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# FIFO/DIDO Enquiry

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Isaac Regional Council Submission

October 2011

# **Isaac Regional Council FIFO/DIDO Enquiry Response**

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## **Introduction**

Isaac Regional Council (IRC) is located west of Mackay, approximately 803 kilometres north of Brisbane. The IRC Local Government Area (LGA) covers 58 862 square kilometres. It borders the Galilee Basin to its west, contains a substantial portion of the Bowen Basin coal reserve (which is the largest in Australia) and includes 100km of coast line between Mackay and Rockhampton.

Its diverse population of 22 650 is made up of families, young people, workers, retirees, and see/tree changers. It includes the larger towns of Clermont, Coppabella, Dysart, Glenden, Middlemount, Moranbah, Nebo and St Lawrence and the smaller communities of Carmila, Clairview, Clark Creek, Greenhill, Ilbilbie, Kilcummin, Mackenzie River, Mistake Creek and Valkyrie.

Coal is one of Isaac Regional Council's and Queensland's biggest export commodities. The Bowen Basin accounts for 83% of all coal production in Queensland. A number of large coal mining projects are also proposed for the Galilee Basin. The impacts of the future development of these reserves will largely be felt in the IRC region.

Isaac Regional Council's Gross Regional Product (GRP) at Factor Cost was in excess of \$9 billion in 2008/09 and contributed to 52.1% to the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region's total GRP.

The unprecedeted level of mining activity combined with the fast growing trend of non-resident worker operations in the region brings economic development opportunities, however it also presents a number of challenges and risks. These need to be addressed if communities are to remain sustainable and resilient into the future. Challenges and risks have been identified and discussed further, in the enquiry specific sections below.

Isaac Regional Council understands a non resident workforce assists in meeting business needs. IRC supports all residents to have choice in their workplace and living arrangements. However, Isaac Regional Council believes population growth through a local resident employee population will lead to sustainable, resilient communities, with a diverse economic base that will see the region continue to prosper post mining.

**Notes:** For the purpose of this report, non-resident workforce refers to the total combination of employees practicing Fly in Fly Out, Drive In Drive Out and Bus In Bus Out (FIFO DIDO BIBO).

## **Enquiry Specific Sections**

### **Section 1**

***“The extent and projected growth in FIFO/DIDO work practices, including in which regions and key industries this practice is utilised”***

Mining in the Isaac Region was founded on purpose built mining towns such as Moranbah, Dysart, Middlemount and Glenden. They quickly grew to become towns with high liveability and great standards of living. They became quality family towns with good infrastructure and high personal safety.

Unfortunately, non-resident workforce is a trend that has quickly grown to become an industry preference. The aforementioned towns have seen a major increase in non-resident workforces and the dynamics of the towns have changed significantly. This is a trend not-likely to slow down, particularly with the emergence of the Galilee Basin to the region's west.

In a survey conducted by the Western Australian Department of Mines, 26 mines indicated their major reason for adopting a non-resident workforce was isolation (44%) and short project life (31%). However, the Bowen Basin, unlike the Western Australian Minerals Province is not isolated nor do its projects have a short project life. There is a further 180 estimated years of mining the Bowen Basin, and Adani's Carmichael Mine in the Galilee Basin, 180km north of Clermont, has an expected operational lifespan of 150 years.

Isaac Regional Council believes there are two primary inhibitors for the progression of residential workforces in Central Queensland. The first is high costs associated with investing in the necessary infrastructure to sustain a population growth in resource communities. Keith Storey and international expert in the field of long distance commuting also supports this notion. He has identified the cost of building in resource towns and an absence of government financial support for new town development as two significant inhibiting factors to the development of residential workforce. Isaac Regional Council will later argue (under section two) that this cost of a non-resident workforce may not be cost effective as companies think.

The second primary factor is the proponent's inability to source readily available labour. This is and will continue to be an issue for resourcing the Bowen and Galilee Basins. Isaac Regional Council believes if the Queensland State Government is serious about its Regionalisation Strategy; it should be directing investment into resource communities to house a greater proportion of residents who can then feed directly and indirectly into the resource sector workforce.

The Galilee Basin west of Isaac is expected to house approximately 20,000 employees across 13 projects at any one time. This estimated population of the Galilee Basin is twice the size of Moranbah and ten times larger than Clermont and surely large enough to justify the creation of a new town. After all, housing these employees will still necessitate the same level of services and infrastructure a regular residential town would warrant, and would create additional economic opportunities in support and key service industries.

