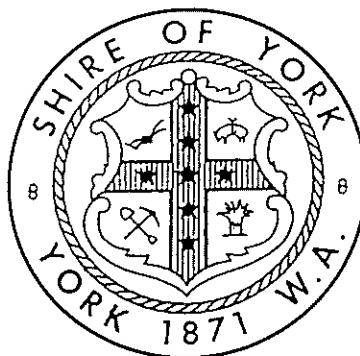


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Shire of York

Submission

INQUIRY INTO FLY-IN, FLY-OUT / DRIVE-IN, DRIVE-OUT MINING
OPERATIONS

TO: THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: ra.reps@aph.gov.au

The Shire of York submits the following views on _ Fly-in, Fly-out / Drive-in, Drive-out work practices in rural and regional Australia.

Rural Dormitories

There is both an opportunity and a threat to peri-urban rural centres with some becoming dormitory suburbs of metropolitan centres due to travel times within cities to reach and return from airports, increased land and housing prices, lifestyle pressures and population growth.

Increasingly FIFO workers are seeing a benefit in a rural shift due to greater family security, reduced land and housing costs (purchase and rent), travel times being reasonable but without congestion, a sense of community and proximity to metropolitan services and entertainment if required.

Some social issues arise from increased numbers of FIFO families as there is a tendency to over indulge during time-off to compensate for controlled conditions on work sites which can lead to police intervention, noise complaints and in a few instances domestic violence.

This culture is the same in metropolitan centres but due to population levels it is not noticed as much.

FIFO families have advised the local government that they feel more secure and included in rural communities but have concerns about secondary and tertiary education access and in many cases families will re-locate to Perth when children reach high school age.

There are issues with partners obtaining suitable employment opportunities in rural areas which can impinge on career paths and sense of worth.

FIFO workers have expressed a sense of disconnectedness regardless of which community the family resides in as they generally cannot engage in sport (primarily team sports) and families tend to enter into activities and friendships independent of the FIFO family member.

FIFO families re-locating to peri-urban rural centres will only look at towns with growth prospects and capital appreciation opportunities in addition to the normal aspects of education, health, recreation, security and work opportunities for partners and children.

Drive-in, Drive-out

Peri-urban areas have dealt with the unquantified issue of drive-in, drive-out workers particularly where state policies prevent government employee housing being supplied within a set radius of the metropolitan area.

This appears to be most relevant in the education and health sectors and it significantly impacts on the social fabric of a town along with volunteering and sport participation.

In the case of York with a current estimated population of 4000 it is considered that there is a minimum of 80 public service staff operating on drive-in, drive-out systems with many advising they would live in the town if accommodation was available at a reasonable standard and price.

At 97kms from the Perth CBD York apparently is inside the radius for government employees housing.

Future Workforce Needs and Movements

Large scale developments in and adjacent to peri-urban areas will result in drive-in, drive-out workers making conscious quality of life decisions on where to reside and commute to jobs which may only have a set time span (years rather than decades).

Residential place of choice may be up to 60kms different to workplace of choice as travel times of 20-50 minutes on uncongested roads is considered acceptable.

Accommodation Types

Rural towns usually do not have an accommodation type and standard acceptable to younger generation workers who appear to want independent living units rather than communal accommodation.

Additionally they appear to want the choice to rent or purchase as a investment but there appears to be a real push and need for quality rather than minimum standards.

Information Technology

FIFO/DIDO workers and their families all want high speed and secure information services for broadband mobile phone and other services and often these are not available or there is not full coverage in rural areas.

Communication is a major issue for FIFO families.

Opportunities

Development of regional airports in peri-urban areas would reduce airport congestion in metropolitan areas and provide a population boost for some rural towns with the consequent flow on effects to local and regional economies.

Regards

Ray Hooper
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

cc. All Councillors