Exceptional and heartfelt stories of the men and women at the frontline of Australia’s mining boom.
Three-part series starts **Tuesday 14 October at 8.30pm**

The observational documentary series *Flying Miners* puts a human face to the men and women working at the coalface in Australia’s mining industry.

Commuting by plane, to work in one of Australia’s remote mines, can be a double-edged sword...the money is good, but the costs are great. Isolation, loneliness, and heartache - these are the realities of working out in the wilderness, thousands of kilometres from home. But over 100,000 people choose to work this way. They’re called FIFOs: Fly In Fly Out miners and they hold a unique place in Australia’s mining industry.

Making money – and lots of it, can make ordinary people do extraordinary things. If the price is right, it can turn teachers into truck drivers, accountants into labourers and high school dropouts into highly skilled drillers. We meet FIFOs to understand the business from their perspective, why they do what they do and how they see their future unfolding. Shana, a former model, she now drives a dump truck in the Pilbara while Michael used to be a power line worker in New South Wales, now he travels across the country to Port Hedland, to maintain rail ore cars.

Earning lots of money can also become a hard habit to break. *Flying Miners* explores the indulgences and dangers of FIFOs with too much cash. Copper miner Nick Dametto has tried to work outside the mining industry but the money keeps luring him back. The series also explores the debate surrounding the benefit - or lack of it - of FIFO money in the surrounding regional towns and also the ongoing issue in some Indigenous communities, where opinions are divided as to the benefit of mining money.

But it’s a fickle business and Australia has been riding the wave of the mining boom for years now, with the bust potentially always just around the corner. Gold miner Chris Banasik knows only too well the pressure of finding and keeping a profitable mine operating. As Director of Exploration and Geology for gold mining company Silver Lake Resources, his decisions affect hundreds of FIFOs working for him. So just what does the future hold for the Australian mining industry?

With input from leading industry experts and with unprecedented access to mines all over the country, this series lifts the lid on the world of those *Flying Miners*.

**Production Credits:** A Screentime Production, a Banijay Group company in association with Taylor Media for ABC TV. Screentime Executive Producers Bob Campbell, Stephen Peters, Simon Steel and Jennifer Collins. Taylor Media Executive Producer Sue Taylor. ABC TV Executive Producer Anita Brown.

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Over 100,000 workers currently hold a unique place in Australia’s mining industry. They are the FIFOs: Fly In Fly Out miners. We meet Shana from Perth, a former model who drives a dump truck out in the heart of the Pilbara. She’s missing out on a social life, but it’s a sacrifice she is prepared to make, having just bought her third investment property at the age of 24.

Underground copper miner Bucky has dedicated his life to mining, and currently earns the big bucks in what is one of the most elite and dangerous mining jobs in the country. But he has a new love in his life, having recently married Melita. With a new home and hopefully a family on the way, Bucky is at a crossroad. Is his love for FIFO mining about to come to an end?

Matt Skeet is a self made FIFO, he owns his own drill rig business up in the Pilbara. He has a wife and baby daughter at home in Kalgoorlie. Matt thinks now is the time to expand the business, but his wife wants him at home more – they are deadlocked. It’s going to take drastic action for them to agree...

While gold miner Brad is the king of the commuters. It takes him a day to travel from home in country Victoria to work in Western Australia. He’s doing the hard yards to put his wife through university and raise a young family, but he’s missing out on precious moments with his kids at the same time. Not being there for his son’s first birthday brings that reality home. It’s clear that the FIFO life can be a tough one.
Episode Two
Boom or Bust
Tuesday 21 October at 8.30pm

Mining has been booming for years, but the good times cannot last forever. ... Bust is always just around the corner. We follow Silver Lake Resources Company Director of Exploration and Geology, Chris Banasik at the frontline. With millions of dollars at stake, the pressure is on him to look for a potential new site to mine.

However, in a time of falling gold prices, making plans for the future is a very risky business, and their current Murchison site in WA is in crisis. Despite doing all they can to turn things around, Chris and his board make the devastating decision to close the mine, forcing hundreds of miners out of work.

