



Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone Inc
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Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Regional Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To Whom It May Concern

Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Zone (MITEZ Inc) is the peak regional development body responsible for the seven local government areas between Mount Isa and Townsville.

Unfortunately MITEZ was not aware of the current inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) workforce practices in regional Australia until today when an interview on the local ABC with Tony Windsor MP stated no submissions had been received from this area.

We thank you for advice received today that late submissions will be accepted due to a perceived problem in the promotion of the inquiry in this area.

MITEZ considers the incidence of FIFO as follows:-

- A potential threat to the future economic and social fabric in established mining communities such as Cloncurry and Mount Isa where employees and families working on mine sites have traditionally lived and worked in these towns and contributed to the community and local economy.
- A necessary evil but accepted as a solution for providing a workforce to isolated mine sites where it is impractical for workers to commute from the closest town on a daily basis.
- Concerns some mines are seen to be opting for FIFO generally, whether they are close to an established town/city or not, with little or no regard for the region in which they operate and exploit. Also there are concerns about the trend that existing employees are negotiating FIFO packages to relocate with their family thus undermining the stability of mining communities and taking their salaries out of town.
- Perceptions of inequity between locally based employees and FIFO workers both working for the same company on similar jobs with the local employee knowing his FIFO counterpart is costing the employer a lot more with no compensation or encouragement offered to local employees either as a bonus or tax incentive.

David Glasson, Chair

Supported by



Glen Graham, Executive Officer

"Maximising the potential of the Northern Outback"



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- Lack of incentives such as a reasonable zone allowance does not encourage workers to consider living and working in mining communities when there are better incentives offered to FIFO.
- Local Government in communities such as Cloncurry and Mount Isa as well as some of the authorities in areas where new mines will soon be opening such as Flinders Shire require the support of State and Commonwealth Governments to ensure they can provide adequate infrastructure, services and improve lifestyle amenity.

State and Commonwealth Governments need to be encouraging true regionalisation in the outer regions and not just building bigger coastal cities to house FIFO workers. Action is needed to enable the towns and cities closer to the mines to improve and develop to cater for workers and families.

If workers are not able to move and establish in the regions due to the pressures of inadequate housing and the necessary services required to sustain functioning communities such as health, education and childcare, then the choice of FIFO has the potential to also erode existing populations in these regional mining communities

Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Zone participated in the Beef and Roads forum held in Cloncurry on 31 August 2011 and there were motions put forward at this forum expressing concern at the threats of FIFO to towns in North West Queensland. The motions have been referred to MITEZ for further action and are on the Agenda for the February 2012 MITEZ management meeting.

It is the intention that the motions are to be considered, perhaps modified and finally endorsed. These will then be forwarded to the Queensland State Government and Australian Government for their respective response.

Therefore following the February MITEZ meeting, there will be further communication concerning the issue of FIFO to the relevant ministerial offices.

Thank you for your opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

David Glasson (CHAIR)

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