



INPEX Operations Australia Pty Ltd  
ABN 48 150 217 262

22/100 St Georges Terrace Perth  
Western Australia 6000

Tel +61 8 6213 6000  
Fax +61 8 6213 6455

INPEX.com.au

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27 January 2015

Dr Graham Jacobs  
Chair  
Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee  
Level 1, 11 Harvest Terrace  
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Dr Jacobs

**RE: Inquiry into mental health impacts of FIFO work arrangements**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further input into the Committee's inquiry following the release of its discussion paper in November last year and your correspondence of 2 December 2014.

INPEX supports the Committee's note<sup>1</sup> that there is no one size fits all approach when it comes to the use of FIFO workforces especially when manning offshore construction and operations such as those of the Ichthys LNG Project. We also acknowledge that all levels of government, the health-care sector and the community including industry need to play a role in providing optimum outcomes in the prevention and treatment of people who experience mental health issues.

This response focuses on the offshore construction and operational workforce of the Ichthys LNG Project who will be working in Western Australia. As outlined in our initial response, FIFO arrangements are in place for both stages of the offshore Project. The construction stage uses predominantly contractors who mobilise a temporary workforce to undertake these activities.

Responses, where appropriate / relevant, to the additional questions from the Education and Health Standing Committee follow.

**1. Contractor information**

Key offshore construction contractors include Saipem, McDermott, Heerema and Technip.

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<sup>1</sup> *Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee (2014) Shining a Light on FIFO Mental Health: A Discussion Paper. p.4, 8*

2. Companies providing hospitality services

N/A

3. The number of unscheduled departures

The offshore construction work forces are in the early stages of mobilising so employee statistics relating to the field are not relevant for inclusion at this stage.

4. Company policies for 'mental health evacuation'

INPEX has an offshore evacuation policy that will respond to any offshore medical emergency or situation that requires an evacuation. Our offshore facilities will be staffed by a medic on each asset who has relevant clinical offshore experience.

A contract is in place with specialist and dedicated offshore evacuation medical services. Evacuation protocols and policies are in place between the evacuation service and the medic in the event of any illness or injury occurring offshore. Due to the distance and time it will take to reach a tertiary medical facility, it is likely that INPEX will evacuate at early onset of symptoms for any medical event rather than observe and hold a patient.

All our offshore workers have a comprehensive medical examination and complete a psychological questionnaire every two years. This clinical assessment is complimented by workplace health and wellbeing programs (described below) provided by INPEX.

All offshore medicals are reviewed by our Chief Medical Officer who is an occupational physician with specialist experience in the offshore environment.

5. Return to work policies following a mental health issue

In our initial response we addressed INPEX's Return to Work Policy for those employees with mental health issues.

In 2014, INPEX managed to assist a number of employees with non-work related illnesses/injuries return to work under the company's structured program. A generous salary continuance program is provided to all employees (at no cost to the employee) and a private health insurance discount program is also available.

6. Attrition rate of employees within first six months

The offshore construction work forces are in the early stages of mobilising so employee statistics relating to the field are not relevant for inclusion at this stage.

7. Company policy on compassionate leave

INPEX provides three days of paid compassionate leave for employees with additional leave being approved if required. This can be a combination of annual or unpaid leave and is in addition to staff sick leave entitlements.

