



Dr Alan Charlton PhD
Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly, Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace West Perth WA 6005
Via email: lacdjsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Dr Charlton and Committee Members

idoba is a digital transformation service business, bringing together multiple technology offerings, operational expertise and broader energy and resources technical capability. We are co-creating an ecosystem that enables people and businesses to thrive by combining diverse talent, diverse thought, and diverse capability to better serve the mining industry. Our collective resources have both lived experience in the mining industry and experience through our extensive work with organisations across the whole mining value chain.

With only 20% of people in the mining industry being women (and half of these Perth based), there is a systemic gender imbalance which is amplified in the FIFO workforces. This non diverse environment supports the conditions for disrespectful behaviour built up over time, and in some cases, manifests in the form of sexual harassment.

Workplace norms reflect societal beliefs and behaviours. Taking deliberate steps to make positive change in our workplaces, in an industry vital to WA's economic and community landscape, is an important part of our shared response.

It is through government, industry and communities coming together that this complex and long-standing problem can be understood and resolved.

We believe a better understanding of the drivers of sexual harassment in FIFO workplaces is required. Leadership teams today struggle to get a full picture of the problem due to factors including:

- a. the diverse, fragmented and competitive nature of the industry where it's hard to know what happens on a single site, across sites, and harder still to exchange learnings and insights between companies
- b. a highly mobile FIFO workforce comprised of a high proportion of even more mobile contractors
- c. a tendency to under report concerns and incidents of this nature due to fear and stigma and a perception of the challenging process to follow
- d. a practice of moving people between sites as a practical way to "resolve" problems
- e. leaders not being adequately equipped to know how to handle sensitive investigations or reporting requirements

FIFO environments have been traditionally built to efficiently feed, rest, and recreate mining workforces. The mental model is that these are not “home” or “community” environments (because a person’s home is where they live when not on site).

Significant improvements have taken place over time, (largely due to awareness and reforms relating to FIFO mental health), however the underpinning mindset of the purpose and function of FIFO camps needs to shift if they are ever to be designed and evolved into residences or communities where people’s needs are put at the forefront of the design thinking.

When it comes to sexual harassment it is important to note that women and trans and gender diverse people will typically have to modify their behaviour in many ways to increase their perception of safety and wellbeing. This is only exacerbated in a FIFO camp where their need to attend to “safer choices” pervades work and non-work time.

Having to adjust behaviour to achieve a basic need of safety strongly impacts the performance and wellbeing of women and trans and gender diverse people. This “fitting in” behaviour is a symptom of the cultural reform that needs to take place alongside the legislative reform, parliamentary inquiries, national summits, and programs organisations run internally.

Indeed, we note a ground swell of action and good intent in 2021 around the issue of woman’s and trans and gender diverse people’s safety, although we cannot help but be curious about the success of these programs on their own, and whether they would have greater impact by pooling our collective knowledge to devise solutions that are collaborative, co-created and executed together.

We are not a big employer, but we believe that cultivating a culture of belonging will help to drive the change we want to see. Belonging doesn’t require you to change who you are, belonging is being yourself in a situation so that you can experience real connection and care for another human. From here, belonging allows different perspectives to bring different solutions to the gnarly problems we face in society and in our organizations. It is from here that we, as an industry, can better understand the problem, come together to co-create a solution and implement the change for the better.

Sarah Coleman
CEO



a Level 1, 33 King St, Perth WA 6000

p +61 8 9325 4342

m +61 400 161 875

w <https://idoba.com/>

