

Hi

I am writing to add another voice from an overseas worker, I am an Australian citizen and my family has been in this country since 1840. I have worked all my life in Australia up until nearly five years ago when I was offered an overseas contract to work on a project in New Caledonia.

At the time I signed agreements with INCO, a Canadian based company to work on the Laterite Nickel project at "Goro" in the far south of New Caledonia. This was done and all my conditions were based on the pay and Tax system at the time. This means that all my overseas Bonuses, pay and entitlements normally given to workers on a yearly base were all deferred till the completion of my contract. This suited as when this job is complete I will be back in Australia full time and un-employed, meaning these payments would cover me during my search for more work.

With this new tax law I will lose all that I have built up over this entire contract as it will all be played out after the 1st July this year. They have offered me work till the end of next year but I see this as not worth doing under this law, we suffer isolation and long periods away living on isolated mine sites and the Pay/Tax breaks are the only thing that keeps us here.

All the Australian workers on this project do a 2 weeks on 1 week off back to Australia and as the long hours and conditions, we have been granted by the Tax department an exception under the 23AG rule. This means we currently pay taxes to the French government only at this time, we all return to Australia and we invest and spend all our incomes in Australia. This new law leaves us with only two options as we have all made an effort to get out and work to the best of our potential.

Option 1. Leave this type of work and seek work back in Australia, meaning that we either become unemployed or due to our skills we would take jobs from others seeking employment at this time, either way up goes the unemployment.

Option 2. We make ourselves citizens of these foreign countries and as such remove ourselves from the Australian system completely as well as not returning to spend this money in Australia as we would now have to live permanently as a resident of a foreign country, at least this way we could get the advantage of many years of built up equity in our contracts as they were originally agreed to on our contracts and all our money would now be spent overseas.

Both of these options mean that we will no longer be spending our incomes in Australia as we currently do. This in most cases can add up to around several thousand dollars a month is just spending, not counting investments, family support etc. Now if you multiply all this by the number of people working overseas doing this type of work, which on this site is ~ 300 hundred Australians, you get very large sums of money constantly being injected into the economy. Need I say a much longer investment in the Australian economy than the stimulus package given this year of which none of us received due to our employment? The money we earn for doing this type of work is a constant injection of foreign money into the Australia economy and I would have thought that this is what we are after?

I hope you can relate to these concerns from Australians working and surviving these overseas fly in fly out positions under conditions far less than what we have in Australia. We put ourselves under stress and hardship on the family front and lots of us suffer marriage issues due to the long periods away from home. We all do not want overseas jobs to disappear for Australians due to these tax changes. If we are to make the changes and we are committed to these changes these jobs are going to disappear for Australians and we will see these jobs going to Europeans, Canadian and Americans, so their respective countries are now due to gain from this overseas work and foreign income injection instead of Australia if we bring in these changes to the tax system.

Thanks for your time in reading this concern from an Australian working overseas

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