



Inquiry into Fly –In, Fly-Out/Drive –In, Drive-Out Mining Operations

The City of Mandurah is pleased to be able to make a contribution to the discussion on FIFO/DIDO and the impact on the local community. It is fair to say that we have been able to find very little in the way of statistical and/or quality research in the area, particularly as it relates to the City of Mandurah or the Peel region in Western Australia.

Some statistics and information on FIFO workers and families;

- There are more than 50,000 mining workers in WA, many are FIFO/DIDO.
- 80% are male and aged between 25-55 years of age, with about 70% married with children. (CMEWA, 2005)
- Mandurah has one of the highest rates of FIFO workers in WA.
- The FIFO population supports local retail, industry, trade and business generally.
- The FIFO population can have adverse effects on local community organisations, especially sporting, with availability limited to train, play regularly and commit to local committees etc.
- The mining industry pays well, but overseas research shows that conditions can affect the lifestyle and health of miners, their partners and families.
- Studies support the notion that anxiety and depression in children of FIFO families was higher than typical children.
- Key deficiencies in the household have been identified in FIFO families including; lack of emotional support, reduced household safety, anxiety by children on perceived work safety, living by two sets of rules (mum v dad), financial awareness (making up by showering with expensive gifts vs paying off mortgages), reduced spousal quality time and reduced practical report including mentoring.
- Local schools are reporting that many children are being removed from school for extra holidays, outside of the regular school holidays, with this occurring for some families up to four times a year
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that Mandurah has large numbers of FIFO/DIDO which is leading to social isolation for many in the community, particularly those who come to Mandurah from other states or countries

There have been several recent studies and reports into the effects of FIFO on communities and local economies in Australia. These include a recent significant report by Susan Clifford. *The Effects of Fly-in/Fly-out Commute Arrangements and Extended Working Hours on the Stress, Lifestyle, Relationships and Health Characteristics of Western Australian Mining Employees and their Partners* in August 2009 which found FIFO could be attributed to family dysfunction, guilt, loneliness, substance abuse, depression and reduced commitment to mining operations and on the upside, FIFO was seen to encourage personal independence and freedom, the adventurous spirit and mate ship among workers.

The report of 222 FIFO workers across the State supported that there was no direct correlation between long term FIFO employees and stress, general health and family dysfunction and that the rates of these attributes by FIFO workers was not that different from stay at home workers across the general public. The finding results largely disputed anecdotal evidence as employees and partners were generally no more or less likely to suffer stress, poor relationships or poor health.

In summary we do not really know enough about the effects of FIFO/DIDO workers on the local Mandurah economy, family units and broader community wellness. However there is evidence to support the notion that FIFO/DIDO are important to the economic fabric of

Mandurah. Having said this there are social negatives including limited ability to get involved locally and impacts on families, however this is an ongoing area of study.

The City of Mandurah would be keen to be involved in any work being done in this area as anecdotally there are many issues and as a City we are struggling to understand the impact on people holding these roles on both the individual, family and the community.

If more information is required please have no hesitation in contacting the City of Mandurah.

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