



# Karen Andrews MP

Federal Member For McPherson

6 October 2011



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Mr Tony Windsor MP  
Chair  
House Standing Committee on Regional Australia  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr Windsor

**RE: Submission to the House Standing Committee on Regional Australia**

As the Federal Member for McPherson, I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the House Standing Committee on Regional Australia's inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out workers' (FIFO) and 'drive-in, drive-out' (DIDO) work practices in regional Australia.

I am very supportive of the development of a fly-in, fly-out terminal on the Gold Coast for two reasons;

1. Because we already have the infrastructure in place; and
2. The Gold Coast is well placed to provide workers.

I recently discussed this concept with the Business Gold Coast Advisory Board; an organisation tasked with strengthening and diversifying the Gold Coast's economic base so as to encourage national and international business investment in the city. The business leaders in attendance were also supportive of this proposal and agreed that current infrastructure is able to facilitate such a strategy.

Our infrastructure includes 33 government and non-government schools on the southern Gold Coast, as well as two universities, Bond University and Southern Cross University, and a number of registered training institutions. Medical facilities on the southern Gold Coast include Robina Hospital, John Flynn Private Hospital, and a variety of allied health professionals, specialists and general practitioners.

Further to educational and medical amenities, there are a variety of shopping centres, retail spaces, cafes and restaurants, as well as RSL Clubs, Surf Clubs and other local community organisations that could support fly-in, fly-out workers and their families.



Through the utilisation of educational infrastructure and resources already available on the Gold Coast, an educational hub can be created to compliment the education requirements for fly-in, fly-out workers. This could boost the tertiary education take up rate on the Gold Coast, boost the local economy and further develop a skilled workforce in the mining and resources industry. Ultimately, this would lead to a more diverse range of service being provided by tertiary institutions on the Gold Coast, benefiting the wider local and business communities.

The southern Gold Coast is also well placed to provide workers as unemployment on the southern Gold Coast has been consistently higher than the national average. Figures for the month of August reveal that the unemployment rate on the southern Gold Coast is at 6.9 percent, compared to the national rate of 5.1%. This is due to a downturn in the tourism and construction industries which traditionally dominated the local economy. This presents an opportunity to provide a skilled workforce to the mining and resources sector.

I am hopeful that the House Standing Committee during its deliberations will take the time to visit the Gold Coast to see what it has to offer for a fly-in, fly-out terminal. I look forward to discussing this issue further with members of the Committee and eagerly await the release of the inquiry's report.

Kind Regards

**Karen Andrews MP**

Federal Member for McPherson