

Michael Hoare  
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Iron Ore and Nickel West  
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By email: [michael.i.hoare@bhp.com](mailto:michael.i.hoare@bhp.com)

Dear Michael,

On behalf of members of the Western Mine Workers' Alliance, we seek urgently to raise a matter with you of significant concern, in particular to those working in BHP FIFO camps.

We have been advised of a recent change to BHP's standard "Village Rules" that we are concerned may encroach on the privacy and legal rights of our Members.

For your information we have included a copy of the new rules, with the paragraph of concern highlighted. Employees are being told that to use the accommodation, they have to agree to the camp rules. In a number of instances we are aware of employees who returned from shift and were told they would not have a room without agreeing to the new rules.

In short, our concerns are that FIFO employees are being required to agree to their belongings in camp being searched on what is said to be a "random" basis.

We understand that little or no consultation has occurred and very few details have been provided.

Arbitrary search powers constitute an extraordinary invasion of privacy and give rise to an immediate concern about the manner they will be used and the uses to which they will be put.

WMWA are greatly concerned that if these changes are enacted upon, improper powers may be given to local management, security, and others, to search both men and women's personal belongings and effects. We are concerned that there is real chance that these powers could be misused, potentially increasing anxiety that may be harmful to the mental wellbeing of employees in the camps.

Some of the issues we have identified and seek to discuss include:

- On what basis does BHP believe that the random searches of employees' personal possessions is lawful?
- Who will do the searches?

- What training will they receive?
- How will the searches be conducted, will there be more than one person present when conducting each search?
- Will the owner of the Personal Belongings be present, or informed, if so when?
- What process is undertaken and what level of managerial approval is given before approval of a search?
- Will belongings be removed?
- What records will be kept in relation to the searches?
- Going through personal items unaccompanied provides an opportunity for theft and even, evidence planting. The rules also state that Personal Belongings are the sole responsibility of the Employee and the Company will not be held responsible for any damage or theft. How can this be reconcilable?
- Will searches be used for disciplinary reasons?
- What is to stop searches being used or threatened informally as an illegitimate power over employees?
- What will be the mental health impacts of the searches and the threat of searches?
- Given the search would extend to clothing, toiletries, medicines and other similar effects, how or why such an extraordinary breach of privacy is warranted.

On behalf of the Western Mine Workers' Alliance and its Membership and as a matter of urgency, I request that senior BHP representatives meet representatives from the Western Mine Workers' Alliance.

If you require further information regarding this correspondence, please contact AWU National Organising Director Shane Roulstone at [shane.roulstone@nat.awu.net.au](mailto:shane.roulstone@nat.awu.net.au) or by phone on 0438 141 380.

Regards,



Craig Beveridge  
**Acting WA Branch Secretary**  
**The Australian Workers' Union**



Greg Busson  
**WA Branch Secretary**  
**CFMMEU – Mining & Energy Division**