

To Whom It May Concern - Please find attachment regarding my thoughts on the Fly/in - Fly/out debate. I have lived in Moranbah since my marriage in 1978 until recently retiring in 2014. I have outlined my thoughts in some of the issues I am concerned about and hopefully all those on the Committee of the FIFO Inquiry will take a few moments to read this. The Government and the Mining Companies MUST get this right, too much into the future of the entire country relies on this outcome and nothing more so than our youth of today who live and reside in communities such as Moranbah, Dysart, Tieri and Middlemount as well as those areas who mostly supports these mining communities such as Mackay and Rockhampton. Australia has a vast area of desert land, our cities such as Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne are becoming overpopulated, so what happens if these rural towns and mining towns continue to have families leaving because the Giants (BHP Billiton; Anglo Coal and most likely Adani) continue with their Fly/in - Fly/out operations. Please consider my thoughts with strong debate along with all other submissions you may have received. Mining Personnel, we know you had to get smarter and mine more efficiently and introduce changes - please don't bury your head in the sand with the attitude, we will do it our way - our sons/daughters/family are relying on you for a full time position in the mining industry so long as they have the right skills for your requirements; in most cases these skills can and will be found locally from our Mining Towns and Rural Communities, without this they will die. Can our country afford this to happen? That is only one of the problems facing us. Please read my attachment with regard to many other problems which arise from fly/in - fly/out.

Regards

Nita Patterson

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

cc Mr. J Pearce, our local MP - Mirani.

Your message is ready to be sent with the following file or link attachments:

Fly in Fly out Objection

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12 May, 2015.

Mr. J. Pearce MP for Mirani  
[Mirani@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:Mirani@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Sir,

I wish to support the Queensland Government in their discussions regarding the situation of Mining Townships and the Local Businesses which support these communities. Most of all, I am strongly against the total Fly/In – Fly/Out situation that the Mining Companies have adopted for seeking their employees to fill positions of employment in some of our Mines in Queensland.

I was married in 1978, now Aged 66 yrs., born in Mackay, and moved to Moranbah with my husband who at the time was employed by Utah Development Company at Peak Downs Mine. Due to my husband being an only child, we returned to Mackay for a short period because of the failing health of his father. We returned to Moranbah again and my husband was again employed at Peak Downs Mine until his retirement in December 2014 under BMA Coal, BHP Billiton. He was in the mining industry for approx., 35 years. I myself was employed at Goonyella Riverside Mine until retirement in October 2014 after serving 30 years at Goonyella Riverside Mine, the latter being with BMA Coal, BHP Billiton. We have raised two children.

No doubt the mining industry and the Companies with whom we were employed were very good to us and for us. Excellent facilities were built in Moranbah. Moranbah was raised from nothing to a thriving community, very family orientated and as all small communities, improvements are made and infrastructure increases. In the early days, Utah supplied the machinery, and goods required to build the wonderful sporting facilities in Moranbah as did the Mining Companies in most communities such as Dysart, Tieri, and Middlemount. The locals in their own time actually built the necessary requirements and turned the bushlands into the wonderful sporting ovals as seen today. Housing was provided at minimum costs to the mine employees until such time we all purchased our own homes, as the Mining Companies decided they no longer needed to support this part of the community; they were in the Business of Mining Coal, not building houses etc. In the latter years, BHP Billiton has continued to support Moranbah in many ways and one particular improvement for the whole community was the monies they spent upgrading the wonderful Greg Cruickshank Aquatic Swimming Centre.

I have given a small insight into my background and feel I am fairly confident in remarks to follow and I certainly have the knowledge of what it is about living in a mining community as well as living on the coast (Mackay).

Reasons for my objection to Fly/in – Fly/out:-

1. Breakdown of the family home.
2. Health issues related to the above.
3. Personal stories of impact to those actually flying/in –flying/out.
4. Impact on Mining Townships (I can only relate to Moranbah) and most importantly the outcome of YOUNG LOCALS work.

I was an employee of BMA Coal, BHP Billiton and was employed in a workshop environment and had daily contact with all Tradesman, Contractors, 457 Visa Holders, as well as some fly/in – fly/out employees. All wonderful people, good workers and there for a purpose – to make money! I am not about telling BHP how to do their business or to tell the Government this is how it should be done. I am going to try and put into words the things I have been told, listened to and hopefully ask for a little thought into some of my words so that maybe the Personnel handling this on behalf of Companies such as BHP Billiton and similar will not put their heads in the sand, and say “we will do it our way”.

With reference to Objection 1:- The employee has just completed his workable roster shifts ending on night shifts (12 hr shifts). Those living outside of Moranbah this is how the story goes – “I get home from doing nights and first step in the front door – the wife says ‘I have had these kids up to my neck so I am going out and you can keep an eye on the kids’. All he wants to do is go to bed to sleep! Those living in Moranbah with their family – once the wife dropped the kids off to school we had a leisurely coffee together, I did this...then went to bed.” They have just completed X number of 12hr night shifts, some sleep really good, others not so good, although they manage their time so as to cover their work rosters.

