



From:
Sent: Monday, 2 April 2012 8:07 AM
To:
Subject: FW: Submission - Inquiry into use of Fly in Fly out Workforce Practices in Regional Australia

From: Shely Ourana
Sent: Friday, 30 March 2012 5:02 PM
To: Committee, Reps (REPS)
Subject: Submission - Inquiry into use of Fly in Fly out Workforce Practices in Regional Australia

30th March 2012

Emailed to:

Mr Tony Windsor,MP

Chair

Standing Committee on Regional Australia

House of Representatives

PO BOX 6021

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

RE: INQUIRY INTO USE OF FIFO WORKFORCE PRACTICES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Dear Minister,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Term of Reference

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

THIS ENQUIRY SHOULD NOT BE ABOUT TOWNS ACCOMMODATING MINING CULTURE AND FIFOs.

IT SHOULD BE ABOUT HOW MINING COMPANIES NEED TO CHANGE THEIR CULTURE TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF THE TOWNS THEY AFFECT.

IMPACTS of FIFOs on The BROOME COMMUNITY

Broome is an ethnically and culturally diverse town.

It has a long social history of mixing bohemian, indigenous and mainstream lifestyles, to interesting and tolerance-promoting effect.

The social and community concern in Broome is not about FIFO and DIVOs as defined in this morning's discussions [at sitting in Broome]

BROOME already has a considerable work force that is based in the town, spends money in town, uses local services & engages in community activities while coming and going from other major centres and remote communities for work. These people work in social services, mines, health, education, horticultural, environmental & other areas. Many of these people are long time Broome residents. Some are transient.

Short term residents employed in Broome and are necessary to the survival, both socially and economically, of the town and its services. These people wish to be here, consider themselves to be Broome connected, are accepted as such and live and act accordingly. They include the influx of dry season workers on whom tourism, hospitality and other small businesses depend for workers.

Rather our concerns are based on FIFOs from the mining & resources section as being of a singular type.

Broome relies on families and a diverse population of single people, all with a variety of interests, to thrive. The Broome Community concern is that the current naturally diverse nature of the Broome will be compromised beyond survival by an influx of MONOCULTURAL FIFOs.

Community health is not just about economics – it is about our “lian” – about feeling good with, between and about ourselves, our community, our environment, our culture, our lifestyle and each other.

Resource based FIFOs are bad for lian.

This is obvious from the experience of communities around Australia already affected by this destructive, money grubbing, profit motivated practice.

A FIFO workforce is not diverse – it is often a large influx of men 25-40 years old.

They have narrow interests and spending patterns. They spend on beer and cigarettes and take away food on their days off. They force up prices in whatever other areas in which they do spend because they don't care how much they have to pay to get what they want and they increase demand on limited and seasonal resources.

Due to rapid expansion over the last 10 or so years Broome already suffers from social issues that impact on law and order – these include alcohol and amphetamine related violence. The concern is that this type of behaviour would increase as the numbers of disconnected men increase around town. They are already an issue in some pubs on weekends off in terms of extreme drunken behaviour and inappropriate sexual advances. They have been observed on local beaches doing wheelies and cutting up the beach and driving dangerously and possibly drunkenly. They have “taken over” the pools in some resorts by drinking beer in numbers and creating inappropriate atmospheres for families - which deters women and children from swimming.

HOUSING & ACCOMODATION

As we’ve heard this morning there are already issues with high rentals due to state government subsidies. Further increases in rents will cause the small business owners, especially in the areas of art, cultural, performance and alternative lifestyles and in women’s interest businesses like boutiques, hairdressers etc. because people can’t afford housing. **This would be a major cultural shift in Broome.**

Increased rent and availability of accommodation would also affect the travellers and transients who wish to work here in the dry – they could and would not choose to stay and work in a town with a mining culture and / or more exorbitant costs than we already face.

TOURISM

Tourism affected when accommodation rates and costs of flights and car rentals increase due to FIFO demands.

Tourists come to Broome for the culture that exists here – relaxed, open, easy, “arty” – this culture is already being affected by increasing costs.

Workers and residents come here from the Pilbara for their holidays to get away from the mining culture... they won’t come to Broome for more of the same.

Flight seat availability for locals and tourists alike will be affected as seats are booked en masse by mining companies.

Increased numbers of planes and helicopters over Broome town centre. Now it’s a tourist novelty – a jet every hour taking off and landing and a massive increase in helicopters ferrying workers around would be an unacceptable intrusive nightmare!

