

Review of the Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act – Key findings

Overview

The *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017* (the Act) commenced in 2018. The object of the Act is to ensure that residents of communities near large resource projects (LRP) benefit from their construction and operation.

The Act's three key elements are:

1. prohibition of 100% fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workforces
2. fair employment opportunities for locals
3. requiring social impact assessments (SIA) for LRPs.

In 2017, the Government committed to a post-implementation review (the review) of the Act. The Government committed to start the review within two years and complete the review within three years of the Act commencement.

Review methodology

The review was undertaken in consultation with the Department of Justice and Attorney General and the Queensland Human Rights Commission and followed best practice methodology outlined in the Queensland Productivity Commission, Office of Best Practice Regulation, Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation (2019).

The terms of reference (ToR) for the review were prepared in consultation with key stakeholders and released on the Department's website. The ToR included 18 questions, for example:

- What has the Act achieved?
- What have the 100% FIFO prohibition and the anti-discrimination provisions achieved and are they effective?

- What are the benefit/cost effects of these provisions to community, industry and government?
- Are there any unintended effects of the implementation of the Act?

The review was informed by views from stakeholders directly affected by the Act and data collected from the resource industry and government agencies. The Office of the Coordinator-General sought stakeholder views in two phases.

Phase 1: 12 February to 18 September 2020

- 74 structured interviews were held with resource industry, peak bodies, local and state government, workers' camp operators, unions and social service providers
- 21 online survey responses and five written submissions were received
- Quantitative data requested from the resource industry and government agencies.

Phase 2: 1 February to 30 April 2021

- The Consultation Report, detailing feedback and draft recommendations to Government, was released for a 12-week public comment period. Nine submissions were received.

For a list of stakeholders, the Office of the Coordinator-General consulted with, refer to Appendix A of the [Final Report](#).

Key findings of the review

Stakeholder engagement and submissions received on the [Consultation Report](#) identified:

- A consensus amongst stakeholders that the Act benefits regional communities, industry and the government by stipulating a clear government expectation and legislative framework for the

management of social impacts and use of FIFO workforces.

- The Act does not disadvantage stakeholders by imposing significant costs, although there is some cost in its implementation due to resources required to ensure Act obligations are met.
- The 100 per cent FIFO prohibition has delivered positive benefits to local communities overall.
- An increase in local worker numbers (and their families) at regional communities in the vicinity of large resource projects since commencement of the Act. (Note: This may also be attributed to reasons such as resource company 'live-local' policies and the COVID-19 pandemic public health requirements).
- No complaints regarding discrimination against local workers. (Note: It is not clear whether this is because no discrimination is occurring or because of an absence of awareness of the complaint process).
- Further education and awareness raising of the anti-discrimination provisions may be of benefit.
- Three resource projects have completed the enhanced SIA process, however as none has commenced construction or become operational, more data is needed to determine if the Act is on course to achieve its object.

For further detail on the findings of the review, refer to section 4 of the [Final Report](#).

Final recommendations

The [Final Report](#) details four recommendations on the implementation of the Act.

For information on the rationale for these recommendations, including how the submissions received on the [Consultation Report](#) were considered in finalising the recommendations, refer to sections 8 and 9 of the [Final Report](#).

1	Retain the Act.
2	<p>Undertake a further review* of the Act, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the SIA provisions and the enhanced SIA Guideline (2018).</p> <p><i>* It is recommended that the future review be undertaken when three large resource projects have: completed the enhanced SIA process under the Act; been operating for at least one year; and have undertaken their reporting requirements against an approved Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). The three large resource projects must include two projects assessed under the SDPWO Act and one project assessed under either the EP Act or the SDPWO Act.</i></p>
3	<p>Implement collaborative data collection for the SSRC Act through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) engagement with the resource industry to obtain annual updates on how large resource projects are achieving the intent of the Act b) ongoing collaboration with the resource industry to identify and leverage other avenues for data collection c) obtaining and analysing government collected data to identify whether the effects of the Act can be isolated from other factors that would have an influence on communities.
4	<p>Improve awareness and understanding of the anti-discrimination provisions by the resource communities.</p> <p>Update publicly available fact sheets to include further guidance.</p>

Next steps

The Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the review in collaboration with key stakeholders.