



BSS EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE



13th February 2015

Hon Dr Graham Jacobs MLA
Chairperson
Education and Health Standing Committee
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Dr Jacobs

Supplementary Submission: Parliamentary inquiry into the mental health impacts of fly in fly out (FIFO) work arrangements.

Thank you for your invitation to provide the Education and Health Standing Committee with additional information to assist in its Inquiry. Further to our earlier submissions, I would like to respond to matters raised in the Committee's interim report, *Shining a Light on FIFO Mental Health: A Discussion Paper*, so as to assist the Committee with points raised on pages 55 and 56 of the report.

BSS Employee Assistance has over the past month provided EAP data and information on EAP operational procedures to assist the further submissions of some of our major client organisations in the Resource Sector

If any further assistance is required please do not hesitate to contact me by phone on 0448 001 003 or by email on michael.tunnecliffe@bsspsych.com.au

Yours sincerely

Michael Tunnecliffe
Clinical Psychologist
Director,
BSS Employee Assistance



Between 01/01/13 and 31/12/14, in our role as a provider of emergency counselling and support, BSS Employee Assistance psychologists were deployed to work sites at the request of contracted client organisations

2013 BSS psychologists responded to 39 Critical Incidents at both FIFO and non-FIFO work sites.
7 = Number of Critical Incidents relating to a suicide or attempted suicide.

		Suicide Completed	Suicide Attempted
2013	FIFO Worker	2	2
	Non-FIFO Worker	2	1

2014 BSS psychologists responded to 57 Critical Incidents at both FIFO and non-FIFO work sites.
20 = Number of Critical Incidents relating to a suicide or attempted suicide.

		Suicide Completed	Suicide Attempted
2014	FIFO Worker	8	2
	Non-FIFO Worker	7	3

(NB – A number of these completed suicides are yet to be subjected to coronial scrutiny).

NB. It appears the main reason for the increase in responses to suicide-related incidents is due to BSS being awarded major contracts in the Resource Sector during the second half of 2014. This created a significant increase the number of personnel (+ families) being offered Employee Assistance services.

BSS comments on points made in the discussion, *Shining a Light on FIFO Mental Health*.

- *The total size of the FIFO workforce in Western Australia is estimated at 67,000 workers, but BSS estimates that it provides services to only half of that workforce.*

Due to a major increase in the number and size of our client organisations in the second half of 2014, BSS now estimates that as at December 2014, the number of FIFO workers that are eligible for our counselling services is now around 45,000. This is a significant portion of the Western Australian FIFO workforce and in any data collection would be a sizable sample of the population.

- *The nature of the companies in the resources sector that BSS provides services to is not known by the Committee – for example, whether services are provided to construction contractors or large mining operators.*

The breakdown of our client organisations which have a FIFO workforce is as follows:

- Large Mining Operators = 36%
(Includes some of the largest mining operators in Australia)
- Mining Contractors = 20%
(Includes some of the largest mining contractors in Australia)
- Construction Contractors = 16%
(Includes major construction contractors on the Gorgon project)
- Oil & Gas Contractors = 10%
- Oil & Gas Producers = 8%
- Other = 10%



- *BSS relies on call-outs by its clients; BSS told the inquiry that “in most cases, actual or attempted suicide away from work (e.g. at home address) generates a request for support for workmates on site (or when they return to site). Given this, it is to be expected that there would be a level of under-reporting attached to the data.*

This assumption is not our experience. It's our opinion any under-reporting would be a minor matter, if at all. Suicides away from work automatically generate a response requiring support for the workgroup. Over the past four years we are unaware of any incidence where BSS has not been advised of a suicide of an employee away from work, or off-site soon after the employer found out. Even in cases where the suicide has occurred with a former employee, especially if that employee has been made redundant or terminated weeks or months earlier, companies ensure we are notified immediately so we can be available to assist employees who had worked with the deceased person. In just about all recent cases where this has occurred (2013-2014), psychologists have been deployed into the work-sites to be available to provide counselling to employees.

Michael Tunnecliffe
Clinical Psychologist
Director
BSS Employee Assistance