

Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 541
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I write in particular regarding the Social Impact and Community Benefit component of the proposed Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I support the proposed amendments which I feel will create a more balanced and community-focused planning framework in Queensland, ensuring that development projects contribute positively to local communities. I have extensive experience in stakeholder and community engagement and it's from this base to which I make my submission.

Enhanced Community Engagement and Social Licence: By requiring developers to conduct a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and enter into a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) with local governments before lodging a development application, the amendments promote early and meaningful community consultation. This process helps developers understand and address community concerns, fostering trust and cooperation between proponents and the host communities.

Identification and Mitigation of Social Impacts: The SIA process enables the identification, analysis, and assessment of potential social impacts—both positive and negative—associated with a project. The approach allows for the development of strategies to manage and mitigate adverse effects which is improved practice to what is currently occurring.

Provision of Tangible Community Benefits: Through the CBA, developers are encouraged to provide direct benefits to the host communities, such as funding for local infrastructure, community programs, or services. This ensures that the economic gains from development are shared locally, contributing to the long-term well-being of residents. However, this should be monitored to ensure that community has buy-in to these programs or services to avoid developers contributing towards unwanted projects or those with limited community benefit.

Empowerment of Local Governments: The amendments empower local governments to play a more significant role in the planning process by allowing them to negotiate and enforce CBAs. This decentralization ensures that decisions reflect local priorities and needs, leading to more contextually appropriate and accepted developments. However, local Council's capacity in this space can be somewhat limited particularly in regional areas. There should be opportunity for council staff to be provided with suitable capacity building in this space.

Support for Sustainable and Inclusive Development: By integrating social considerations into the planning process, the amendments promote development that aligns with broader sustainability goals and respects community values. This approach supports the creation of developments that are not only economically viable but also socially responsible and inclusive.