

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Wednesday, 13 August 2014

1440. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

I refer to the deaths by suicide of fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers in Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) what positive processes and actions does the Department of Mines and Petroleum undertake to minimise worker exposure to suicide or depression;
- (b) if none to (a), why not;
- (c) what positive process or actions does the mining/petroleum industry take to minimise worker exposure to suicide or depression;
- (d) if none to (c), why not;
- (e) how much is budgeted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum to mitigate worker exposure to suicide or depression;
- (f) if none to (e), why not;
- (g) does the mining/petroleum industry report on how much it expends in minimising worker exposure to suicide or depression;
- (h) if no to (g), why not;
- (i) does the mining/petroleum industry expend any funds in minimising worker exposure to suicide or depression;
- (j) if yes to (i), how much;
- (k) if no to (i), why not;
- (l) has the Department of Mines and Petroleum had any discussions with the mining/petroleum industry, or its representative, over FIFO suicides; and
- (m) if yes to (l), who with, when did this commence and on how many occasions did it occur?

Answer

The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) advises:

Every suicide is a tragedy, including suicides on mine sites.

We know the factors that affect mental health in any workplace are complex and wide ranging.

Resource companies employing fly-in, fly-out workers are expected to have strategies to address mental health issues in their workforce, including access to employee assistance services.

DMP is also implementing a number of strategies around mental and emotional wellbeing. These include workshops and publications dealing with:

- mental wellbeing
- bullying, aggression and violence in the workplace
- addressing toughness in mining (gender and safety)
- preventing and managing fatigue
- improving communication and consultation.

The Department also sponsors Mining Family Matters, an organisation that provides practical advice to Australian families in mining, oil and gas. It publishes *Mining Families Rock*, a self-help book featuring support and advice to families overcoming the challenges of fly-in/fly-out, drive-in/drive-out and living in isolated mining communities. There is also access to online information and advice from a psychologist.