



YOUR REF:
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7 October 2011

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) workforce practices in regional Australia

To Whom It May Concern,

Mackay Regional Council seek input to the Inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) workforce practices in regional Australia.

Council adopted a formal stance on the issue of a Fly in Fly Out workforce, confirming it supports a choice for employees to reside in the Mackay region; and does not accept mandatory 100% FIFO.

The management of the FIFO issue is critical as it has long term implications for our region's communities.

A report, tabled in council on 27th July, shows about 61 per cent of the non-resident workers in the Isaac Region live in the Mackay and Whitsunday region. At that meeting a motion was passed as follows:

THAT Council

Confirm that its position regarding FIFO is that it supports choice by employees and that mandatory 100% FIFO is not acceptable;

(Council Minute: Ordinary Meeting 27/7/11)

Council believes that providing a worker with a choice is paramount, without any interference from their employer or the community.

Where an employee actually lives should be their personal choice. At the moment there is a mix with some employees living in communities immediately adjacent to the mines, others living on the coast and driving in and out to work their shift series and others who FIFO from destinations much further afield.

Their choice of domicile is affected by a number of factors. Some of these are of a pure personal nature while others are external factors beyond their control. For

example, the price of housing in the communities close to the mines is often prohibitive, due to very short supply and associated building costs. The employers have in many cases only assisted in the provision of additional permanent housing in these communities to a very limited extent.

Having a strong proportion of the workforce living in the region provides for better social cohesion and the development of a community. Should an employer create a situation where its entire workforce is flown in and out this social cohesion obviously cannot occur and the local community sees no benefit from the development.

Mackay's growth has been reasonably dependant on mine workers exercising their options by choosing to live in Mackay and driving in and out to the mines. Council is anxious to see this maintained and growth continue and sees the principle of free choice by the mineworkers being essential.

As mentioned above, the issue of choice is paramount and employees should be able to choose where they reside without interference of either their employer or the community.

Yours sincerely,

Gerard Carlyon

Director Community Services