The Parliamentary Inquiry into FIFO/DIDO (2013) examined issues linked to the impact of such work practices on local mining communities, including costs, infrastructure and community cohesion (see also Clifford 2009; Haslam McKenzie 2011). FIFO and drive-in, drive out (DIDO) have emerged as key platforms for the development of remote mining resources. The management of remote workforces has long been a major HRM issue across sectors other than mining – road construction and maintenance; telecommunications; shipping; policing and teaching. In the past, mining companies used a local residential base for housing the workforce. Then, basing workforces within mining regions was the dominant model used, especially prior to the arrival of mass aviation. However, many mining-based communities have had a short life linked to the viability of the mines, and many mining towns have all but disappeared (e.g. Hill End, Sofala, Mount Morgan, Mount Magnet) while others were able to survive and reinvent themselves (e.g. Broken Hill, Bendigo, Cessnock, Ballarat).

The scale of recent mining sector developments in remote regions of Western Australia (WA) and Queensland has meant that meeting workforce demands has led to workers travelling long distances and being employed for long shifts at the site with long periods off the site (see CMEWA 2012). This enables the families of mining sector workers to live in large cities close to facilities and infrastructure. In this special issue we seek to examine the drivers and the consequences of FIFO/DIDO activities in the mining sector. Topics include:

- the impact on workers involved (health, well-being, stress) and their families;
- HRM challenges around recruitment, training and retention of FIFO/DIDO workers;
- the underlying organisation of work and implications for labour regulation;
- the challenges for trade unions (e.g. workforce organising);
- impact on local communities, especially regional economic development;
- impact on the workplace, especially safety issues;
- alternatives to FIFO/DIDO;
- workforce management practices in other remote mining regions – such as Canada and Mongolia; and
- managing the labour process in international and globally integrated mining multinational enterprises.

We welcome all approaches including historical; labour process; economic, HRM and policy-based perspectives. We also welcome all methods, and in particular case studies of FIFO/DIDO. Articles should be between 5000 and 8000 words and adhere to ABL formatting guidelines.

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References:

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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia (2013), Cancer of the bush or salvation for our cities? Fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in Regional Australia. Canberra.