



Daily FIFO for Exmouth a first.

Rio Tinto in a presentation to Exmouth Shire Councillors and key local stakeholders by senior Rio Tinto project manager Jacques Landyut explained how the first daily FIFO would operate between Exmouth and a new mine site under construction in the east Pilbara. The arrangements have been made after 3 months of discussion and consultation involving the Exmouth Shire, local police, the hospital, airlines and various Exmouth stakeholders.

Exmouth Shire President Turk Shales acknowledged concerns that some members of the local community had, but said that during discussions with Rio Tinto he believed that measures being put in place by the company would alleviate these concerns. In a statement he said, 'Rio Tinto has been very conscious to brief myself and my CEO Bill Price.

I believe that carefully managed by the company, the council and other stakeholders this could lead to some employees and their families moving to Exmouth on a permanent basis and may encourage others to come to town.

The Council's aim is to grow the town and where possible to become a human resource hub for the region. We know many people find Exmouth a highly desirable place to live and a growth in employment opportunities will certainly encourage people to make the move.

I hope opportunities will emerge for our communities youth to access apprenticeships and training in these and similar nearby resource operations.'

The plan involves 120 to 150 workers being housed in 6 accommodation properties in Exmouth and setting off for work at 5.30am every morning by aeroplane and returning at 6.30pm each night. Vincent Aviation will fly an 84 seat BAe 146 and initially 2, 19 seat Beechcraft 1900 aircraft from Learmonth to an airstrip approximate to the mine site near Tom Price.

Skypac Aviation Pty Ltd have been appointed to handle the transport and hospitality logistics for the workforce and have already sought office space in Exmouth and are now

considering proposals to lease property from which to operate. Executives from Skypac have made a number of visits to town making logistical arrangements in the last 6 weeks and have also sought local employees for their office to assist the local manager. The first flights are expected to take off later this month.

The Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Jon Warren said the benefits would be felt more widely than just in the hospitality sector. The benefits will flow through to retailers, tourism operators and other business looking to engage and service the mining companies generally such as employment agencies and training organisations.

The initiative will require a concerted effort from local service providers to meet the needs to make the proposal successful. A start up at the beginning of the low season is a boon to locals who generally wind down from October to April each year as tourists abandon Exmouth for cooler climes. Accommodating and feeding the workers will require the employment both full and part time of more than 50 locals in excess of what might be expected during this period. Based on information provided to Rio Tinto by operators regarding occupancy levels in the 6 month tourist season, the numbers envisaged in this operation will still allow normal tourism activity to take place in the season except for maybe Easter and July school holidays.

When pressed on concerns that the towns accommodation would be stretched as a result of this Jon Warren said that it was well known that the town's population more than doubles to over 6000 during the tourist season and it was unlikely that 150 more people would have a detrimental effect. Tourism numbers have dropped in recent seasons as a result of the high value of the dollar and the fact that many intrastate tourists have been travelling overseas. 'The benefits in the off season are very big,' he added.

Other employment opportunities for locals will initially be available in aircraft ground handling (4), aircraft catering (4) and ground transportation (10) according to a Skypac spokesman.

Concerns regarding the effect of FIFO workers in town were discussed in a question and answer session at the close of the presentation. 'Workers will be required to 'blow in the bag' prior to boarding their aircraft and if any numbers come up they will be on another plane out of town not the one going to work according to Mr Landyut. The fact that workers will be required to change out of fluoro work gear outside working hours in town was a welcome response to another question.

The work roster is 3 weeks on and 1 week off with a day off in the middle of the roster. Tour providers and charter operators will have the ability to provide recreational opportunities on the rostered day off and instead of employees having to fly out of town at the end of their roster as an option Rio Tinto will fly partners to Exmouth for the week instead to check out the Ningaloo Reef lifestyle.