

From: Glen Ditchmen
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2009
To: Economics, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Fwd: Section 23AG - lobby against changes
Attachments: Película.wmv;
Sedco_700_Shallow_Gas_Blow_Out_6_June_2009_11_35am.wmv;
Lifeboat Drop.wmv

To the Honorable Members of The Senate,

Dear Sir or Madame,

I wish to write to you and complain against the unfairness of the proposed changes to Section 23AG concerning the introduction of taxation for overseas workers. My name is Glen Ditchmen and I presently reside overseas and travel home to visit my partner and children on a frequent basis. I am employed as a Rig Maintenance Supervisor on an offshore rig, off the coast of West Africa. As you will notice I have included three Oil Rig related accidents that have been circulated to me in the last week for the purposes of awareness to ensure such accidents don't occur on the rig I am assigned to. The first clip shows a derrickman 90 feet up in the derrick about to catch and pull back a stand of drill pipe whilst the driller is removing them from the hole. As you will notice something goes horribly wrong and the derrickman narrowly avoids being killed. The second clip shows a rig off the coast of Nigeria which has drilled into shallow gas and has an uncontrollable blow out. Luckily there were no ignition sources and the rig was able to winch off location and without loss of life. The third clip shows a life boat being raised when a failure occurs and it drops back into the ocean. Through lots of constant training and a large amount of luck all of the above accidents were without loss of life. In my 26 years in the Industry I have witnessed the loss of two fellow crew members to cerebral malaria, watched a fellow crewmember drown in freezing water before we could rescue him and lost another friend when a piece of equipment fell on him. Almost all of my Rig friends have had similar experiences. The oil field as it is known, is quite a close knit group and never before have I witnessed such an upheaval as with the proposed changes in Section 23AG. It is the unfairness of the way it is being introduced that has stirred everyone up. We are away from our homes for much of the year, we work and reside on steel structures at sea, in often unsanitary conditions, we sleep in bunks, (not beds), we work long hours, and we spend large amounts of our leave in service schools just to keep our positions, and the proposed changes are going to introduce, not partial taxing based on the percentage of time we are in Australia, but the full amount as if we were residing at home in a comfortable occupation in the company of our loved ones. As you can imagine with the long periods we are away from home, a great number of my colleagues are separated and like myself pay child support. Can you imagine the absolute unfairness of paying approximately 37% taxation and another 27% in child support, and being left with 36% to try and support loved ones and maintain any sort of a life? The general consensus is that a large proportion of the elderly rig workers will retire and move home and take unemployment or retire early. Those with families still together are considering their options, and I have no doubt that many of these will be prepared to bite the bullet and pay the tax. Those who are in the younger age bracket and those without family are mostly making, or have made plans to move overseas permanently. I could not have imagined that any Australian Government could have introduced such unfair changes as are being proposed, just for the sake of revenue raising. Presently most of the money we earn is sent home to Australia and spent within the respective communities. If the legislation is passed much of that inflow of capital will instead flow into other countries that are already welcoming the oilfield influx. To those of you who have taken the time to watch the clips and read my email I thank you.

Yours Sincerely

Glen Ditchmen