



Living around the roster : What we learnt from you

Thank you to all the families who participated in this study. Our research is not possible without people finding time in their busy lives to speak with us and share their experiences.



What we did

We spoke with 31 partners of current FIFO workers to understand their perspectives on the benefits and challenges of FIFO work, coping strategies, things that make it easier and harder to manage, family impacts and ideas for support. In this document, we provide a summary of what we found.

What we found



Positives

- Increased financial security and improved work-life balance for FIFO workers.



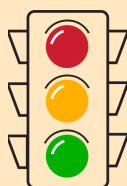
Challenges

- Juggling parenting, household, and work responsibilities alone during swings was the most significant challenge.
- Limited or strained communication due to prolonged separation and disrupted family routines during transitions were key challenges for partners.



Wellbeing impacts

- Partners experienced fatigue due to the demands of parenting during swings, while FIFO workers were reportedly physically and mentally exhausted due to long working hours.
- Most partners interviewed believed FIFO had little impact on their children's wellbeing. However, younger children were seen as more vulnerable due to difficulties understanding the FIFO parent's absence.



What helps and what gets in the way

- Support from friends and family, like help with school pickups and housework is pivotal and helps ease the pressure during swings.
- Sharing caregiving and household responsibilities when home reduced partner stress, while limited involvement could strain family relationships.
- Workplaces offering flexible leave, support for responding to family emergencies and short, even time rosters enabled FIFO workers to be more engaged.

Coping strategies



- Consistent and open communication helped maintain connections and coordinate weekly routines.
- Partners helped children adjust to FIFO by explaining the arrangement in age-appropriate ways, providing ongoing reminders of when the FIFO parent would be away, and regular communication during swings.
- Self-care, including exercise, socializing, and personal time, helped partners manage stress and was easier to prioritise when the FIFO parent was home.

What can help?

Partners shared many ideas for ways that FIFO families could be supported



Resources for Families

Accessible information on topics including communication and managing transitions.



More Family Days

More frequent family days (site visits) and family events based in Perth.



Peer Support

Peer networks, including support groups and playgroups to help partners build social connections.



Reform

Wider implementation of balanced rosters and timely access to leave for family matters.



What's Next?

We are currently co-designing a **free online support resource for families**. The resource aims to help families build the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to thrive in FIFO working arrangements. The resource will be available in December 2026.



How can you contact us?

If you have any questions or feedback or would like a full copy of our publication, please contact Dr Vincent Mancini at:
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