

FLY IN, FLY OUT WORKERS — INTERSTATE — PERMANENT WA RESIDENTS

**308. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's announcement on Friday in which he said that the state government would launch a joint campaign with industry to relocate thousands of interstate fly in, fly out workers permanently to WA.

- (1) What target has he set for the relocation exercise and what time frame does he hope to achieve it in?
- (2) Will he prioritise the relocation of those willing to come to WA permanently to regional areas that service our mining and resource sector?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) On Friday after the national cabinet and the State Disaster Council, I went to Mandurah where I held a press conference on the foreshore with the member for Mandurah, and then we had a great walk around Halls Head Central shopping centre. It was very good and —

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We got to talk to lots of locals and to hear their concerns. It was very informative. I enjoyed very much visiting Dawesville and Halls Head. I expect I will visit there many more times over coming months.

In answer to the specific questions, I had a roundtable meeting with the iron ore industry Thursday or Friday a week ago. Each of the major iron ore miners was there. Five miners were represented with basically the CEOs of each as part of it to discuss what things we can get out of what has happened. What is there that Western Australia can secure out of what has happened to better strengthen and better support WA? It is a terrible time, but we have to take and look for any opportunities that might arise. Clearly, the mining industry, as have the oil and gas and other industries, has moved lots of staff members with their families from the east basically to live here. There are people who fly in, fly out from the city here. Some have moved into regional towns and some have moved into Hedland, Karratha or Kalgoorlie rather than FIFO from Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane. It struck me that railcar manufacturing, reinstating flights when the time is right—as we know, a lot of flights are supported by the mining industry—and getting some of those FIFO workers who fly out of Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane to live permanently in Western Australia is an opportunity. That is why I convened the meeting. The Treasurer and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum were there, and it was a very productive meeting. We all agreed that it would be a great opportunity. This event has shown that supervening events can cause trouble for industry, particularly when staff members and employees have to travel 4 000 kilometres to Perth and another 1 500 kilometres or so to work. It can interrupt their operations. We talked about the opportunity of FIFO workers coming here. I would love it if they came and lived in regional communities—to Hedland, Karratha, Newman, Kalgoorlie or wherever it may be. That would be wonderful as part of this.

In terms of time frame, the opportunity to work on this is now, so industry and government is working on this as we speak. In terms of exact targets, thousands of people—I have heard various figures; one figure I heard was 6 000 people—are FIFO-ing out of the east. Making sure we secure as many of those people to live in Western Australia would be great for the state. We have had a huge net decline in migration to Western Australia. Not having the migration levels we used to have is having a big impact on home building. It is impacting home building in a way that that none of us could have foreseen and that none of us are in control of. Clearly, if we get people moving from the east who live here for a period and experience the lifestyle, it can partly make up for that loss of international migration. It means also that people with large incomes generated in Western Australia keep those incomes here. I have answered the member's question as best I can. When those people come here with their families, I would certainly love to see them living in regional WA.