

Submission for the Productivity Commission Issues Paper: Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments.

1. Please provide a brief background on your business:

Real estate agent and developer involved in residential property for rent and sale and all types of commercial industrial property leasing and sales.

2. Please provide feedback on how the cost and quality of food, groceries and clothing affects your weekly spending:

They don't

3. Please explain how the cost of transport (airfares, fuel, freight etc.) costs impacts you:

Freight impacts on everything we obtain. Airfares are expensive flight times make attending business related activities, like meetings, seminars and training courses expensive as it usually entails one or two nights accommodation on top of the air fare

4. How do you feel about access to primary health care?

The range of services and specialists is quite limited, the City does not yet have an MRI machine

5. Please explain if/how education offered within the Goldfields addresses your needs:

It didn't thirty years ago but is now much better. Tertiary education needs to be expanded and more effort by Curtin University put into growing the School of Mines campus and range of courses in Kalgoorlie

6. Please provide feedback on how the cost of utilities (water, electricity, gas) affects your household and business:

Cost of utilities, particularly water is high, we are on the top cost scale

7. Please explain if you believe that the cost of living warrants an increase to the zone rebate:

There are many limitations that people who, by choice or circumstance, live outside a major City have to endure. These include access to a full spectrum of specialist medical services with consultant choice within a two hour drive of their home. Travel and accommodation from the country to the city is expensive and time consuming, particularly if it entails a course of treatment, dialysis and cancer therapies being the most prevalent. Education limitations at tertiary level which invariably means relocation to the city and maintaining two places of accommodation if

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parents are unable to follow. This is because of a lack of subject choices within a daily commute distance. Generally higher costs of items impacted by freight costs. Lack of opportunity to take part in retail sales and shopping bargains available in the City. This all equates to thousands not hundreds of dollars a year, depending on individual circumstances.

8. Any further comments:

Australia needs to grow its rural communities including cities like Kalgoorlie Boulder. The current taxation structure favours fly in fly out (FIFO), even for the permanent workforce as all travel and accommodation expenses are tax deductible to the employer and the employees spend no money or time in the community nearest to their employment. Result, no expenditure in the local community so shops and restaurants become unsustainable and close, no family of the employees residing in the community so the property market suffers with high vacancy, sporting clubs and other organisations are starved of members so communities struggle to raise a football or cricket team, volunteer organisations have no volunteers, school numbers drop and communities steadily become unsustainable.

The taxation structure needs to change so that for permanent workforce employees tax deductibility for FIFO stops and housing incentives in regional centres made fully tax deductible. Tax concessions need to be substantially increased when living in regions where the drive in drive out (DIDO) major centre populations are less than say 100,000. Local planning laws also need adjusting so that building SPQ camps within DIDO of an established centre is prohibited or at least within the power of the Local Council to control, the exceptions being short term workforce needs such as construction camps and for shut downs.

If positive action is not taken regional centres will continue not shrink and the cost to support towns and enterprises in the regions will become unsustainable at huge cost to Government which in reality means the tax payer.

It is time to act and act decisively