



Submission to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, The Hon Simon Crean MP, regarding his inquiry into *the use 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) and 'drive-in, drive-out' (DIDO) workforce practices in Regional Australia.*

My submission refers to the following terms of reference:

- the effect of a non-resident FIFO/DIDO workforce on established communities, including community wellbeing, services and infrastructure;
- the impact on communities sending large numbers of FIFO/DIDO workers to mine sites;

I have spent nearly thirty years as a teacher and linguist working with Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. I spent thirteen years teaching in a remote community south of Fitzroy Crossing. I also spent many years as a literacy consultant travelling to communities across the Kimberley. For the last ten years I have made Broome my home and as a teacher/linguist continue to work closely with local Aboriginal people.

Broome is a fragile community, with severe social problems that will be exacerbated by the arrival of 8000 fly in, fly out workers associated with the proposed James Price Point Gas Refinery. New figures show the murder rate in Broome has jumped from none over a period of six years to eight homicides in the past three-and-a-half years. The impact of the heavy drinking, male dominated FIFO/DIDO culture on communities has been well documented. The rapid social change associated with this development and the work force pattern that goes with it, will overwhelm the Broome township. Local Aboriginal people still struggling with the changes colonisation has wrought on their social fabric will be further marginalised by a huge influx of people with no understanding of the local culture and no sense of belonging or responsibility towards the community.

Yours faithfully

Carmel Leahy