



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# FLY-IN, FLY-OUT INQUIRY MUST INCLUDE HEALTH



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The Fly-In, Fly-Out Federal Parliamentary Inquiry must examine key issues relating to the health of workers, especially mental health, obesity and proper access to general practitioners, the AMA(WA) said today.

"I note with concern that the Inquiry's Terms of Reference emphasises economic issues but fails to properly emphasise health and socially related subjects," AMA(WA) President Associate Professor David Mountain said.

"It is important and well overdue that the economic issues surrounding FIFO are examined by a Parliamentary committee, but if they don't include health as a key part of their terms of reference, committee members are missing a significant opportunity to have a real impact on the lives of FIFO workers and their families," he said.

"Recent reports have shown significant health concerns around FIFO workers – ranging from diabetes, to obesity, mental health and heart issues and it is important that any review involves this key area," he said.

Data already available shows that working different shifts can be very disruptive to lives and relationships. The mining industry is full of stories about FIFO workers suffering general health problems, relationship breakdowns, and sometimes the abuse of drugs, especially alcohol and Kronic.

"Medical professionals acknowledge FIFO workers face a range of special health demands and it is vital that the Parliamentary Inquiry consider these issues and propose solutions.

"Especially worrying is that, due to their unusual lifestyles, FIFO workers are often not able to develop a close relationship with a general practitioner," he said.

"It is equally important that health services for people living in remote towns that service FIFO workers and their work sites be closely examined as well, due to the major effects

increased pressure on resources and increases in local costs and rents have on medical services and local employment,” he said.

The AMA(WA) will be making a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry based on the personal knowledge and experience of medical professionals who have, for some years, advocated a serious inquiry into health and social issues of FIFO.

“We would also encourage Committee members to visit Western Australia and pay particular attention to the Kimberley and the Pilbara,” A/Prof Mountain said.