



YOUR REF  
OUR REF SSRC Bill

9 December 2016

Research Director  
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

### **Submission on Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities (SSRC) Bill**

Dear Committee

Mackay Regional Council is centrally located in Queensland's major resources region and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee on the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities (SSRC) Bill.

Mackay Regional Council has since 2010 made several representations and submissions on the practice of 100% Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) operations for resource workers and the issue of the cumulative impact of mining projects – be it as part of the Parliamentary Enquiry into FIFO practices in 2015 or commenting on environmental impact assessments of mining projects in the Bowen Basin.

We have consistently supported the position that a person should have a choice as to where they want to live and work. In addition, we have consistently voiced our concerns as to the impacts of major resource projects on local government infrastructure and services.

Council wishes to congratulate the State Government on its progress towards regulation of the issue of workforce choice to enable regional communities to benefit from major resource projects and to address the impacts of major resource projects through the proposed SSRC Bill.

We feel strongly that local councils should be empowered to provide choice for workers to live in resource communities and to participate in the assessment of major resource projects that impact on the local communities we serve.

We support key tenets of the proposed SSRC Bill to the extent that it will:

- mandate consultation with local government regarding major resource projects;
- prohibit the future use of 100% FIFO workforce arrangements in large resource projects and enable employment from nearby regional communities; and
- prescribe the Social Impact Assessment process for new resource projects.

Notwithstanding our support for the SSRC Bill, your attention is drawn to aspects of the Bill that can be improved.

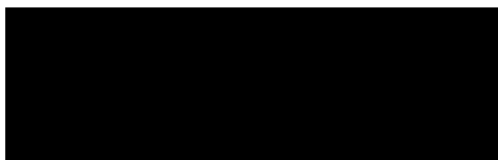
Firstly, we welcome the powers of the Co-ordinator-General to also nominate workers during the construction phase, and not just the operational phase, to be a worker under the Bill. However, we believe the Bill should be strengthened in Section 8(2)(a) to also apply to the construction phase and state that the owner must not advertise positions for workers '*in the construction and operational phase*' of a project in a way that prohibits residents of nearby regional communities from applying.

Secondly, we welcome the Co-ordinator General's powers to nominate a town of greater distance than the 100km, as opposed to the 100km in the definition of a nearby regional community, to be applicable to a large resource project. The concern is that distances from mines in the extended Bowen Basin to nearby towns are more often than not greater than 100km, and the support services from Mackay certainly 150km away from the mines. Mackay has established itself as the key mining support services hub to the Bowen Basin and highly skilled workers from Mackay should be viewed as being from a nearby regional community. The choice of 100km in the definition of a nearby regional community is at issue and it should be amended to read 150km.

Thirdly, the scope of the social impact assessment in Section 9(3) should be widened to specifically identify the 'impact on local government services, infrastructure and land use planning' as one of the aspects to be dealt with. For example, the individual or cumulative impact of large resource projects can impact on the road network and water supply of the local government which warrants these aspects to be part of the SIA process.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide further constructive comments and welcome the progression of the proposed SSRC Bill into law.

Yours faithfully,



**Cr Greg Williamson**  
*Mayor of Mackay Regional Council*