This logic is starting to re-emerge in resource rich regions such as the Pilbara, where record growth and higher costs of living has placed pressure on the services and infrastructure in the

region. The Pilbara Cities Initiative has taken centre stage to effectively house a skilled residential workforce in a modern, vibrant city in relative proximity to the mining region.

## **Section 2**

### ***“Costs and benefits for companies, and individuals, choosing a FIFO/DIDO workforce as an alternative to a resident workforce”***

Due to the complexities and specific costs and benefits for both parties named, Isaac Regional Council has broken its response into a series of headings as follows:

#### **Company Cost:**

*Skills Shortage* – Skills shortages are found in all resource communities across Australia. Desired skills demand desirable wages and has consequently pushed wages up across all industries to compete. Highly mobile workers flying from one location to another for work, can just as easily transfer jobs and fly elsewhere for a higher wage. The mobility of skilled and desired workers chasing higher wages will place upward pressure on inflation and interest rates and in turn exacerbating the two speed economy.

*High workforce turnover* – A study undertaken by the University of Queensland’s Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining on Employee Turnover noted ‘the average turnover rates of company employees at the seven FIFO sites in the study was 20.2%’. The study further noted that some of these sites had, in the past, experienced turnover in excess of 60%. Anecdotal evidence received by Isaac Regional Council from companies in the Bowen Basin suggests 18 months is the average timeframe non resident workforce employees last before becoming ‘tired’. High workforce turnover means higher operational costs related to recruitment and training.

*Loss of productivity and performance* – increased staff turnover is an acknowledged impediment to productivity and performance, regardless of the industry. For mining companies, a culture of safety can be difficult to maintain through the constant training required for new recruits and the increased fatigue associated with longer travel requirements.

*Corporate image* – Communities who feel they are not invested in or connected to major industry employers become strong advocates for change. A social licence to operate, and positive legacy is important for companies to ensure further operations are assessed and approved swiftly. A non-resident workforce brings many corporate reputational risks. High levels of work-related fatigue incidents create great safety concerns and are justly evidenced by recorded incidents on the Peak Downs Highway.

#### **Company Benefit:**

It is understood that cost and time are the major benefits to the mining industry by utilising a non resident workforce. There is also the capacity to access skilled and unskilled workers from national and international locations. Isaac Regional Council believes that supporting the mining industry means working partnership to ensure that non resident workforces are able to be utilised, particularly during construction and production increase where time frames are urgent.

However, the industry should work to invest in the region through increasing residential workforces through the operational phase of mine life.

As mentioned in Section One, an inhibitor for companies to build in resource communities is the considerable capital costs required to house and service residential employees. Maintaining a non resident population is considered an operational cost, rather than capital, and is consequently easier to fund and justify to shareholders and the board. The ability to regulate workforce and manage fatigue on site is another benefit to the industry. There is also decreased industrial action and union influence in workforce matters with a non-residential workforce.

As further benefit, mining companies do not wish to invest in resource communities as it enables a quick and simple exit from communities when the resource is exhausted or product becomes unviable. Isaac Regional Council however, does not endorse this or believe it is acceptable practice.

#### Individual Cost:

As previously mentioned many non-residents suffer from travel fatigue. While initially attractive, sustaining a career in a non resident workforce is difficult. For families, there has been evidence of increased divorce rates, and social issues such as domestic violence, alcoholism, gambling and decreasing physical and mental health. The lack of a male role model and paternal discipline can have a negative effect on families and children.

*Increased risk of fatigue related travel trauma* – The increase in population and mining related activity in the Bowen Basin has resulted in increased usage of roads, therefore increasing the risk of accidents. These are regularly reported in the local media, along with complaints about the declining condition of roads. While it's difficult to determine whether this is directly related to non-residential workforces, DIDO schedules add to the volume of traffic on the roads and thus the risk. Travel fatigue after long shifts is a great concern to communities and family. While most companies have fatigue management plans in place, they do not address the underlying cause – long shifts. Fatigue researchers have identified between 13-23% of drivers on their way to or from shifts will fall asleep, resulting in accidents (Di Milia 2006). Furthermore, shoulder travel period between shifts decreases time with family, regardless of the roster schedule.

For those employees not in camp accommodation, there is a cost associated with maintaining and sustaining two households. This can lead to increased debt. As accommodation in resource communities are difficult to come by, rent for a 3 bedroom home in Moranbah for example, rent in excess of \$1500 per week.

