

To the Honourable Member for Mirani,

The absolute abuse of the FIFO work practice is rife within the mining industry and employers have not only taken advantage of this but have been downright [REDACTED] in discriminating those who choose to live in close proximity of employment.

I have seen firsthand of the devastation the FIFO work practices have put upon us at Central Queensland. Being born in Mackay and raised out at Dysart I feel nothing but sadness for the town I used to call home at Dysart. Basic infrastructures, such as the water treatment plant, have long gone been neglected and for a period of time the people of Dysart were reduced to a couple of bottles of water a day. People would forgo showers for multiple days because there wasn't enough water and from the foulness of the water coming from the dilapidated water treatment plant. Basic services such as doctors and dentists, which were once permanent in this flourishing township, have now been reduced to regular visits from regional towns. The FIFO work practices must stop or at best be reduced to a small percentage of the workforce not greater than the people who are in close approximation to the place of employment.

As a resident of Walkerston in the Mackay Region, I see a worry of the people as jobs for the industry taper off and with that vacant houses and blocks around the area. The jobs on offer at mine sites such as Caval Ridge are 2 hours away from where we live and yet people from the South East corner get the opportunity to work as it agrees with the employer's selection criteria.

Businesses around local and regional areas are suffering from the FIFO work practices as the money generated from working on the site doesn't fully flow out to the local businesses as the FIFO workers don't even step foot on the townships of Moranbah, Dysart or the regional centre like Mackay. All local businesses around the Mackay region have had to make drastic changes to suit the mining downturn, but what has made it worse is that the communities around the Dysart, Moranbah, Middlemount, Tieri and Capella area, that used to travel into regional centres like Emerald and Mackay to spend on their needs and wants are rarely coming in with the increase of vacant housing due to FIFO. With the increase of the FIFO work practice all of these towns will suffer.

I for one couldn't cope with a bus in and bus out to Hail Creek as the transition from a family life to a single every few days were having a detrimental effect on me. I can only imagine the workers who are in the FIFO work practices that have to continuously juggle between family life at home and the single life thousands of kilometres away from place of residence. However, if it is a choice that the employee chooses then it is their choice and not of the employer.

The outcomes that I wish for State and Federal Governments to deliver is a reduced need for the FIFO work practices to absolute minimal, if not diminish, and to secure the sustainability and essential services that are required to be provided in the local mining towns and regional centres. The reduction of FIFO practices will also lead to an increased and sustainable population to our mining and regional communities and thus providing a more prosperous Central Queensland.

Yours in solidarity  
Vladimir Nikolic