Satisfaction with a fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) lifestyle: Is it related to rosters, children and support resources utilised by Australian employees and partners and does it impact on relationship quality and stress?

Wendy Voysey
Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), Murdoch University, 2012
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

............................................................

Wendy Voysey
COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that a copy of this thesis will be held at the Murdoch University Library.

I understand that, under the provisions of s51.2 of the Copyright Act 1968, all or part of this thesis may be copied without infringement of copyright where such a reproduction is for the purposes of study and research.

This statement does not signal any transfer of copyright away from the author.

Signed: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Full name of Degree: Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)

Thesis Title: Satisfaction with a fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) lifestyle: Is it related to rosters and support resources utilised by Australian employees and partners and does it impact on relationship quality and stress?

Author: Wendy Voysey

Year: 2012
Abstract

The phenomenal growth currently being experienced in the Australian resources industry has seen unprecedented interest in the practice of fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) work practices. This study explores a number of factors that have been previously identified as having possible negative impacts on those involved in FIFO. A sample of 314 FIFO partners and 245 workers were surveyed on roster satisfaction, roster length, relationship quality, children, perceived stress and perceived social support. Resources and supports were also examined to determine awareness, utilisation and usefulness to partners and workers. This study found that overall workers were satisfied with their rosters and relationships, including those on longer rosters. Partners however, were less satisfied with rosters and relationships, particularly those who had children between six and twelve years of age, although roster length was not a factor. Children’s ages did not influence partners’ perceived stress however partners without children reported higher perceived stress than those with children. Less than half of the partners were aware of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) however personal supports, such as family, friends, co-workers, and FIFO specific support websites, had a positive effect on partners’ perceived stress. When compared to other resources, both partners and workers rated personal support as the most useful.

**Keywords:** FIFO; rosters, relationships; children; stress; support
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my supervisor Libby Brook for her continuous support and guidance throughout this project. Her time and input has been invaluable.

Thanks also to Dr Graeme Ditchburn for his contribution, along with the FIFO data collection team, Matthew Walford, Daniel Funston and Alexei Behr. You all taught me something new along the way. Thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge the FIFO partners and workers who took the time to respond to the surveys, along with the FIFO support groups and principals of the primary schools who enthusiastically promoted my study.

A very big thank you to my friend Karen Rowe who gave so much of her time, supported me when the going got tough and acted as a sounding board for my ideas.

Love and thanks to my parents, John and Fran Hewitt, for their continual encouragement and support - in particular to Dad for his invaluable mathematics and computer instruction.

My children, Matthew, Shaun, Rebecca and Michelle, who were at times a distraction but also my inspiration, to seek out answers to the questions that I found myself continually asking when I had been a FIFO partner.

And finally to my husband Paul, who has provided me with unwavering practical and emotional support throughout this project and always believed in me. I couldn’t have done it without you.