The non resident worker also experiences intense social dislocation. Anecdotal evidence shows decrease in volunteerism in mining communities and communities of origin. Non resident employees often feel the “don't belong”, and are unable to volunteer, play sport and participate in family friendly activities due to work rosters.

Finally, the enforcement of a non resident workforce leads to lack of choice. Increasingly, the depressed economies external to mining regions are forced to find employment in mining, but

are unable to choose to move with their families to the communities due to employment policies that force employees to remain non resident.

#### Individual Benefit:

There is little doubt that there are some excellent benefits for non resident workforces. The higher than average mining industry income comes with increased spending capacity. This includes the ability to make significant investments that will lead to future financial security.

Many are able to better support their families due to the higher wages, and are able to afford key family experiences through travel and assets. Some rosters provide workers with large chunks of time to spend with family, while the ability to choose to earn a high wage while maintaining a home and lifestyle in the point of origin community can be very attractive.

### **Section 3**

#### ***“The effect of a non-resident FIFO/DIDO workforce on established communities, including community wellbeing, services and infrastructure”***

##### Effect on Established Communities- Community wellbeing:

There are many impacts of a non-resident workforce on established communities including:

*Economic and Population Growth* – The significant growth occurring in the mining industry brings many benefits – more jobs, higher wages, more people and diversity, local business growth, increase in services, and improved infrastructure. The first impact of the resource boom is significant population growth. The increased population is supplemented by a substantial non-resident workers in ‘temporary’ accommodation who are predominantly male. This significantly adds to the male dominance commonly experienced in the Bowen Basin. There is also the issue of turnover. School enrolments do not always reflect the increase in population. This is a result of turnover as workers arrive and move quickly to better jobs (or preferred locations) and in some towns, families are replaced with ‘single’ men, resulting in a decline in school enrolments (Rae et al 2011).

*Accommodation Costs* – Increased and uncontrolled growth created limited availability of permanent housing and the associated inflation in purchase and rental cost of the housing. This creates hardships for low income earners, with workers having to sleep in cars or tents. It also creates difficulties to attract and retain employees in essential services such as schools, hospitals and social services and people are being forced to relocate as low cost housing options are converted to house non-resident workforces through single-person-quarters (Rae et al 2011).

This is explained in more detail by Ptekova et al (2009):

*On the one hand, and increasing proportion of the permanent housing stock was taken up by itinerant workers who preferred to enter share housing arrangements than to live in work camps. As rental costs increased, it was correspondingly difficult for anyone not sharing with several*

*others to access such housing. One the other hand the ability of these towns to generate the critical mass of permanent residents needed to underwrite human services and other facilities was further undermined, in turn making them less desirable to permanent residents.*

Decreasing affordability has led to the increase of a “new social poor” i.e. people on non mining industry incomes or what would traditionally be described as middle income, are now experiencing increased living costs and housing stress. This is placing pressure on traditional social services, particularly housing services. Due to the data indicating high wages in the area, the state is pulling away from strategic investment in social housing, failing to take into account the non mining industry sector.

*Travel fatigue and motor vehicle accidents* – as discussed in individual costs. This also creates extra burden for volunteer emergency service organisations like the State Emergency Service that face extra demands due to increased road traffic without being able to recruit extra members (Rolfe et al 2009).

*Lack of social integration* – Aside from visual amenity, the proportion of residents to non-residents also contributes to the sense of being ‘taken over’ by work camps (Petkova et al 2009). Small rural towns have a strong identity and sense of community – an important part of the social capital of these towns – that is being threatened by the dominance of mining. Lack of integration between resident and non-resident workers creates a strong ‘us vs them’ mentality and non resident mine workers are blamed for a disproportionate share of crime and anti-social behaviour. There are also increasing level of fear being reported. This is especially so for sexual assault, which is now rated higher in parts of Isaac, than Queensland, with average rates increasing faster than the state average in some towns (Petkova et al 2009 p.222)

*Gender Imbalance* – The progressive masculinisation of the workforce is often seen as the cause of increasing levels of violence in rural towns. It also creates unease for women who reside in male-dominated towns and discomfort when socialising at night. Social perceptions of decreased community safety are important to residents. This includes increased crime and drug and alcohol related violence increasing in alignment with the introduction of a non resident workforce (Rae et al 2011).

*Poor resourcing of essential community services* - Essential community services such as Health, Education, Local Government and Emergency Services are increasingly finding they are unable to retain and recruit due to wages incompatibility, housing affordability and lack of supply of personnel. This sector is further affected due to under resourcing. As population data does not reflect true population numbers, only resident population numbers are included in allocations of staff to areas. The public health system is especially impacted by the non resident population. These are utilised extensively by the non resident population to treat all manner of injuries and ailments, however are not resourced in accordance with the non resident population.