Resource sector FIFOs are NOT community or tourism friendly, no matter how nice they might be as individuals when they’re at home, and no matter what spin Woodside and the State Government put on it!

We don’t want them in Broome – 6 to 8000 of them over the next decade while the threatened port is built is not a drop in our bucket – it’s overwhelming and has the potential to change Broome irrevocably, and we who choose to live here, whether over generations or for mere years, love our town as it is! We have not been consulted as to whether we want these changes or not & for us it’s not just about minimising impact on hospitals and accommodation – it’s about the very survival of our town as a thriving and diverse art and tourism community – of all colours, types, creeds & lifestyles! This is what tourists and visitors come for...

As to local employment, it's been shown in surveys of small businesses in resource affected towns that 70% of PROMISED local jobs don't eventuate – they go to FIFOs instead. [Trade Union survey 2012]

Resource sector FIFOs, orange jackets and suits alike, put strain on all resources and only benefit a few businesses. Many businesses in Broome that are cooperating with Woodside only do so out of fear that if the complex at JPP is built there will be NO OTHER income options as the town becomes a mining town and the diversity of the population they now depend on to make a living is lost. And it is also considered that if this goes ahead it's just a beginning in terms of port expansion and industrialisation of the Kimberley, of which Broome would become the base town. Many more FIFOs than already threatened!!! And WATER supply is already an issue!

THIS ENQUIRY SHOULD NOT BE ABOUT TOWNS ACCOMMODATING MINING CULTURE AND FIFOs.

IT SHOULD BE ABOUT HOW MINING COMPANIES NEED TO CHANGE THEIR CULTURE TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF THE TOWNS THEY AFFECT.

FIFO rape and pillage has gone on long enough!

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

- The major concern of a FIFO workforce is the social, and economical, aspect and the damage caused to established communities. A FIFO workforce does not value their town and are not an integrated part of the community.
- Sporting and community groups suffer as they can no longer attract enough volunteers, players or participants.
- FIFO people are less likely to contribute to the community either with their time or finances, and hence fundraising efforts can also be affected.
- Most towns in regional Australia have limited medical facilities and basic hospitals. Increases in FIFO workers increase the demand on these services, which are already struggling to meet the demand of the resident population.
- When companies use a FIFO workforce, most employees are housed in a group house, which can have a negative impact on the community. A large group of people living in what used to be a family home can increase the instance of socially inappropriate behaviours and has a negative impact on neighbours in terms of traffic congestion and noise.
- Rents are affected to the point where locals are forced to leave towns.
- Local businesses are affected by lack of staff due to unavailability of affordable rental properties, or forced to close entirely due to unaffordable housing.
- In Karratha a FIFO workforce of around 15,000 has contributed to safety fears for Senior High School students and locals who have questioned whether the community could continue supporting the transient population.
- In the Pilbara FIFO workers are having a detrimental impact on the community. Fights in overcrowded taverns are now common place.
- Litter is a problem.

- Women don't feel safe to walk around in public.
- Tourism is affected by rising airline prices due to increased seat demand from miners.
- Tourism is affected by lack of rooms due to increases in numbers of mining administration & associated staff on short visits.

Mines must be required to

- Use at least a majority semi- PERMANENT town based work force of families and single people who choose to live in a community, who can and will become productively integrated into it, when their operations are near a service town.
- Roster these town based workers on normal 8 hour shift [not 12 hour] so that they can be community involved and productive.
- Teach workers cultural respect for the townspeople they live near and visit.
- Monitor and control behaviour in the camps and in the towns.

Governments need to implement changes

- Regulate as above as appropriate
- Instigate a mining tax to ameliorate the effects of mining on regional centres
- Change the fringe benefit tax which has a significant impact. When companies move people, they are required to subsidise their rental, therefore they incur, fringe benefits tax. Companies, who pay air fares and accommodation, can claim them as a tax deduction.
- Financial incentives need to be offered, both to the company hiring residential employees, and the worker who lives in the community.
- Current policies encourage resource companies not to engage with local councils. This results in resource companies ignoring legal clearances to undertake work.

I ask you to carefully consider the overall effect of FIFO on our society. It is clear that a FIFO workforce does not promote a happy and sustainable community.

Shely Ourana

This submission is an expansion of that given verbally to the Committee in Broome on March 30th, 2012.