The biggest issue here is, the dads are not home every night to see their babies grow up. Help with homework, just everything a dad does when he comes home EVERY day. This would not be the only reasons as to why a marriage breaks up, however if a study was to be carried out on the number of break-ups with those living in this environment I am sure these companies would not believe it.

Objection 2: Many times I would be told of the marriage falling apart – I am here, she won’t come to live here, I miss the kids, the kids want to know when I am coming home. All this had a huge impact on the health of my fellow workmates. This mostly came from contractors who were travelling from all over the place. Interestingly enough those on the 457 visa were ok; they had their families living with them in Moranbah. On my crew they were mostly from South Africa and I got on very well with them. The number of marriage break-ups on my crew alone would astound you. BHP offer all the counselling in the world, but they really do not ask – WHY IS THIS HAPPENING IN THE FIRST PLACE – is it the remoteness of living in a camp whilst the family resides somewhere else – like New Zealand – yes they are flying home to New Zealand.

Another problem area relating to (2) is the fact that contractors who are living away from Moranbah are working in excess of their hours. The first round of days off, they are off to another mine sometimes with the same contractor, but most times with a different contracting company. They work these days off at another work site and then go home on the next lot of days off. They only do this because they want the money and the quickest way out of here (the mining industry) is to work and make the extra money so they can eventually be home full time much earlier – why? They have paid off the mortgage or whatever the reason they came to the mining industry in the first place.

You will find those living local, stay.

Question 3: I ask the task force to look into fly/in – fly/out by just boarding a plane, do not let on who you are or the reason why you are on the plane and sit next to a miner who is flying in this situation for employment.

Ask them why they are working in the mines and yet living somewhere in Brisbane or the Sunshine Coast. The answer – “I tell my partner once I have paid her University fees off, then I am out of there. I am sick of sitting on planes, sick of living in a camp, the sooner the better”. The other most common reason is that they are paying off the house and once done, I’m out of there.

It would be most interesting to know the turnover in employees at the BHP Billiton Caval Ridge Mine – the turnover figures were never released and they would never admit it, but it is huge. Several who had lived in Moranbah for many years, took up a position at Caval Ridge by moving to Brisbane and so word of mouth was the above remark about how they could not keep people.

Questions 4 & 5:- I was at a motor show in Mackay on the weekend and several young locals were discussing work. Yes in the mines. All young early 20’s working for contracting companies – trouble is, work one day this week, maybe 2 or three the next and then nothing for the following week. They work along- side 50 year olds who were made redundant, have other sources of income and this sort of work suits them because they can keep under the Government radar for tax and only earn sufficient not to pay tax.

What is the future of these young local lads from Mackay and Moranbah or Rockhampton and what impact is it having on these communities. What impact will it have on their health and what related issues will this create. For what – so people in SE Qld can fly/in – fly/out. SE Qld is not struggling like these rural communities. The amount of work in SE Qld created by Local Government as well as State Government is more than sufficient when one looks at the infrastructure and building being carried out in and around Brisbane. Our communities are dying, businesses are closing and families are leaving.

BHP Billiton should be looking after long term small businesses such as Moranbah’s Mitre 10. Owned by the Goulevitch Family they have not only supplied the mines, locals, with all their supplies through their business, they have been heavily involved in the community in all aspects and have given many hours of their free time to help at charity events, members of Scouting, Lions just to name a few. Most of our business people do the same in this community. What is to become of them? Close because BHP chooses to fly their employees in and out of the community, therefore no more sales. The mines buy local and support local but not sufficiently to keep them all up and running, this takes a full community.

Mining Companies please ask yourselves – If I was living in these rural communities or had family in Mackay or Rockhampton would I expect my 20 year old son or daughter with the correct skills to be able to obtain full time work in your mines. The answer would be “YES”. What impact on these communities will take place over the next ten years if they do not get the opportunity in a mining environment which is situated right on their back door? Forget your counselling you will need Suicide Prevention in a big way, because the youth of today just can’t handle it – they want full time work. Many years back, the Mining Companies closed down their camps because of Suicide, Health problems, Social problems – you Mining Companies are opening the flood gates to start this all over again. Check your records, it happened. Please give our kids/family full time jobs; please give our small businesses back their business; PLEASE we know you had to do things smarter but don’t take away our towns or our jobs.

Please Mr. CEO of BHP Billiton/Adani/Anglo Coal and all HELP US HELP YOU. The  
Government and our Local Governments in our areas are fighting for us; please help them to  
help us. We will still give you your coal (or is that our coal)?

Submission 020

11 to 2

12 May 2015

Nita Joyce Patterson

