

25 January 2012
Mr Tony Windsor MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Regional Australia
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Matthew Graham

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Dear Mr Windsor

INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF FLY-IN/ FLY-OUT (FIFO) WORKFORCE PRACTICES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your inquiry on the use of FIFO/DIDO workforce practices in regional Australia.

I am a mining engineer with ten years work experience in the coal industry in regional Queensland and New South Wales. I feel I can add some insight into the terms of reference in three ways;

- Firstly through the contribution of my undergraduate thesis – ‘The Changing Face of Fly-in/Fly-out mining operations within Australia’ which was completed in 2000 as part of my Bachelor of Mining Engineering at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). This attached document, albeit now dated, may provide some insight into the emergence, drivers-of and issues related to FIFO. It received a high mark and numerous accolades when submitted at UNSW;
- Secondly through my personal experience in FIFO. As a result of completing the fore mentioned thesis I have deliberately avoided FIFO roles as I had seen the detrimental impacts this arrangement could have on relationships. My family have lived in several mining towns and we are continually frustrated with the lack of investment from mining companies or governments in infrastructure. Mining companies will generally only contribute mining town facilities or improvements as stipulated by their mining approvals. Once the requirement has been met (eg. new town pool built) the town or local government is left to provide other improvements and meet the costs of maintaining existing facilities. I believe a more strategic relationship could be forged between mining towns and mining companies that could collaboratively work toward making mining towns more ‘liveable’ places; and,
- Finally through my involvement the ‘Out of the Pit’ network (www.outofthepit.org). This is an on-line network of Christians in the resource industry that was established to provide support and encouragement for its members. Currently there are over 400 members, many who work FIFO/DIDO and this network helps support them through the difficulties associated with these arrangements. Out of the Pit works closely with mining chaplains and also provides links to other resources (eg. the Mining Family Matters website – who have submitted to the inquiry as well).

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input into your inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact me on _____ if you require further information.

Best regards,

Matthew Graham