




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE COMMUNITIES BILL

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.22 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak in support of the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Bill 2016. Before I speak this afternoon about the specifics of the bill, I would like to put on record here in this place just how incredibly livid I am that on Tuesday mining giant Glencore extended its lockout of 190 permanent workers at the Oaky North mine for a further 14 days, placing a financial and mental health strain on the workers and their families. I think this is incredibly un-Australian behaviour by a corporation which pays no tax. I believe Australian workers should not be treated like this.

This renewed lockout will make the total number of days that Glencore has locked out its workers up to 51 days. The timing is atrocious and belligerent by this company, because the 190 workers at the mine were set to return to work at midday on Tuesday. Glencore continues to show complete disregard for these workers by emailing them at 6 am on Tuesday telling them that they would be locked out for a further 14 days. I visited the locked out workers at their protest camp near Tieri on Saturday. Whilst I really felt the strength and unity of these men—they say, 'One day longer, one day stronger'—I also felt a sadness in them because Glencore has locked these men out of their work: the work that they are good at, the work that they are passionate about and the work that they love doing. The lockout extension comes on the back of mega profits for Glencore and shows the complete disdain that this foreign owned company has for its staff and their families. Glencore's Australian coal operators' revenue jumped from US\$1.77 billion to US\$3.1 billion in the past six months alone, so it is hardly doing it tough.

Glencore's agenda appears to be about breaking the workforce, bringing in labour hire contractors and blatantly casualising their workforce. It is an abhorrent way to treat workers who have helped Glencore earn their massive profits. The 190 locked out workers at Oaky North are standing up against casualisation of their workforce and fighting for their conditions to be maintained. This is not a strike over pay; these workers have been locked out of their work because they want their conditions regarding workplace representation maintained. I support them all the way. Standing up for workers is why I got into politics. There are some of the country's best and hardest working coal miners on this picket line, locked out of work. They do not deserve to be treated this way. I believe that everyone deserves fair representation in the workplace.

That leads me to the bill. I thank and congratulate at the outset the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce, for his passion, his stamina and his perseverance in standing up in this place with a good bill, a good Labor bill, before the parliament as a result of his tireless efforts to ensure the voice of regional Queensland and the voice of mining towns and mining families is heard. He has brought those voices together, all the way to this place. We have got good legislation before the House which will support mining towns to attract and retain workers and their families. It will help protect mining workers' health and wellbeing. It will help improve the social impact assessment process for mining projects. It will also help local businesses to provide goods and services to mining operations.

It was an election commitment of the current government to legislate against the use of 100 per cent FIFO operations near regional communities and introduce choice for workers to live in the mining towns near to where they work. This bill fulfils that commitment. This legislation will be the first of its

kind in Australia to manage FIFO and will be closely monitored by the Queensland government. The Queensland Labor Party has been at the forefront of FIFO impacts. We are the only party which has been able to deliver on banning 100 per cent FIFO and giving workers the choice to live in the mining towns near where they work.

Mining communities have been hurting, but the Labor Party is the only one that has listened to those mining communities, those mining workers and their families. They wanted choice and tonight we are delivering that choice. We are not joined at the hip like the LNP are to the mining companies. We have seen a primary example of the LNP joined at the hip, because the amendments that the LNP are proposing tonight are watered down because their mining company donors, the Resources Council and the big mining corporations have said no. We know that the big mining companies of this country say 'Jump' and the LNP say 'How high?'

Were the amendments proposed by the LNP—the watered-down amendments—drafted by the mining companies or the Resources Council? I only ask because it would not be the first time. Remember the time the member for Burnett gave a confidential parliamentary committee report to the Resources Council to edit and the Resources Council's amendments to the report were submitted by mistake by the member for Burnett without first accepting the tracked changes. The poor old member for Burnett got caught out because he forgot to accept the tracked changes made by the Resources Council so he was subsequently found guilty of contempt of this parliament. Were the amendments tabled by the LNP for this bill dictated to the LNP by the Resources Council again? I should hope not.

