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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Please consider this submission into the "Fly in, fly out and other long distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland" inquiry.

Between 2008 and 2012 I resided in Bundaberg whilst working at a mine in the Bowen Basin. The distance from Bundaberg to the mine and vice versa was 700kms each way. I was during this time working both the 4on 4off and 5/5/4 rosters. Bundaberg only has a small airport so flying into either Moranbah or Mackay, the 2 closest airports to the mine, was not an option as it was excessively expensive. This meant that every 3, 4 or 5 days I was travelling by car 700kms to or from work before commencing or after finishing a 12 hour shift. I was fortunate to have a work mate who lived in Rockhampton, halfway between the mine and Bundaberg, of whom I was able to travel with that allowed for me to be able to rest a little on the journey and meant I was only travelling half the distance by myself.

The toll this took on myself both mentally and physically never presented itself until a couple of years into this arrangement and by the time it had become present, damage had already been done to my physical state, my state of mind, my relationship and many friendships, with some of these never recovering. The reality was, when reflecting on this period, that the long commuting was having a significant impact on my physical state, my social life and personal relationships and my mental state of mind and it wasn't until the damage was done and I had stopped the long distance commuting that they level of impact that it was having and had become abundantly clear. The best thing I did was move closer to work and stopped the long distance commuting.

My concerns around this matter and these arrangements are as follows:

1. Local Workers - Some coal mines have been allowed to go to arrangements where they only employ workers from set cities or towns e.g.. Brisbane or Cairns. This means that workers who may have the required skills and experience for a position at the mine, or young workers who are seeking to gain training opportunities that may exist at the mine, that live within the township close to the mine or any another that are not specified as being residences employees need to have to gain employment, will not gain or be considered for employment at that mine. This is very contradictory to the coal mining company's stance on fatigue, safety, family and community values and workplace/employment opportunity discrimination. This means that to gain employment at the mine, they need to uproot their families and move away and go to a fly in fly out arrangement. This also means that on the other side of the coin, employees who may be suffering from issues related to fly in fly out arrangement, are not able to relocate to a township that may be close to the mine to alleviate any said issues as they would lose their employment if they did. This again is contradictory to the coal companies own stance on safety, fatigue, family and community values. In the modern world, these companies should be held accountable as to what they state as being their values and stances regarding these matters and should not be allowed to discriminate against a worker on the grounds of his or her

home address. Any employment opportunity in the coal mining industry should be open to any worker regardless of where they live and furthermore the companies should be held accountable by the government to apply properly their stance on fatigue, safety, family and community values by encouraging people to live as close to the mine as possible if they so choose to reduce or take away any issues presented from these matters.

2. Local Businesses Are Suffering - The preference for mining companies to use commuting workforces means workers' wages are no longer being spent in local shops and businesses. Fly-in and drive-in workers are confined to camps while they're not working and have little or no opportunity to spend money locally or engage with the local community. This trend is making the impact of the current downturn much worse. Shops and businesses are being forced to close, creating a downward spiral of amenity and economic activity.

3. Long Commuting Times And Fatigue - Workers are spending many hours travelling to and from work, leading to fatigue for those workers and dangerous conditions on our roads. Many workers are starting their shifts after journeys taking many hours and often including several transport modes, e.g. car, plane and bus. Many workers report lack of adequate facilities at the beginning and end of their shifts to manage fatigue. Regional Queensland roads have become extremely dangerous due to worker fatigue. Refusal to employ locals pushes people to look further and further away for jobs. Living closer to work is better for managing fatigue and road safety.

4. Family Stress And Rosters - The trend to long-distance commuting is also driving longer rosters for workers. This means more time away from families. The Western Australian parliamentary inquiry has exposed the severe strain on people leading to increased suicides among FIFO workers. Family breakdown and severe stress should not be the price workers have to pay to hold a job in the mining industry. Workers should be able to choose living and working arrangements that suit them and their family – not just the mining companies.

To reduce the impact of FIFO and Long Distance Commuting, the following should be considered and actioned -

1. No more approvals for 100% compulsory FIFO operations.
2. Reverse immediately all existing 100% compulsory FIFO operation approvals.
3. Improve all conditions and general and association worker freedoms in accommodation camps.
4. Provide incentives for workers to move closer to work to reduce or remove any issues presented by FIFO or Long Commute Arrangements and to allow families more time together.
5. All mining approvals to include community impact statement outlining commitment to local jobs, local communities and engagement with local businesses.
6. Ensure companies who have Equal Employment Opportunity policies in place are held accountable of ensuring all job opportunities are open to any applicant and the selection of employment cannot be based on an address.
7. The Mines Department and Government need to investigate the companies positions, policies and procedures regarding fatigue, mental health, rest and travel between shifts and excessive work hours to ensure the companies are adhering to their own policies and procedures and if any FIFO or Long Distance Commuting arrangement is impacting this then those arrangements then the companies need to be stopped from allowing them to happen.
8. The government needs to challenge the companies, when making public announcements or advertising around their support of and positive messages on community, local business, safety, fatigue or employee engagement whilst having in place compulsory FIFO and long distance commuting arrangements that take away from community and have a negative impact on employees and their

families.

9. Immediately stop companies locking people into mining camps not allowing them to go to townships near their workplace.

Regards

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