

Being a business owner in Carnarvon for the past 12 years, I have seen a marked decline in the local economy. I also deal with clients in Denham and Onslow, and those towns are in a very similar position.

The feedback I receive is that costs continue to rise and that people are finding it more difficult to make ends meet.

People that live in the remote areas do not have what city folk take for granted. Public transport, reasonably priced domestic airfares, medical specialists, good schools, arts and entertainment. These are just a few things that we don't have enough of.

Everything you purchase in these areas has additional freight charges. Things such as fuel, food, white goods, clothes, drinks, cars are just a few. Then because of the remoteness, the basic services such as power and water cost much more than the cities or even in the south of Western Australia. Because of all of these costs, they are all passed onto the end purchaser.

We've all heard of the "mining boom" in Western Australia. However, this story is not all wonderful for the local residents of the towns. Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) workers don't financially support the local economy. FIFO is often the killer of a community. For communities to survive and prosper they need population growth, services and financial confidence.

People that live above the 26th parallel, particularly in Western Australia because of the remoteness and harsh climate, need some financial assistance that would help their individual circumstances. Tax relief such as Zone Allowance goes part way to help. But I think this could go further. To promote growth in these small regional towns perhaps a lower tax rate would go a long way to stimulate the local economy and encourage others to live in these communities?