I am very pleased that this bill seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 to prohibit discrimination against locals during the recruitment processes for new workers. We heard from many regional Queenslanders living in mining communities throughout the committee's inquiry who were frustrated that they have the suitable skills and experience but were told they are not eligible to apply for jobs in the mining sector because they did not live in Brisbane or on the Gold Coast. This is so unfair. We heard stories about miners from resource communities, like Moranbah, going out of their way to try and have a postal address in Brisbane or the Gold Coast so that they would be eligible for a job in their very own community.

This will also enable existing fly-in fly-out workers on mining projects to move into the local community if they choose. We spoke throughout the inquiry to FIFO miners who would absolutely love the opportunity to relocate themselves and their families to the mining town which they fly in and fly out of all the time but the mining company they work for would not allow it. These changes will now give miners the choice when it comes to where they live, but it will also help rejuvenate mining towns in regional Queensland. These amendments will end this form of 'postcode discrimination' in Queensland because it will become an offence to advertise positions in a way which prohibits local people from mining towns from applying for a job at a mine.

Following the introduction of this bill, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee conducted an inquiry into the bill and made a number of recommendations. I am pleased that the minister will now move amendments to the bill which will extend the ban of 100 per cent FIFO to all existing and future mining projects with a nearby mining town regardless of when they were approved and that it is not just limited to future projects. Previously, the anti-discrimination provisions of the bill only applied to mining projects which were publicly notified after 2009. However, the committee was concerned that there would be many mines older than that to which the anti-discrimination provisions would not apply. I am particularly pleased that the amendments to be moved by the minister mean that the anti-discrimination provisions will extend to all existing and future mining projects to ensure discrimination against local workers does not occur in future recruitment.

The amendments also amend the recruitment hierarchy that was in the draft social impact assessment guideline and elevate its importance by putting it in the bill itself. The proposed recruitment hierarchy now specifies that local people must be considered first and foremost in the recruitment of local jobs and then as a second preference the mining company will need to identify strategies to attract people to live in the community who wish to work at the mine. This amendment will help rejuvenate mining towns, with locals being considered first and then companies being required to consider people wishing to move to the local mining town as opposed to flying workers in and out. The amendments also change the radius and the definition of 'nearby regional community' to 125 kilometres and also clarify that the Coordinator-General may decide to include towns of less than 200 people as a nearby regional community.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring this bill is implemented in practice. We will put in place effective compliance monitoring of projects to ensure that mining companies are abiding by this bill. To achieve this, the Coordinator-General will have new investigation powers to request information from any mining company about the provisions of this bill. For example, if a large resource

project is suspected of having a 100 per cent FIFO workforce, the Coordinator-General will be able to require the owner of the large mining project to provide relevant information regarding the operational workforce arrangements. Also the enhanced social impact assessment process will require resource companies to provide local businesses with access to project supply chains and maximise opportunities to build resource communities that attract and retain workers and, most importantly, their families. Failure to submit the relevant information will have a maximum penalty of 400 penalty units, or approximately \$250,000 for a corporation. Knowingly giving false or misleading information to the Coordinator-General will have a maximum penalty of 1,665 penalty units, or approximately \$1 million for a corporation.

The Queensland Labor Party is the only party that listens to the concerns of regional Queensland and will act to ensure that workers, their families and regional communities will have a choice when it comes to where they work and live. In 2015 we saw the LNP's federal member for Capricornia and federal member for Dawson all over the papers claiming that they were the FIFO saviours; they were going to Canberra to fight for regional towns, to change the Fair Work laws and to ban 100 per cent FIFO. The member for Capricornia posted on her Facebook page in March 2015, 'Two Central Queensland federal MPs have launched a dramatic fight to change Australia's Fair Work Act in a bid to ban 100 per cent FIFO work practices that are devastating local jobs and towns.' She said that they were 'taking their fight to the floor of Parliament House in Canberra with a bill to make it illegal for companies to lock people out of jobs based on their home location'. The member for Capricornia said that she was 'fed up with inaction over 100 per cent FIFO' and that she was 'sick of waiting for the authority to act' and she promised that the bill would be debated in late May 2015. I table a copy of the Facebook post of the member for Capricornia from 30 March 2015.

