



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 29 October 2015

**INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Notice**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.52 am): It was a great privilege and an honour to be involved in the parliamentary inquiry into fly-in fly-out and other long distance work practices as a member of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. The committee examined the impact of FIFO workforces on resource communities, including the health and social impacts, and the provision of infrastructure, housing and services. The committee travelled to and held hearings in Emerald, Rockhampton, Moranbah, Moura, Middlemount, Dysart, Mackay, Dalby, Toowoomba, Roma, Gladstone and Blackwater. We heard from over 100 local people, current and former mining workers, FIFO workers, mining companies, chambers of commerce and industry, business owners, real estate agents, local government, local police, volunteers from sporting clubs and many more. The overwhelming message was that a person should have a choice as to where they live for work and equal access to job opportunities. The committee has made recommendations based on the evidence presented to it that are fair reasonable and achievable.

From the committee's hearings we know the following: that workers have been told they are not eligible to apply for positions in the mining sector, despite being suitably qualified and experienced for these positions—even during the committee's inquiry, there were active jobs in Moranbah advertised which specifically required that applicants must live within 100 kilometres of the Brisbane airport; that rural and regional communities are suffering—locals told us that local businesses are closing down, local football clubs are struggling to form teams, and volunteers and coaches are in short supply; that many mining companies do not provide support to FIFO workers who wish to relocate to the local mining community in which they work; that locals are also not convinced that resource companies are complying with conditions of approval; that locals told us of their frustration with the lack of local procurement practices employed by resource companies—for example, local bakeries are overlooked to supply bread in favour of trucking bread and other supplies direct from Brisbane or elsewhere; that resource companies are prioritising casual workforces and the use of labour hire—there is a massive decline in the number of permanent jobs, which in turn hurts local families and communities, and some workers are on month-to-month and even week-to-week contracts, with no annual leave, no sick pay and no certainty or job security; that work rosters were central to many issues raised by stakeholders; and that there is also a clear recognition that there are a range of general workplace stress factors and specific aspects of the FIFO role that may put workers, their families and communities at risk of mental health problems.

The committee's report makes 19 recommendations in total. Perhaps the most prominent of these recommendations is that which recommends the government consider making changes to the anti-discrimination legislation to stop local workers being discriminated against on the basis of where they live for work. It is clear to me that this inquiry has demonstrated the need for all resource companies

to proactively demonstrate their social licence to operate which should start with the ending of postcode discrimination. We have also made recommendations to strengthen the monitoring of compliance with the Coordinator-General's conditions on resource projects. The message to the committee from the constituents we heard from during the inquiry was loud and clear: all people should have a genuine choice of where they live for work. Choice is what this is all about.

The committee's inquiry has been welcomed by local people in Central and Western Queensland. Sarah Atkins from Moranbah is one of those people. She said that after eight years of living in the town she has been forced to move to find work because BMA's nearby Caval Ridge and Daunia mines will not employ locals. Sarah said that BMA will only look at your application if a Brisbane address is used in the application form, regardless of how suitably qualified and experienced you are. Sarah herself has been desperate enough to put a Brisbane address, fly to Brisbane on her last day of work and then fly herself back to Moranbah, just so she can keep her family together in Moranbah.

To all of the local people who appeared at the committee's hearings and those who made submissions during the inquiry, I sincerely thank you. I thank you for sharing your stories, some of which were deeply intimate, personal and heartbreaking. I also thank the secretariat of the committee and the Hansard staff for their ongoing dedication and support. I thank my fellow members of the committee—the chair, the member for Mirani; the deputy chair, the member for Burleigh; and the members for Gregory, Gladstone and Dalrymple.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the work of the member for Mirani. The member for Mirani has been and always will be a champion for the people of Central Queensland. It has been an honour serving on this inquiry with you, Jim. You are a great mentor to me and I look forward to continuing the fight for the workers of Central Queensland side by side with you. I commend this inquiry report to the House and I, like the people of Central and Western Queensland, look forward to the government's response.