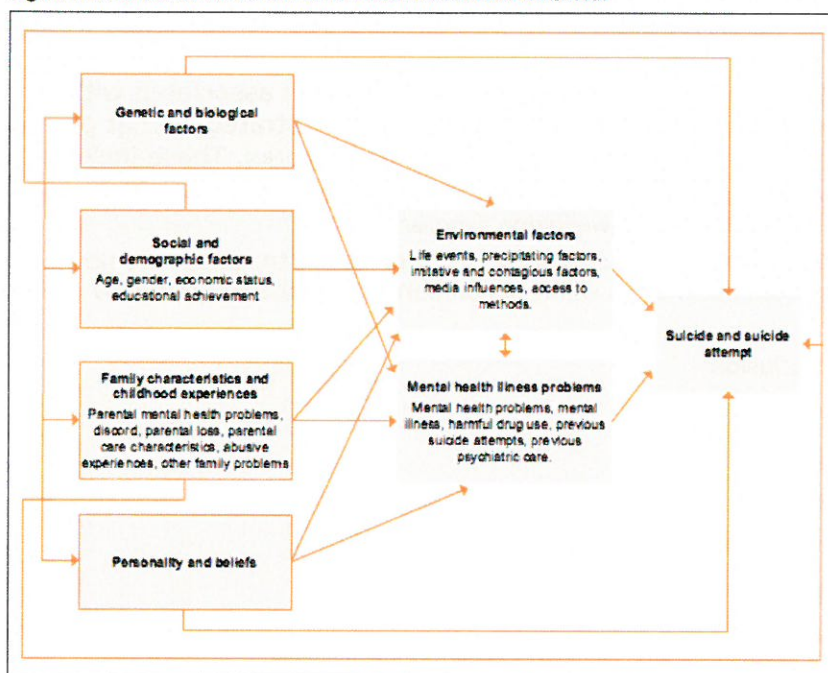
8. Suicide-related information

INPEX shares the Committee's view that evidence and information regarding suicide is critical. As highlighted in the WA Government's Suicide Prevention Strategy there are a range of complex risk factors associated with suicide and suicide behaviour. Given the complexities, a whole of Government and a broad community response is required.



INPEX would welcome suggestions by the Committee on any gaps and ways in which industry data can help inform state and federal efforts on suicide prevention.

**Figure 4: Risk factors associated with suicide and suicide behaviour**<sup>29</sup>



Source: Western Australian Suicide Prevention Strategy (2009).

## Our approach to health and wellbeing of personnel – additional input

As described in our initial response, INPEX is committed to actively supporting its employees to ensure people are fit for work both physically and mentally through a range of policies and human resource practices.

## Employee Assistance Programs

We note the Committee's interest in seeking further information on Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)<sup>2</sup>. The following 2014 EAP information is provided for the Committee's attention.

- Promotion and staff workshops on EAP and its services saw an increase in enquiries in 2014 compared to 2012
- Personal reasons were cited as the leading reason (79 per cent) for accessing clinical services. Work reasons made up 21 per cent as the primary reason. This is in line with the oil and gas industry that records the reasons as 75 per cent personal and 25 per cent as work reasons
- Women made up over 70 per cent of staff accessing the service
- People aged between:
  - 20-29 years represented 13 percent of users
  - 30-39 years represented 30 per cent
  - 40-49 years represented 26 per cent
  - 50 years and over represented 17 per cent<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.3

<sup>3</sup> 14% of people didn't provide details

- Self-referrals were by far the highest referral source (as opposed to family; members for instance). Clients recorded that they knew about the EAP mainly from workplace promotional materials and the INPEX intranet
- Analysis of the intranet EAP portal revealed that most people searched on general EAP details followed by information on relationships, stress and work life balance followed by a range of other topics.

INPEX intends to strengthen a number of programs and policies associated with employee health and wellbeing. This work will enhance INPEX strategies that promote inclusion, embrace diversity and encourage peer support networks. These include:


- Plans to award a three year contract to a specialist wellbeing provider who will assist in providing a robust and comprehensive wellbeing program
- The release of INPEX's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in late 2014. Under the Strategy, the Australian and overseas offices in 2015 will focus on harmony in the workplace by running sessions with staff on:
  - diversity and inclusion
  - expected behaviours
  - bullying and harassment
  - measuring company values as part of performance management
  - cultural awareness and understanding
  - celebrating success.
- Commencing the development of a comprehensive Peer Support program that will carefully select staff who will be trained to provide emergency crisis support.

There are a range of programs and services that are currently provided by INPEX such as:

- Online support via the online hub and EAP services
- Holding staff workshops on wellbeing, stress and general mental health including assisting people in crisis
- Running 'R U OK day' with our major contractor and staff
- Having representation at dedicated mental health forums such as the Beyond Blue and AMMA CEO luncheon on Mental Health
- Providing peer networking and socialising events such as the Corporate Global Challenge, charity events, community fun runs and bike rides which attracted over 44 and 211 participants respectively in 2014
- Free health checks, nutrition assessments, flu vaccines and skin cancer checks.

INPEX thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide additional information on this complex issue and we look forward to the final Report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the submission.

Yours sincerely



**Bill Townsend**  
General Manager External Affairs & Joint Ventures