




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE COMMUNITIES BILL

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.42 pm): I would like to make a contribution to the Strong and Sustainable Resources Communities Bill 2016. This has been a long time coming. This is a very important piece of legislation for the communities I represent in the seat of Gregory. I am talking about towns like Emerald, Clermont, Capella and Tieri that have suffered under the impost of 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforces. These towns have lost people over many, many years.

Mr Costigan: Good people too.

Mr MILLAR: They are good people. I take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday, who understands that we need to keep people in these towns. It is absolutely vital. In towns like Emerald over the last three or four years we have seen businesses close. We have seen people leave town. We have seen schools impacted. We have seen sporting groups, Rotary clubs, Lions clubs and community organisations being impacted by 100 per cent fly-in fly-out or the fly-in fly-out mentality in the mining industry.

I, like a lot of members in this House, have firsthand experience of the impact of fly-in fly-out. Not only does it impact our businesses, but families moving away from towns like Blackwater, Emerald, Capella and Tieri impact the local sporting clubs. It impacts the local Rugby League fixtures where one year they have a full club of players and the next year they are forfeiting because families have moved away.

We want coalminers and their families to live in our towns. We need them to live in our towns. I remember growing up as a young boy back in the eighties and going to primary school. Plenty of my mates that I played football with—whether it was the Capella Roadrunners or the Emerald Tigers—were sons of miners, and they were good mates. Their living in those towns was absolutely essential to the economic growth of those towns. It is important that these towns survive. Every day we see families leaving these communities. It is not only fly-in fly-out that affects towns like Emerald, Capella, Clermont, Tieri and all of those mining towns in the Bowen Basin but also drive-in drive-out where families have decided to move to the coast but the husband continues to have a job in the Central Highlands. That has an impact on the economic viability of those towns.

I understand the importance of the enduring partnerships between mining towns and the resource companies. It is important that we have a close connection. Resource companies are important. Coalmine workers are important. Businesses are important. Those partnerships are forged through respect, sharing the economic benefits and, most importantly, creating local jobs and business opportunities. Also, the spin-off of that is other jobs in those towns. A healthy population in those towns provides more jobs in local businesses, whether it is a new auto-electrician starting up or a mechanic or a new tyre-fitting shop. The more population we have in those towns, the more viable they are. We must make sure that we have legislation that continues to improve that and grow those jobs.

The LNP government made it clear that we would never approve a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out resource project where it is located in the vicinity of a regional town. I was listening to the member for Keppel before. I would like to remind the member for Keppel and others that it was in 2009 that the

BMA mines, Caval Ridge and Daunia, could operate with an up to 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce. The government that gave that approval was the Bligh Labor government. They ignored local community views and set the company up to make extreme decisions that were not in the interest of the region. That has had a huge impact on towns north of the seat of Gregory, towns like Moranbah. The mayor, who has been a vocal advocate of making sure that we do not have 100 per cent fly-in fly-out, is here today. It is important that we continue to support those towns. I pay tribute to Mayor Kerry Hayes from the Central Highlands Regional Council. He is another vocal advocate of making sure that we do not ever see 100 per cent fly-in fly-out.

A major mine that is going ahead—and we want it to go ahead—is the Adani mine. They have made commitments to our local regional towns such as Emerald, Clermont, Charters Towers and Capella. I want to make sure that people who are employed at that mine do come from those towns and also come from towns such as Jericho, Alpha, Barcaldine in Western Queensland because it will provide an economic stimulus to that region.

One hundred per cent fly-in fly-out for mines in the vicinity of nearby regional communities is completely out of step with community expectations. It shows how out of touch it is when the government still allows 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforces for these mines during the construction phase. I would like to pay tribute to our deputy leader, Deb Frecklington, on her amendments. The deputy leader has the balance right. The LNP amendments will prohibit 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforces during construction and operation for large resource projects in the vicinity of nearby regional communities. They will ensure that local communities are consulted as part of the social impact assessment for large resource projects.

The LNP is backing regional Queensland. We are backing jobs in regional Queensland. Our amendments will ensure that regional Queenslanders get a fair go, and that is important—getting a fair go at having an opportunity to be employed in those mines. Our amendments address the major concerns raised by a number of local governments and the major concerns of other groups. They are about making sure that we have the right legislation in place so that people can take advantage of it. Regional Queensland is important to all of us. It is the economic backbone of this state. It generates the royalties which go into state government coffers. It also provides the economic stimulus that Queensland needs when it comes to making sure that we can grow our communities, build our roads, build our schools and build the infrastructure we need out there.

What is concerning is Queensland's jobless rate, especially in regional Queensland. The jobless rate and the unemployment issues that we have in regional Queensland are very concerning, especially for places such as the outback where we have seen youth unemployment skyrocket to about 57 per cent. It is unacceptable to have a youth unemployment rate that high. We have people out there who need jobs, and we have to do everything in our power to make sure they have jobs. The youth unemployment rate in parts of Gregory, Warrego, Mount Isa and Cook is not acceptable and we have to do something to fix that. Over half of all young people in outback Queensland who want a job cannot get one.

Unemployment in the Fitzroy region is getting worse, with another 2,900 jobs lost in the last year. We need to ensure there is an opportunity for people to get jobs in local mines. It is important for the economic wellbeing of the regional towns which I represent and which the member for Warrego, the member for Mount Isa, the member for Cook and the member for Callide represent. These are important regions, and we need to ensure that if there is a job at a mine they are able to apply for that job and are able to work at that mine. That is incredibly important.