




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING AND OFFENDER PROHIBITION ORDER) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (6.35 pm): I rise today to speak on the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I specifically wish to speak in support of the amendments circulated that amend the Mineral Resources Act 1989. These amendments achieve an outcome for a workers camp at Byerwen mine in the Bowen Basin which has been heavily scrutinised. While I am on my feet it is probably a great opportunity to acknowledge that in the public gallery we have with us tonight members of the Isaac Regional Council. I would like to acknowledge Deputy Mayor Kelly Vea Vea, Councillor Gina Lacey and Daniel Wagner, who is the director of planning and many, many other things, I understand. Well done! It is great to have them here, particularly for this really important piece of legislation.

The amendments are about more than just the scrutiny of that miners camp: the amendments provide certainty for all involved. They provide certainty to the mine and its many hundreds of workers as the mine continues to operate. They provide certainty to local government in relation to land use approvals and economic outcomes, but most of all they provide certainty to the people of Glenden. These amendments seek to secure the long-term future of Glenden, and they will ensure that the residents of Glenden share in the economic and social benefits of a billion dollar resource project in the Isaac region.

The residents of Glenden, a small mining town, have increasingly been concerned about the town's future, as had the Isaac Regional Council. This comes as the nearby Glencore Newlands mine winds down its operations. Fortunately for Glenden, the end of one mine does not necessarily mean the end of a town. In 2017 the Byerwen mine was approved. It is a similar distance away from Glenden as the Newlands mine is—about 45 kilometres west by road. It is fair to say that, as a consequence of the commitments made by the proponents of the Byerwen mine in terms of how they prefer to accommodate their workers, the residents of Glenden saw the Byerwen mine as an opportunity to stop the decline of the town and encourage its growth again. The Byerwen mine is a significant project—a significant project. It employs 750 people, and that is expected to rise to around 900 people at peak production. That is an amazing number of workers.

This government has a strong track record in making sure that regional communities get their fair share, particularly from significant resource projects in the area. This is demonstrated through the introduction of the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017, which banned 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workers and promotes employment opportunities for locals. The amendments being considered today are an extension of those requirements as the Byerwen mine predates that act. In practice, they will give legislative effect to the grant of a mining lease that considers the social impacts of the resource project on the town of Glenden.

This would have happened under the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act should the social impact considerations of that act have applied to the mining lease application, but they do not. To achieve this important outcome, legislative backing is necessary to grant the mining lease with

conditions supporting the long-term viability of Glenden. Several existing mine leases for this mine, as well as any future leases, will also be conditioned to require that Byerwen mine's workforce transitions to Glenden. In fact by 31 March 2029 the entire workforce at Byerwen mine will need to be accommodated in Glenden.

Another important component of these requirements is that, of the workers accommodated in Glenden, 30 per cent will need to be housed in residential dwellings. It is intended that these workers are provided residential dwellings—such as houses, townhouses or units—for them to reside in on an ongoing basis. This means that Glenden will see the benefits of a large workforce living in their town in a mix of long-term and short-term accommodation. These arrangements are also consistent with Byerwen's environmental impact statement and workforce accommodation strategy for the Byerwen Coal Mine project.

I have consulted directly with Byerwen Coal and the Isaac Regional Council to determine a way forward on the lease that might balance their competing interests and concerns. It is my expectation in the first six months that an implementation plan will be developed with these stakeholders. I would like to thank Byerwen Coal, Glencore and the Isaac Regional Council for their input right throughout this process. We understand that time will be required to get this transition right. As a result, we have included a five-year transition period in the legislation. This allows for the investment in accommodation, the transfer of assets and relevant planning approvals to take place. The Queensland government will work with Byerwen Coal, Glencore and the Isaac Regional Council to facilitate a smooth transition.

Ultimately, the amendments seek to provide a fair and balanced approach to securing a long-term future for both the Byerwen mine and the town of Glenden. They keep the mine open and operating, supporting hundreds of jobs, and we show that the Queensland government is going to support regional communities. I commend the bill to the House.