

*Inquiry on the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) and 'drive-in, drive-out' (DIDO) workforce practices in Regional Australia.*

WA has come a long way in a relatively short space of time. It is important as we manage our transition into the twenty first century that we continue to learn from the legacy we leave behind and not take what we have here for granted. WA is blessed with employment from an abundance of natural resources. From fisheries, precious metals, gem stones, oil and gas to iron ore. Our climate provides an ideal growing environment for a whole range of employment in agricultural and pastoral areas. Ample produce for our population also means our potential can be more easily realized. This includes contributions to science, sport and the arts.

Western Australia needs to consider the opportunities available from a carbon friendly economy. This may include a new manufacturing sector to generate a better return from our assets. WA has the technological capability to lead the world. Revenue and employment can be moved away from the State's land intensive agricultural and pastoral zones where the ratio of return from this type of land investment continues to decline. We owe our future generations the opportunity to enjoy this land. It is potentially time to give these areas back to the safe hands of its traditional owners for regeneration.

In regional WA, particularly in the North, our regional towns need to become more attractive places for families to live and work. Increased financial support for our Shires can be directed towards plants, trees, gardens and parks, and renewable energy and water reclamation schemes. Northern areas deserve the spoils of economic development which exist as a result of the abundance of natural resources. The prevalence of FIFO workers needs to be overcome as it denies families unity. Families form the foundation of society. Adjustments should be made to the State Agreements with Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton and the Fortescue Metals Group so housing can be provided for the families of FIFO contractors. Families can then be given the option to be together.

Regional areas of Australia can be used to grow new industries. The flow on effects of increased population levels in the regions will lead to demands for new housing and employment in the provision of goods and services. A move to decentralize the State's population to the regions will help relieve the strain on Perth. It is cheaper and quicker to expand infrastructure in regional WA.

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