

Sc

Dear Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment in terms of the current inquiry into FI/FO & DI/DO for mining operations in regional Australia.

I have been a resident within the Town of Port Hedland for nearly 12 years. In that time I have been able to witness first hand the negative impact that FI/FO has on our Town of Port Hedland community.

While appreciative that for specialist trades and the competitive construction industry, FI/FO is a necessary element, it really has to be limited to that. At the moment there is very little in place from State and Federal Government to dis-incentivise companies from adopting the practice of FI/FO and I feel strongly that this should be addressed. This is critical to ensure that FI/FO is not expanded and used for operational workforces that could otherwise be residentially based in Town.

I also feel strongly that more should be done to encourage integration of FI/FO personnel into the local community. While I appreciate that they are construction industry employees, who work 12 hour shifts and have little time for anything else. These people however are "humans" and do need to have available opportunities so that they can visit the local shops, beach, sports grounds etc. I feel companies should be encouraged to adopt "integration plans" for FI/FO workforces that way not only better integrating them into the local community but also serving a greater overall social responsibility and due diligence in terms of mental health and further allied support for FI/FO workers.

In addition to the above, I would like to make the following comments:

- the proliferation of FI/FO in a community can have an extremely detrimental impact on local housing markets, particularly when resource industry based, associated service businesses operate on the FIFO model. Within the Town of Port Hedland the average house price was \$1.12 million (March 2011) 2.3 times higher than average house price in Perth. Average rental rates are \$1,772 per week (March 2011). These are not sustainable and impact significantly on our Town.

- Many permanent residents, who do not have the benefit of a resource industry based income, are unable to pay the high rentals resulting from FIFO staff competing in the domestic housing market and are therefore forced to leave the community. We have seen a continual drain of long time locals having to leave town, sometimes their town of birth, simply because they were unable to afford to live here.

- Local small businesses and other local employers, who have traditionally been required to provide staff housing, are unable to compete in local rental markets due to prices paid by resource industry based businesses with FIFO staff.

- Accommodation price pressures resulting from traditional tourist accommodation being used by FIFO workers, has drastically reduced the financial viability of the tourism industry in the Town of Port Hedland. Currently the Town of Port Hedland has no backpackers facilities (the ones that were in town closed down December 2006) and there is little incentive for anyone to operate a backpackers accommodation business when they can rent out their premises to FIFO companies for in excess of \$2,000 per week. Also our caravan parks are full of workers and there is little to no room for tourists which has a significant impact during tourist season (May-August). Effectively squeezing tourists, travelling hospitality staff etc out of town due to lack of tourist accommodation.

- The community of the Town of Port Hedland is deprived of many of the services and trades which would be normally be found in a town of our size (approx 20,000) due to service trades and businesses servicing the resource industry operating FIFO operations.

- The introduction of FIFO workforces has severely undermined our community's ability to maintain strong sporting, service and community organisations. This is something that could be addressed through the company developed "integration plan" and should be given heightened support to

encourage companies to look at these "normal community life" areas and how they can contribute and improve the lot of the local community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and I look forward to the Standing Committee coming to the Town of Port Hedland to further gain an understanding of the impact of this practice on our community.

Kelly Howlett  
South Hedland based resident &  
Mayor  
Town of Port Hedland