#### Effect on Established Communities - Effect on Community Infrastructure:

Due to the lack of accurate population data, it is difficult to measure the impacts of a non resident population on important infrastructure that sustains and builds communities i.e. roads, water, sewer, telecommunications.

As many non resident workforces are housed in accommodation villages that supply their own water, power and sewerage infrastructure, it is often supposed that there is little impact on mining communities. However, this does not take into account the wear and tear on roads and airport infrastructure, nor the indirect employees who are housed in towns and utilise community infrastructure.

Therefore, infrastructure investment by the mining industry is generally around “headline” projects (new pools, halls etc), but do not fundamentally and systematically sustain communities. Moreover, projects like new pools or halls do not include a depreciation budget that support local government in the ongoing maintenance of the facilities. Isaac Regional Council is also concerned infrastructure projects supported by the mines are designed to create an exit strategy that leaves a positive legacy, rather than strategic investment in developing resilient communities post mining.

#### **Section 4**

##### ***“The impact on communities sending large numbers of FIFO/DIDO workers to mine sites”***

Impacts to point of origin communities have not been effectively measured, however, there are significant social impacts worth noting. These include issues such as separation anxiety, poor work-life balance, increased alcoholism and party drugs and relationship pressures.

A study by Brereton, Beach and Cliff (2003) notes that FIFO operations separates families for long periods of time, making relationships unmanageable. There is evidence which suggests non-resident workers have higher rates of divorce, fractured families, lack of volunteers and low participation in social recreational activities. This affects the social and community services in the point of origin communities, particularly health and community services. A study undertaken by Murdoch University’s School of Psychology found that non-resident workers have lower job and life satisfaction.

Another negative impact to point of origin communities is the relocation of their workforce, creating skills shortages and undermining the community, social and business infrastructure especially for trades’ people.

On a positive note, the delivery of higher wages into point of origin communities alleviates some financial pressures and aids in growing the local economy through their higher disposable income. This has the potential to impact localised inflation.

## **Section 5**

### ***“Long term strategies for economic diversification in towns with large FIFO/DIDO workforces”***

The realisation that non resident workers are not included in the Census data and therefore do not bring about improved infrastructure, facilities, and services to the community needs to be addressed. The inability to provide accurate population statistics means that state and federal investment in long term growth is declining in areas with large non resident workforces. Economic diversification requires like investment in community infrastructure to support population growth and stability through the provision of schools, health services, roads, training etc.

Economic diversification requires investment and support by mining companies for local business and industry to develop capacity to survive and thrive post mining. Essential to this is the development of partnerships between state and local governments and industry.

Isaac Regional Council developed a range of strategies to assist in economic diversification for the Region. These include the Isaac Social and Economic Study, which will be released in November. The input-output tool will be able to measure growth and decline against existing social services and infrastructure and national standards benchmarking.

The Clermont Preferred Futures process is recognized as a ground breaking partnership between Isaac Regional Council and Rio Tinto Clermont Region to improve a community's resilience for post-mining. This has evolved into a successful model of engagement, and community and economic development. The model has invigorated the community and has become a preferred way of doing business, and was recently recognized by Economic Development Australia, winning the Highly Commended award for the Community Economic Development category. The Preferred Futures model helps communities to develop term post mining visions in partnership with local and state governments, business and industry, that diversifies and adds value to the current industries.

The Adaptive Communities initiative was developed by Isaac Regional Council to assist the community of Moranbah work towards a community solution for housing the approximate 2500 predicted non resident workers who will be living in the region in the near future.

Isaac Regional Council advocates to the State and Federal government to work with local government, business and industry to develop legislation that focuses on closure and post mining economies. Investment in residential workforces creates a stable local economy, increases affordability and enhances business and industry capacity and resilience.

## **Section 6**

### ***“Key skill sets targeted for mobile workforce employment, and opportunities for ongoing training and development”***

While particular qualifications (engineering, specialist positions) are targeted for specific positions, a large proportion of the workforce does not require skilled tradespersons. Essentially,

the large employment requirements mean that all areas are targeted in order to maintain production schedules.

The increasing need for unskilled workers to fill high paying jobs in the mining industry is devaluing the education system. High school leavers can get highly paid unskilled work without any formal qualifications. This workforce is not multi skilled and very little knowledge and training is not transferable outside the mining industry.

