

FIFO workers: Companies don't care

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Preliminary findings from [two fly-in fly-out \(FIFO\) studies](#) reveal partner dissatisfaction and a distinct perception among workers that companies don't care about their wellbeing.

Mrs Libby Brook of Murdoch University's School of Psychology said while FIFOs were commonly stereotyped as 'get rich fly-by-nighters', the reality was that companies were failing to foster a strong sense of belonging.

"On a rating scale of one to seven, perceived organisational support came in at about mid-point, meaning as a group, FIFOs don't feel very much [emotional attachment](#) to their employers," Mrs Brook said.

"The workers also rated perceived supervisor support as low, showing they don't feel valued for their contributions and don't believe their supervisors genuinely care about their [wellbeing](#).

"Since workers see their supervisors' [attitudes](#) as a [reflection](#) of the organisation's attitude as a whole, this is significant."

Mrs Brook suggested companies look at better training for supervisors in '[soft skills](#)' and better understanding that the work-life balance for this group is skewed.

She said policies that promoted [Employee Assistance Programs](#) and other supportive measures for workers and their families needed to be communicated more effectively or in some cases reviewed completely.

A concurrent study on partner satisfaction turned up a mix of findings, reflecting the complexities and interplay of relationships and FIFO work.

"There were a number of surprises. While we expected rosters to be an issue for FIFO workers, overall contentment was high, including those who spent longer periods of time away," Mrs Brook said.

"Partners, however, were less satisfied with their relationships and with the roster system, particularly those with children between the ages of six and 12.

"But they weren't alone. Partners in couples with no children had high levels of [dissatisfaction](#), higher overall in fact than those with children. This may be because they are lonelier when their partners are away."

Mrs Brook said support and resources were available, but again few workers or their partners utilised them, and fewer than 50 per cent even

knew they existed.

"A number of companies have made major efforts to improve their support for FIFOs, but our study shows more needs to be done to inform [workers](#) of what is available," Mrs Brook said.

More information: Research at Murdoch University into issues surrounding fly-in fly-out work is ongoing – potential participants are encouraged to go [here](#).

Provided by Murdoch University

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