



2011

Inquiry into the use of Fly in Fly out Workforce Practicing in Regional Australia

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loneliness
depression
abuse
in families
drugs & alcohol
sexual relationships



Jim Pearce –

Mining Community Advocate

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Mining Communities Advocate

My name is Jim Pearce, I am currently sponsored by the CFMEU (Mining & Energy Division, Queensland) as a Community Advocate, my role includes;

- Recognition of the need for a resources community to have its own representative group.
- To work with the community in the election of community members to the representative group.
- To train/coach elected community groups through the processes of communication and how to function with credibility and professionalism.
- The management of meetings, recording of minutes, incorporation and the establishment of appropriate financial management systems.
- The writing of letters, submission to State Government Agencies and Ministers.
- The writing and presentation of media statements
- How to communicate with the community through print media, social media and established contacts list.
- The intent is to assist in the development of these groups to instil confidence and know how to make effective representatives on behalf of the community.

I served in the Queensland Legislative Assembly for 20 years, prior to being elected to Parliament, I worked 11 ½ years in the Coal Industry and lived in Dysart for a number of years.

Community representative groups are currently active in Moranbah, Collinsville, Dysart, Blackwater, Moura with Middlemount in the early stages of forming up its own representative group.

All of these communities have been seriously impacted on by the fly in-fly out, drive in-drive out & bus in-bus out employment policies of all mining and contractor companies operating in the region.

Communities Position on FIFO, DIDO & BIBO

All communities acknowledge that FIFO, DIDO & BIBO are now entrenched and a necessary requirement in the provision of workers to meet the demand for a rapidly expanding coal industry.

While there is an increasing resentment toward the number of workers camps being constructed within the boundaries of resource towns, only one community, Blackwater, is promoting the building of workers camps on **mine leases**.

Communities are united in the belief that mining companies now prefer fifo/dido as an employment strategy because it relieves the company of its responsibilities to providing housing.

- It is a cheap option.
- It prevents workers from getting together as a collective.
- It is easy to impose, as a condition of employment to live in a camp, without a choice of living with family in a nearby resource community.

What are the Impacts of a Non-Resident Workforce on the Community?

- Population imbalance.
- Safety of women and children.
- The liveability of the community.
- Road safety – higher risk.
- Increases in the presence of alcohol, drugs, prostitution, sex offenders and depression.
- Communities being overtaken by temporary accommodation units.
- Police and ambulance staffing numbers allocated at official population numbers – where actual resident and non-resident numbers can be more than double official population.

- High cost of housing – forcing people not employed in the industry or a related industry, to live in caravan parks.
- High cost of rental, private and company owned – up to \$3000 per week.
- 80-90% of Hotel/Motel accommodation booked out months in advance.
- High cost of developed land and the shortage of land.
- Housing under rental contracts become run down – lawns not mowed, rubbish visible and up to half a dozen mine work vehicles parked on footpath or in yards.
- Loss of families who move away because they are not happy with the mix in the community.
- Money is not going to local or regional economy.
- Extended waiting time at hospital out patients and doctor surgery's, due to high numbers of non-resident workers accessing local services.
- Loss of skilled workers from local government and farming.

Impacts of Large Numbers of FIFO, DIDO Workers Commuting

- Increased risk of traffic incidents and damage to road networks (local, state & federal).
- Fuel sales increase.
- Take away food sales increase (health impacts).
- Alcohol outlets do very well.

For the commuter, in addition to the above;

- Pressure on relationships due to extended days away from home.
- Pressure on home stay partner, due to loss of companionship, burden of raising children on their own and losing the ability to stay in touch with friends.
- Impact on father/child(ren)'s relationship.
- Odd jobs not done.

Strategies for Economic Diversification in Towns with Large FIFO & DIDO Workforces

- Commitment from government and project proponents to engage community, with local government, to negotiate short, medium and long term infrastructure and social needs of community and for those commitments to be locked in under the EIS process.
- This could include affordable housing, community housing, targeted housing, partnership investment to improve medical service delivery, incentives for doctors, dentists, speech therapists and mental health.
- Some of these services could be on a share basis between local communities.
- Take pressure off Hotel/Motels & caravan parks through an accommodation managed plan.

Key Skill Sets Targeted for Mobile Workforces

- Mining companies use skills shortages as a means of talking up a need for fifo.
- A weak government which accepts untested, the arguments for fifo as put by industry.
- Communities acknowledge that there are specialist skill sets that do not operate in numbers through the regions, but dismiss claims that the skills shortage is about lesser duties i.e. plant operators, truck drivers and hands on labourers.
- A lack of a commitment to training of people has left companies facing this so called skills shortage.
- Lack of opportunities for the youth of our communities in apprenticeships and training.

Provision of Services – Infrastructure and Housing Availability for FIFO & DIDO Workforces

- Non-resident workers take advantage of existing health services provided under permanent population figures, which means that hospitals are catering for an ‘in’ and ‘out-patient’ numbers that far exceed budget allocations.
- Doctors overloaded with demand for services.
- Police numbers are sometimes, 2 or 3 below recognised population to police officer ratios.
- Ambulance officers are far below population requirements.
- Lack of dedicated housing for doctors, police, ambulance officers, nurses and teachers are responsible for lack of consistency in recruitment outcomes.
- Rental accommodation is abused by contractor companies who will pay excessive high rents and house multiple numbers of workers.

Strategies to Optimise FIFO & DIDO Experience for Employees, their Families, Communities and Industry

- The only way that this can happen to the benefit of local communities is for government and employers to work in partnership with the community to identify and implement strategies and take the communities suggestions seriously. Give communities ‘ownership’ in the process.
- Employers need to encourage those workers who, as a choice, indicate a desire to live locally with their families.
- Encourage family focused employees to live as a family locally.
- Companies to present themselves as worker family friendly employers.
- Support workers and their families, financially in the same way as they financially support non-resident workers, through subsidising for accommodation and meal expenses.

Potential Opportunities for Non-Mining Communities with a Narrow Economic basis to Diversify their Economic Base by Providing FIFO & DIDO workforces

Resource communities are supportive of sharing in the benefits of mining, so long as local & regional people are employed and that **Queenslanders** are employed, ahead of interstate and international workers.

- Economic benefits will flow through to the areas from where workers come.
- Opportunities are dependent on where wage packets are spent.

Current Initiatives and Responses of the Commonwealth State and Territory Governments and Other Related Matters

There are currently NO government initiatives in response to the blow out in FIFO, DIDO & BIBO – non-resident workers being housed in accommodation villages or private and company owned rental accommodation.

- A recent Queensland State Government decision to approve, despite the angst of the community, a 100% fly in-fly out operation workforce for the proposed BMA owned Caval Ridge Mine, south of Moranbah has left the community devastated and without hope.
- This approval once again highlighted the government’s lack of respect for people and their communities’ well-being and an arrogant response to the social impacts that come with population imbalance.
- The state government’s Urban Land Development Authority is supposed to be the answer to community housing issues in Moranbah and Blackwater. The state government claims that the work of the UDLA has no connection with FIFO.

- These communities recognise and understand the intent of the ULDA agenda, but believe that in the long term they will cater for increased numbers of non-resident workers living in the town.
- The ULDA attracted a high level of resistance from community groups over the authority's lack of effective consultation and have been sooking since, refusing to communicate and update progress of their developments.

Thank you, for taking the time to consider my brief, if you wish to discuss this further, please contact me on 0419 778 401.

Jim Pearce

Central Queensland Coal Communities Advocate &

Former Member of Parliament

Don't turn our TOWNS into CAMPS!