Training programs for positions in the mechanical, electrical and construction phase is often used by the mining industry to maintain workforce numbers. Unfortunately, due to the particular requirements of the mining industry, even trade qualifications can be difficult to transfer into small business. This will be a significant issue should the mining industry decline.

A global downturn or workforce change which decreases the labour requirements may end up in a largely unskilled workforce with non transferable qualifications in point of origin communities. A focus on financial management skills for employees is also necessary in order to future proof individual economic circumstances against economic events such as the global financial crisis.

## **Section 7**

### ***“Provision of services, infrastructure and housing availability for FIFO/DIDO workforce employees”***

Strategic investment in regional services, infrastructure and housing has decreased with the uptake of non resident workforces. Local governments are the greatest providers of infrastructure, and their lower rate bases due to non resident workforces makes it more difficult to grow and provide better infrastructure. As the impacts of a non resident workforce are difficult to quantify, the mining industry has been able to decrease strategic investment in communities. This decreases the capacity for communities to remain and thrive after the non resident workforce leaves.

If the non-resident workforce trend is to remain, provisions need to be made to ensure essential services and infrastructure is provided so as not to disadvantage permanent and non permanent residents. Emergency services, social workers, medical staff and other state departments will need to be increased to cope with an increasingly mobile workforce. This needs to be enforced at a state and federal government level in conjunction with local government and mining proponents.

The resource sector has had a negative impact on the cost of living in resource communities. This is widening the gap between the two speed economy, and the result is lower paid residents cannot afford to live in the communities in which they work. Housing availability is an issue due to lack and quality of stock. In order to attract quality provision of services, affordable accommodation needs to be constructed. Mining companies should be required to assist in the development of affordable housing facilities to help alleviate high costs of living in resource communities.

## **Section 8**

***“Strategies to optimise FIFO/DIDO experience for employees and their families, communities and industry”***

### **Employees and their Families:**

There are a few strategies which will optimise the non resident workforce experience for employees and their families. These include:

- The ability to invite families to stay in the communities to experience their partner's primary place of residence. This would include a program including possible employment opportunities, and typical community events and recreation that showcases the liveability and lifestyle of the area.
- The development of more flexible 'lifestyle' rosters, with decreasing shift hours. This will assist in managing fatigue and decreasing time spent away from home for workers. The development of public transport in regional areas will also assist in decreasing the self-drive and fatigue related road trauma. The notion of a high speed train to connect resource and coastal communities should allow workers to travel to and from on a daily basis.
- The encouragement of a workplace of choice policy. Re-evaluating existing employment policies to ensure employees have the ability to choose their lifestyle – resident or non resident – will ensure increased job satisfaction and decreased social issues.
- The ability to accommodate worker's families for short term stays (5 – 7 days) in self contained camp accommodation may assist non resident workers in spending time with their families. This could be particularly useful to address the issues of child access in situations of separation and divorce.

### **Point of Origin Communities:**

Understanding the social cost to point of origin communities is very important. It's also crucial to develop and deliver mining industry funded family support services to address issues specific to families of non resident employees. These services could include increasing child care facilities and respite care services for partners in point of origin communities to allow workforce and community participation and alleviate household stress caused by single parenting.

### **Resource Communities:**

There is little to recommend the growth of non resident workforces to resource communities. Advocating for workforce participation in community and social recreation and events could assist in developing long term ties to the community and assist in taking pressure from overstretched services. Isaac regional Councils preferred policy position is as follows;

*Council requires urgent action from all levels of Government and industry on ensuring the community balance of non resident worker accommodation is to be built around a community design outcome of;*

- a) Up to 30 %                   *Camp style rooms*
- b) Up to 30 %                   *Medium to high density unit development*
- c) Not less than 40%           *Detached residential housing development*

*The development ratio in items above is to be undertaken in line with Council's goal for a significant majority of permanent residential population in the community, in line with the adopted policy statement of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010 below;*

*"Isaac Regional Council is opposed to any development within the Isaac Regional area that does not support the fundamentals of growing vibrant sustainable communities and the provision of accommodation choice for the families and the workers that wish to seek employment in the area."*

#### Industry:

Isaac Regional Council would encourage all mining industry stakeholders to identify key areas of labour and skill requirements which can be alleviated through a non resident workforce. All other workforce should be encouraged to live residentially.

#### **Section 9**

***"Potential opportunities for non-mining communities with narrow economic bases to diversify their economic base by providing a FIFO/DIDO workforce"***

Mining industries have naturally occurring narrow economic base, however the rate of non-resident workers only makes it more unstable. Focus needs to be on providing an accessible labour force to non-mining related industries in resource communities.

