jobs and associated business opportunities and ensuring operating sustainability.

Another important issue to be considered with respect to fly-in fly-out options is the impact such arrangements have on both employees and their families. Employers in the mining and resources sector often prefer fly-in fly-out options when the cost of establishing permanent communities or a sufficient quantum to attract families to live locally exceeds the cost of airfares and temporary housing on their relevant work sites.

On the employee side of the coin, fly-in fly-out employment can put stress on family relationships. The impact of absent fly-in fly-out parents on their children has been compared to that of military families, before, during and after deployment. A research paper published in Australia in 2014 suggested that children of fly-in fly-out parents suffer emotionally from the absence of the relevant parent.

It is also important to note that a federal inquiry in Australia in 2012 found an increase in substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections and mental illness in workers on a fly-in fly-out roster. It is fair to say that fly-in fly-out work has the potential to create stresses and challenges that may exceed the coping mechanisms of many in our community. The workers themselves often have long working rosters in arduous conditions. This can disrupt normal daily routines and contribute to poor physical health, with significant disturbances in sleep patterns. Fly-in fly-out work can be lonely and workers can lack social support from family and friends while they are away.

The amendments to this bill proposed by the LNP will 100 per cent prohibit fly-in fly-out workforces both during the construction and operation stages of large resource projects proximate to nearby regional communities. The amendments will also ensure local communities are consulted as a part of the social impact assessment for large resource projects. We on this side of the House are committed to backing regional Queensland and, importantly, backing jobs for regional Queenslanders. Our amendments will assist in ensuring regional Queenslanders get a fair go.

A number of local governments have raised concerns, and the amendments of the LNP will address these concerns. It is vital that the Palaszczuk Labor government adopt the amendments to be moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Nanango.

Only the LNP has been consistently opposed to 100 per cent fly-in fly-out mines in Queensland. I would also like to make the following observations. There is no doubt that economic rationalist policies have had a significant impact on many rural and regional communities where market failure often exists. Having worked in communities like Mungindi in south-west Queensland and visited many other communities which in part rely on the mining and resources sector, including Mount Isa and Moranbah, it is my view that there is an absolute requirement to maintain the social and economic integrity of such communities.

When I was president of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland I had many conversations and meetings with local government representatives, industry groups, small business operators, farmers, graziers and others about public policy strategies that could assist with pressure bandaging the haemorrhaging of rural and regional communities so as to prevent the further loss or undermining of their integrity. Many of these conversations related to health care and health workforce development, but I have no doubt that this legislation will assist with developing, maintaining and ensuring the integrity of relevant rural and regional communities where the resources sector is a vital part of their viability.

Queensland's youth job losses have skyrocketed under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Over 8,000 young Queenslanders have lost their jobs under the Labor government over the past year. In some parts of Queensland youth unemployment is nearly 60 per cent. Youth unemployment in parts of the electorates of the member for Gregory and the member for Warrego is at 57 per cent, which has more than doubled since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government in 2015. Fortunately, the LNP has a terrific \$100 million get Queensland working package which will certainly assist with addressing youth unemployment. The LNP has a plan to build a better Queensland.