

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

**Outcome 4 - Employment**

**DEEWR Question No.** EW1134\_12

**Senator Waters asked on 15 February 2012 , Hansard page 105**

**Question**

**Staff in the Resources Sector**

Senator WATERS: There is a lot of discussion about the skills shortages in mining. Obviously, that is exacerbated by the high staff turnover in the industry. Has the department got any view on what causes that high turnover? Ms Paul: High turnover in the resources sector? Senator WATERS: Of staff in the resources sector. Ms Paul: It is a range of factors. The fly-in fly-out nature of some of that employment can be a factor. There would be a whole range of different factors. Much of it is remote. Much of it is young people and it is just a life cycle impact and so on. If you like, I can come back with a bit more on that too. Senator WATERS: Yes, thanks.

**Answer**

Data from the ABS Labour Mobility survey indicate that 17 per cent of workers in the mining industry (as at February 2010) had been with their current employer for less than 12 months, similar to the average for all industries (18 per cent).

A considerably higher percentage of workers employed in the Mining industry (60 per cent) had had no change in their work (such as a change of employer, a promotion, being transferred to a different position, a change to usual hours worked, or a change to their occupation) compared with the average of 49 per cent across all industries.

The National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce (NRSET) discussion paper *'Resourcing the Future: National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce Report July 2010'* commented that "the probability of job separation from the mining sector is relatively high compared to other industries and anecdotal advice to the Taskforce suggests turnover is higher for FIFO workers". That said, responses to an NRSET survey show substantial variation in staff turnover depending on sector of employment.

The earlier discussion paper preceding this report (March 2010) noted that, anecdotally, turnover in the resources sector is high due to a range of issues including:

- the remoteness of project locations
- competition for skilled workers
- difficulty of the work

- burnout arising from FIFO work arrangements and demanding work schedules
- difficult workplace culture
- a lack of social infrastructure in project locations.