Origin communities need to be careful they're not being lulled into a false economic upturn through increased expenditure of highly paid miners. Point of origin communities also need to be careful not to strip themselves of its skilled and unskilled workforce. It will create long term employment shortages and is only replicating the issues already being faced by resource communities.

#### **Section 10**

***"Current initiatives and responses of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments"***

Investment in Pilbara Cities through legislation set by WA Parliament – Royalties for Regions and placing the resource industry into a position of investment and growth to create a sustainable legacy in these communities and underpin the long term resource sector development in the state.

Tax returns to local government in US much higher than returns to local government in Australia which creates greater security for investment in infrastructure that sustains wealth creation in the regions.

Brazil – legislation requires re investment into communities from Central Government.

## **Section 11**

### ***“Any other related matter”***

The increasing use of non resident workers from overseas can create a number of social and cultural issues. Australia's high mining safety standards may be compromised through language barriers and cultural norms.

Limited public transport means that non resident workers are increasingly using the road to access their workplaces. Pressure on these roads is significantly increasing, and will be further impacted by the growth of mining. The Department of Transport has indicated that there will be a two to three fold increase in wide load traffic throughout the Bowen Basin in the near future.

The availability of water to sustain non resident accommodation villages will continue to place pressure on resource communities. Added to this will be an ongoing advocacy for the delivery of no net loss to the agricultural industry due to mining land use alienation. These components not well managed have the capacity to deliver very undesirable long term consequences for the region and state.

The multiplier effect of the growth of the LNG and Coal industries at the same time is going to place further pressure on workforces. Industries will require similar skill sets for construction and operation placing more pressure on communities.

Council is supportive of the following Plan of action to deliver real change to the present unsustainable circumstances;

1. Impose an immediate moratorium on the expansion of any further FIFO, BIBO, DIDO workforce residency solutions until a balanced assessment is undertaken of the long term effects of non resident workforces in resource regions.
2. Recognise the urban communities of Isaac Region as state significant assets one of several international centres of coal industry excellence globally.
3. Protect Queensland's internationally recognised coal industry urban communities in line with best practice urban design and economic diversity, underpinned by the triple bottom line of social, economic and environmental sustainability.
4. Develop a sustainable land use strategy for the Isaac Region that guarantees coexistence of urban, agricultural and mining interests maximising the productivity of all sectors simultaneously
5. Appoint a dedicated minister of regional development to over see the creation of resource cites in the Bowen basin to grow and sustain the workers necessary for Australia to prosper over the next 100 years.
6. Reform QLD mining and planning legislation to ensure the development of the state mineral resources is not disconnected from the maximisation of wealth generation and economic sustainability in the Isaac Region.
7. Establish an independent planning commission to oversee the development of central Queensland inland cites serving the mineral development of the state.

8. Respect and recognise all affected land owners by enacting state legislation ensuring the equal value of community over mineral assets as the community and mineral development are mutually inclusive when undertaken in the best interests of all participants.
9. Stop the sterilisation of alternative land uses for urban and agricultural pursuits as all are critical to the long term vitality of the Isaac Region.
10. Strategically invest to grow infrastructure capacity to support regional inland cities in central Queensland.
11. Provide for diversified markets across housing supply to meet market needs and sustain full supply and diversity of product choice.

A robust and skilled urban community is vital to the long term viability and excellence of the coal industry in Qld especially the Isaac Region.

The cumulative impacts of mining across several spectrums has reached a point where it may dictate the need for a pause until all parameters are thoroughly considered to avert irreversible and intergenerational long term consequences.

It is time for an independent expert body to advise government and community on the sustainable land use issues surrounding the further development of the Northern Bowen Basin coal reserves in the Isaac Region.

The continued development of the Isaac Urban Communities is contingent on an improvement of the currently dysfunctional assessment process of the state government that lacks the long term commitment and vision for the Isaac Region to grow long term resource cities to maximise the Coal resource development for the benefit of all the state.

In recent years more and more decisions have been taken out of the community view and decided externally to the region. This is a recipe for a collapse of public confidence in the system and a disaster in long term community investment and security.

The erosion of family and community rights is a tragedy for the Isaac region and a matter of concern and economic significance for all Australians in this time of global economic turmoil.

It is important to maximise the use of all natural resources short and long term in the Isaac Region as the nation depends upon the regions success in the global market place for food and energy.