

MEDIA RELEASE

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Over regulating FIFO would harm investment and jobs

(AMMA – Australian Mines and Metals Association)

IMPOSING excessive regulation on fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) work on Queensland resource operations would further damage an industry already struggling with a commodity price slump and investment downturn, says resource industry employer group, AMMA.

A Queensland parliamentary committee today handed down a raft of recommendations on FIFO work that although well-intentioned, would do more harm than good to Queensland's reputation as a place to invest and do business.

"The reality is Queensland's resource industry isn't as competitive as it used to be, so simply imposing more regulation on the way resource companies manage their workforces would drive even more potential Queensland resource jobs offshore," says AMMA executive director – policy and public affairs, Scott Barklamb.

"International analysts already rank Queensland as an increasingly less attractive place to invest, and the new regulation recommended today would exacerbate this."

Mr Barklamb says if the resource industry is to secure the confidence of the international investment community and keep delivering royalties and taxes to help fund Queensland's schools, police and community services, it cannot be burdened by even more red-tape, legislation and regulation.

"Queensland resource companies take their social licence to operate very seriously, with many already investing in comprehensive recruitment, training and apprenticeship programs to source skills from local communities," he says.

"The industry also has well-established health and wellbeing programs for both FIFO and non-FIFO employees and strives to provide the best possible food and facilities. However, having a government prescribe what employees eat and the décor of their bedrooms would be over the top."

Mr Barklamb says the committee's proposal to change anti-discrimination laws would have far reaching negative impacts on Queensland businesses.

"Providing employees with a choice of where they live for work sounds fine in principle, but in practice the proposal would give rise to unwarranted lawsuits across Queensland workplaces, not just those in the resource industry," he says.

"Today's recommendations may be well intentioned, but they seem to have been drawn up with little knowledge of the resource industry and how it actually operates in Queensland.

"We encourage the Palaszczuk government to work with industry employers to understand leading industry practices on FIFO work and promote them more widely, and to not embark on additional heavy handed regulation enforced by more state and local government inspectors.

"The government now has two reports before it on FIFO work. If it is to come up with sensible and effective responses, it must work with the resource industry and not rush to announce new regulation based on reports and recommendations the industry cannot have confidence in."

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