



Submission Number: 143
Date Received: 31/10/2011

Date: 28 October 2011
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Mr Tony Windsor MP
Chair
House Standing Committee on Regional Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Windsor

Re: House Standing Committee on Regional Australia

I am writing to you on behalf of Gold Coast City Council in support of the submission by Mentor Pty Ltd to the House Standing Committee on Regional Australia inquiry into the use of 'fly in fly out' (FIFO) workforce practices in regional Australia.

Gold Coast is Australia's sixth largest city and has experienced a five year annual average population growth rate of 3.2% with the city's population projected to reach 739,000 in 2026. Council is responsible for a unique set of conditions at a local level including managing the diversification of a narrow economic base that is largely reliant on the construction and tourism sectors and vulnerable to boom and bust cycles and global impacts. Currently, the city faces a number of challenges including a current unemployment rate of 6.7% compared to 5.4% Queensland and 5% Australia; and an increase in the average length of duration of unemployment from 52 to 104 weeks.

Council officers are working closely with Mentors, Gold Coast Airport Ltd and the Business GC Advisory Board (Council's interface with the business community) in the attraction of mining and resources industry FIFO business to the Gold Coast.

Mining companies are increasingly looking to regional centres such as the Gold Coast to supply labour and ancillary services as their projects come on line and expand. As a result the Gold Coast has the opportunity to promote itself as a region that can provide employment and recruitment solutions to the mining and resource sector as well as meeting supply demands of mining companies by building the capacity of our local businesses to ensure the city becomes a one stop shop for those companies using the facility.

Council has embarked on a number of initiatives including:

- roundtable discussions with educational facilities to support mining workers
- regular updates to the business community through the Business GC Advisory Board
- targeted meetings to identify potential business involvement
- participation in the organisation of the Mining Expo, held in the city in October, that resulted in attendance by approximately 10,000 people seeking information about employment opportunities within the mining and resource sector
- introductions to key strategic stakeholders including airline carriers
- the commencement of a labour audit of the city's labour force

- engagement with State Government's training department
- approval to engage a FIFO community liaison officer, once the facility is operational, to address social issues in the FIFO community

The FIFO project will achieve significant economic benefits for the city. The Gold Coast FIFO Terminal will, once operational, be the first of its kind in Australia to provide all encompassing services to its prospective clients.

Gold Coast City offers the following advantages for location of FIFO activities:

- well established infrastructure at the second terminal at Gold Coast Airport Ltd
- freight and medical facilities
- educational providers at the leading edge of teaching and training
- ideal geographically location
- easy commutable distance to a large number of mining sites in Queensland
- an excellent location for families with leading edge education providers, social infrastructure to support;
- a large employment catchment area including South East Queensland and northern rivers of New South Wales

Yours faithfully

Darren Scott
DIRECTOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR PROJECTS
For the Chief Executive Officer