




Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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**STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE COMMUNITIES BILL**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.25 pm): I too acknowledge the participants of the Queensland Servant Leadership Forum. It is great to again host them this year, having done it for a number of years past. I thank those of our colleagues from both sides of the chamber who are participating in the forum this evening. It is a wonderful opportunity for us and, hopefully, for the participants.

This evening I will make a very short contribution to the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Bill 2016 or, as it is known colloquially, the FIFO bill. I will restrict my comments primarily to my role as the shadow minister for local government. I commend the work of the committee and, in particular, the work of the LNP representatives on that committee. In their statement of reservation, they picked up on the fact that many councils—in fact, just about every council—that submitted on this bill, including the LGAQ, sought greater consultation when it comes to the impacts of these kinds of projects.

**Mr Costigan:** There is a bit of theme there, isn't there?

**Mr POWELL:** There is a bit of a theme; I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. I quote from the statement of reservation in the committee report—

Many communities often feel the negative impact of large scale FIFO.

I would add that, as well as communities, it is the local governments themselves. The statement continues—

This includes issues surrounding stress on community services and escalated infrastructure maintenance, contributions to the local economy, housing availability and affordability, lifestyle and safety issues and FIFO worker and family impacts.

The LGAQ advised more needs to be done to achieve a genuine partnership with local government, including requiring better consultation with local government than that currently provided for in the bill. Resource projects make substantial demands on council assets and services as well as significantly affecting land use in and around towns.

Councillor Dane Swalling, Deputy Mayor, Cloncurry Shire Council outlined to the Committee these three benefits—jobs, infrastructure and business opportunity—will only be obtainable by genuine collaboration between the mining company and local government with the outcomes enforceable by the state. A suitably structured and enforceable social impact assessment process can deliver these outcomes.

The current bill does not address the concerns of councils such as Cloncurry Shire Council, the Isaac Regional Council or the LGAQ more generally. In its submission, the LGAQ put it pretty eloquently when it stated—

As part of introducing a systematic approach to managing the social impacts of the resources sector, it is vital that local government be recognised as more than a stakeholder and is instead acknowledged as a 'partner-in-government'. Significant improvements can be made in managing the impacts of resources projects on communities if information regarding a project is provided early to local councils and agreement is reached on managing these impacts *before a project commences*.

I might add, before construction of the project commences. The submission continues—

While both the SSRC Policy Framework and the SSRC Bill make welcome progress in this area, more needs to be done to achieve a genuine partnership, including:

- Requiring greater and more meaningful consultation with local government than that provided for in the SSRC Bill.

On that note, I acknowledge the work of the shadow minister, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in bringing forward the amendments that are before us tonight, one of which specifically enshrines as a minimum requirement that a proponent or owner of a large resource project undertakes consultation with the local community within the local government area of the location of the large resource project as part of the social impact assessment. I think it is only fair that if a project of this nature is going to impact on a local community and on the resources and assets of a local council then those councils and their communities should be brought into the equation, discussions, assessments and outcomes at a far earlier stage. The amendments to be moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition achieve that.

In conclusion, I challenge the contribution of the speaker prior to me. He suggested that somehow the LNP is not standing up for these local communities against large resource companies. Let us have a little history lesson. The LNP has never approved a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out operation in the state of Queensland—ever.

**Mrs Frecklington:** Who has?

**Mr POWELL:** I take the interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There is a party in this chamber that has. In fact, they have done it not just once but twice. That party is the Labor Party. Any suggestion that it is the LNP that is failing to support regional communities in the state of Queensland is utterly false.

I go to the nub of what the member was saying. If that member is genuine in their rhetoric around supporting local governments and local communities to ensure that they are sitting at the table at the earliest possible opportunity to address, identify, mitigate and prevent negative impacts on their assets, on their resources, on their communities and—dare I say—on individual families then that member and those opposite should support the amendments that will be moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition this evening.

I am unashamedly standing up for local governments and local communities, alongside the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the LNP opposition. I call on those opposite to do more than engage in rhetoric in this chamber—

**Mr Walker:** Lip-service.

**Mr POWELL:** I take the interjection from the member for Mansfield. They should do more than pay lip-service to the councils, the communities and the mums and dads around the state of Queensland. Step up to the plate and support the amendments.