Tabled paper: Media article, dated 30 March 2015 by Ms Michelle Landry MP, titled 'News Alert: MPs launch dramatic fight to change fair work laws to ban 100% FIFO' [\[1458\]](#).

The bill was not debated at all in May. Fast-forward to October 2015 and the member for Dawson and the member for Capricornia issued a media statement with the headline 'Labor fails to deliver on 100% FIFO', and I table a copy of the statement from the website of the member for Dawson.

Tabled paper: Media article, dated 12 October 2015 by Mr George Christensen MP, titled 'Labor fails to deliver on 100% FIFO' [\[1459\]](#).

However, when I clicked on the link to the statement on FIFO on the website of the member for Capricornia, I found that it had been deleted. The page was not found because the member for Capricornia is obviously embarrassed that she has not delivered as she said she would. I table a copy of that website page of the member for Capricornia.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, showing a screenshot of a '404 Page Not Found' message on webpage of Ms Michelle Landry MP [\[1460\]](#).

Mr Christensen said that Labor had 'drastically failed to deliver' and on 14 October Mr Christensen issued another media statement with a nice picture of the two of them, looking tough and cranky, saying that he and the member for Capricornia were taking 'action to ban 100 per cent FIFO' by introducing a bill into parliament on 19 October, and I table a copy of the media statement of the member for Dawson.

Tabled paper: Media article, dated 14 October 2015, by Mr George Christensen MP, titled 'CQ MPs take action to ban 100% FIFO' [\[1461\]](#).

They grandstanded only to end up with egg all over both of their faces, because what happened? In true LNP fashion, absolutely nothing! The member for Capricornia and the member for Dawson, two hypocrites, did absolutely nothing about FIFO. What we saw was these two running around in the papers claiming credit, talking about how they were going to change 100 per cent FIFO, but they did nothing. The bill was introduced on 19 October and on 15 April 2016 the bill lapsed. After all the promises by the member for Dawson and the member for Capricornia, after all the mudslinging, accusing Labor of doing nothing, it was the LNP that did nothing and it is now the Queensland Labor Party that is doing the heavy lifting and banning 100 per cent FIFO and ending postcode discrimination.

How embarrassing for the LNP members for Capricornia and Dawson to go on a rampage like they did, claiming credit for banning 100 per cent FIFO when they did not, bagging the Labor Party for inaction when it was their own inaction that resulted in the bill lapsing. The LNP will no doubt claim that the bill lapsed because the 2016 federal election was called. What have the two federal members done since the federal election 12 months ago? They have done absolutely nothing! It just goes to show that the member for Capricornia and the member for Dawson are full of hot air, making promises, issuing media statements, claiming credit and bagging others, but they do not have the guts, they do not have the stamina and they do not have the political ability to actually get things done. They failed on FIFO—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! First of all, member for Keppel, there are some phrases there that are unparliamentary. Can you just be aware of that, please.

Mrs LAUGA: They failed on FIFO, they refuse to support Central Queensland's Buy Local policy, they refuse to fight for Central Queensland's fair share of disaster recovery funding, they refuse to call on their very own Northern Australia infrastructure fund to get money out the door on much needed infrastructure projects and they sold out the landholders at Marlborough by pushing full steam ahead for the compulsory acquisition of land for the Singaporean defence force—

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mrs LAUGA:—not to mention the levy; I take the interjection from the member for Gladstone.

Only the Labor Party will listen to the concerns of regional Queensland and will act to ensure that workers, their families and regional communities will have choice when it comes to where they work and live. Only the Labor Party has the passion, the determination and the political nous to get these things done, to make the change happen.

This bill will bring hope and opportunity back to Central Queensland. No longer will mining money fly out of our region. Local workers living in Central Queensland mining towns will now be able to get work in the mines surrounding their towns. No longer will they be overlooked for Brisbane or Gold Coast workers. They will have a fair go at applying for the jobs on offer in the mines around their town. They will be back on a level playing field.

In turn, those Central Queensland miners will be drawing an income from the very mines which are situated around their own towns, and their disposable income will help their local towns flourish again. Their incomes can be spent at the local butcher, the local pub, the shop, the newsagency, and all of the local businesses in that town. The incomes of these local workers will help breathe new life back into the mining towns of Central Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.