

FUNDED POSITIONS IN COUNCILS IMPACTED BY LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS LIKE RENEWABLE AND RESOURCE PROJECTS

MOTION 62

The LGAQ calls on the State and Federal Government to fund positions in councils to manage the impact of large renewable, critical minerals, mining and energy projects.

DESIRED OUTCOME

As Queensland and Australia strive for Net Zero, develop new decarbonisation strategies, explore critical minerals and develop new energy projects, the role of local government becomes increasingly crucial.

This demand for local government to facilitate State and National priorities puts additional pressure on already strained councils.

Many councils dealing with these projects have to dedicate resources to specifically manage community engagement, development assessments, project compliance, enforcement of state project conditions and legal breaches.

While many local governments understand the importance of decarbonisation and their pivotal role in the energy transformation, there is a clear need for specialised resources dedicated to supporting these efforts.

To avoid the shifting of costs to local government there needs to be funding allocated by State and Federal governments for roles to manage the impacts of large-scale developments.

This would ensure councils have the necessary expertise to manage the workload and complexities of renewable, critical minerals, and mining projects.

This support would enable smoother project implementation, better community engagement, and progress toward the energy transformation and Net Zero goals.

BACKGROUND

Local councils are at the heart of managing the impacts of large renewable, critical minerals, and mining projects.

These projects are key for regional growth and a sustainable economy but bring significant challenges which strain local government resources.

For instance, Isaac Regional Council is handling major projects like the Olive Downs, Carmichael Mine and Byerwen Mine.

These are vital for our economy but require extensive oversight, compliance, and community engagement, putting immense pressure on council.

The complexity of these projects often goes beyond the expertise available within local councils, causing inefficiencies and delays.

We need specialised support to manage these projects effectively and sustainably.

Creating dedicated positions within councils or a specialised state department would provide the necessary expertise.

This support would help local governments handle the workload, ensure compliance, and engage with stakeholders more effectively.

It would also allow councils to focus on community development and essential services.

By funding these positions or creating a specialised department, the State Government can significantly boost local councils' capacity to manage these projects.

This will promote sustainable regional development and support the well-being of our communities.



CASE STUDY/EXAMPLE

Isaac Regional Council (IRC) has been significantly impacted by the Carmichael Mine project, one of Australia's largest and most controversial coal mines.

This project, spearheaded by Adani Group, has presented both opportunities and challenges for the region, highlighting the need for specialised support from the State Government.

BACKGROUND

The Carmichael Mine, located in the Galilee Basin, promises to deliver significant economic benefits, including job creation and increased regional investment. However, the scale of the project has placed unprecedented demands on the IRC.

Managing environmental approvals, community consultations, infrastructure development, and ongoing compliance monitoring has stretched the council's limited resources.

CHALLENGES

Financial Strain: The financial burden on IRC has been substantial. The need to upgrade local infrastructure, such as roads and utilities, to support the mine's operations has required significant investment.

Additionally, the council has faced increased costs associated with regulatory compliance and environmental management.

Resource Allocation: The Carmichael project has required extensive time and effort from council staff, diverting attention from other critical local issues. The lack of dedicated resources to handle the project's demands has led to delays and inefficiencies.

Community Impact: The project has polarised the local community, necessitating careful management of stakeholder relations. Balancing the economic benefits with environmental and social concerns has been a delicate task for the IRC.

NEED FOR STATE SUPPORT

The Carmichael Mine case underscores the need for the State Government to fund dedicated positions within councils. Such support would provide the local government with the expertise and resources needed to manage the project's complexities effectively.

Benefits of Support

With additional state-funded positions, Local Government could:

- Achieve better outcomes for communities.
- Enhance project management and regulatory compliance.
- Improve community engagement and address stakeholder concerns more effectively.
- Ensure sustainable development practices are upheld.