




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE COMMUNITIES BILL

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Bill 2016. In doing so, from the outset I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Nanango, our shadow minister who led the response for the LNP. It was a very robust and passionate contribution from the member for Nanango who has put strongly the LNP's position in relation to this bill.

From the outset I would like to acknowledge the robust representations that the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego and the member for Burdekin have made to the LNP about our approach to this particular public policy issue. They are passionate advocates for the communities that they represent and that they seek to represent in the future, and they deserve credit for the way they have advocated for their constituents.

The policy objectives and the reasons for the provisions of the bill which the minister has put forward are to ensure that regional communities in Queensland which are in the vicinity of large resource projects benefit from the operation of those 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.

As the explanatory notes accompanying the bill indicate, the bill aims to prescribe the social impact assessment process for large resource projects, prevent the use of 100 per cent FIFO workforces for the operation of future large resource projects located near regional communities, prevent resource companies discriminating against local residents in the future recruitment of operational workers, and support existing and new workers who choose to live and work in regional communities.

I would like to recognise that, in part, this bill is the result of a long campaign by the member for Mirani to try to achieve some outcomes on behalf of the CFMEU on behalf of whom he comes to this parliament. He is a delegate of the CFMEU in this place. He does so proudly. He wears his heart on his sleeve in that regard. He has been campaigning for a long time to see some change with respect to FIFO arrangements in the resources sector in Queensland.

Inconveniently for the member for Mirani, he has to face up to the reality of the situation that the only two resource projects in the state of Queensland that have ever received approval which explicitly allows 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce arrangements are the Caval Ridge and Daunia projects and that they received that approval from the Bligh Labor government, a government of which he was a member.

The member for Mirani left this parliament in 2009 and the 100 per cent FIFO approvals for those projects occurred in circumstances where there was a boom in the resources sector in Queensland. There is no denying that: in 2008 there was a boom in the resources sector. Almost anyone who wanted to get a job in the resources sector at that time was able to get one. There was an extremely strong

demand for labour, particularly in the coal sector at that time, because of the international export price of coal. It was in those circumstances that the Bligh Labor government gave that approval, and it is inconvenient for the member for Mirani but it is the truth.

The member for Mirani left this place of his own choosing in 2009. He then went away and reinvented himself as a community advocate for the CFMEU, which paid his salary. He went on a crusade in relation to his advocacy for those communities and that resulted in him attempting to come back to this place in 2012. He was unsuccessful in that regard, but in 2015 he was successful. What happened shortly after the 2015 state election was that we came back to the parliament and off he went as chairman of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee around the countryside holding community consultation. They took a lot of evidence with that referral to that committee, and they came back with a recommendation—the most substantial recommendation in that committee report which was debated in this place in October 2015—that there should be an amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act so you were not discriminated against on the basis of where you lived. That was all they could find. After going around the countryside for months and months, that committee came back with the profound recommendation that Queenslanders ought not be discriminated against on the basis of where they live. Of course no-one is going to disagree with that vanilla, unremarkable recommendation. That is the summary of the contribution of the member for Mirani's campaign for almost a decade. It has resulted in that recommendation and the bill now before the House.

There are another couple of amendments in this bill relating to amendments to the Mineral Resources Act. The Mineral Resources Act will be amended to insert provisions that will prohibit all mineral (f) activity in Queensland. Mineral (f) activity within the act includes in situ gasification of coal—underground coal gasification, also known as UCG—and in situ gasification of oil shale which use similar processes to extract the mineral. This gives effect to commitments that the government has given previously to prohibit UCG activities in Queensland. Once again, those UCG activities in Queensland were initiated by the Bligh Labor government in 2009. They initiated three trials—

A government member interjected.

Mr CRIPPS: I beg your pardon?

A government member interjected.

Mr CRIPPS: They approved three trials; namely, Cougar Energy, Carbon Energy and Linc Energy. Those trials were inherited by the previous LNP government in 2012. I received the report of the independent scientific panel and subsequently referred that report from the independent scientific panel to the Chief Scientist who undertook a review. The recommendations of that review undertaken by the Chief Scientist and the ISP said that Carbon Energy and Linc Energy should be allowed to continue with their current trials; a planning and action process should be established to demonstrate successful decommissioning of the underground cavities used as part of the UCG process; and that until decommissioning could be demonstrated no commercial UCG facility should be commenced.

Those recommendations were implemented. The member for Nanango touched on the unfortunate situation facing the community around Kingaroy with respect to the Cougar Energy project. Communities represented by the member for Warrego have subsequently experienced a very concerning situation in relation to the Linc Energy project. I understand the reasons the government has moved to ban UCG in Queensland. I think though that the carbon energy project, which was not found to be wanting in any serious way within the framework provided by either government, should be given the details of the government's decision with respect to why their particular project ought not proceed.

I also note that the in situ development of oil shale projects will be prohibited. This is in contrast to oil shale developments that are not in situ. I would like to make that distinction and differentiation between oil shale resources that are first extracted and then processed off site. The former LNP government developed a framework for the development of the oil shale industry in Queensland which stands to this day. I would like to encourage investors in Queensland to give consideration to the economic viability of developing those oil shale deposits, not in situ because the provisions of this bill will not permit that in future.

It is an interesting fact that Queensland has about 90 per cent of Australia's known oil shale resources, which is equivalent to approximately 22 billion barrels of oil. There is a robust framework in place that was developed and the member for Glass House and I were involved in that. It is important to understand that the oil shale industry is different from the shale gas or shale oil industry. The technical aspects of that can be secured by going to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' website and looking up the fact sheet.