We meet Andrew Carstairs, a gold miner working in WA, while his family is up in the Gove Peninsula in the Northern Territory. He’s already lost one marriage to FIFO, so second time around, he’s trying to put his family first and is desperate to secure a job close to home. But in a fickle industry, his new job is under threat too.

On the other side of the country, is 68-year-old copper miner Rob Dolan. Family means everything to Rob, after enduring a crisis that took him to breaking point. He lost his entire life savings in the Global Financial Crisis. Without mining, he would probably be out on the street. He won’t be hanging up his hard hat any time soon.

This episode also pays a visit to regional towns around the country, many of which see mining as a curse rather than a blessing. Former MP Tony Windsor calls the work practice of FIFOs ‘the cancer of the bush’, while places like Port Hedland see very little benefit of FIFO money. We also spend time in the former gold mining town of Cue, where the boom left long ago. The streets remain deserted but the locals are optimistic - the good times will be here again. However, with the nearby Murchison mine closing, the glories of the past are a long way off.
Everyone knows that FIFOs earn good money. But mining money can also be a trap. Bigger wages brings shinier toys and bigger bills and before they know it, they’re bound by the ‘golden handcuffs’.

The final episode explores the indulgences and dangers of FIFOs with too much cash. Some are spending, some are saving, and some are misbehaving. We meet copper miner Nick Darnetto who has had the golden handcuffs for years. He’s tried to live without mining, but the money has kept him coming back for more. Now he can never go back to a 9 to 5 job as he has too many toys to pay for.

Mark Lynch is the straight talking iron ore miner from Perth. He’s gone from owning 4 plastic chairs to 4 Harleys, and is only too aware of the pitfalls and prizes that mining can bring.

For the Indigenous community, mining money is dividing opinion. Despite a chequered and controversial history with the mining industry, some argue it is better to sleep with the enemy than miss out on the spoils of the mining boom. Others feel that it’s still an industry that’s denying equal opportunities. For Indigenous miner Michael Lynwood, there’s no denying that FIFO has turned his life around. After months of unemployment and depression, mining money has not trapped him - it’s revived him. For Annie and Charles, who found love on the mine, mining money has meant they can look to invest in a dream home together. But be careful what you wish for, as the money trap lies in wait...

So what exactly does the future hold for Australia’s mining industry? With huge investment in gas, Australia has a new resource up its sleeve, which is good news for FIFOs. But in the battleground of global competition, mining companies are also looking for ways to keep costs down and production up, which means that with the advent of automated trucks and rail, FIFO jobs are in jeopardy.

Clearly times are changing for the mining industry, but for now the FIFOs will continue to fly high on mining prosperity. No one knows for exactly how long.
Meet our FIFOs

**Shana Mooyman**  Iron Ore Mobile Plant Operator – Lives in Perth works in the Pilbara

**Matt Skeet**  Iron Ore Drill Operator – Lives in Kalgoorlie works in the Pilbara

**Bradley Hamence**  Gold mine Excavator/Dozer Driver – Lives in Mildura works in Cue WA

**Rodney ‘Bucky’ Buck**  Copper mine Jumbo Operator – Lives in Charters Towers works at Osborne Mine QLD

**Andrew ‘Smalls’ Carstairs**  Gold mine Plant Operator – Lives in Gove Peninsula (NT) works in Cue WA

**Rob Dolan**  Copper mine Fixed Plants Trades Assistant – Lives in Townsville works at Osborne Mine QLD

**Nick Dametto**  Copper mine Mechanical Fitter – Lives in Townsville works at Osborne Mine QLD

**Michael Lynwood**  Iron Ore mine Rail Ore Car Maintenance – Lives in Grafton works in Port Hedland WA

**Mark Lynch**  Iron Ore mine Production Superintendent – Lives in Perth works in the Pilbara

**Charles Comegain & Annie Marie Wallam**  Iron mine Plant Operator and Trainee Plant operator – Both live in Geraldton and work in the Pilbara

**Merwe & Zani Du Plessis**  Gold mine Geologist and Lab Technician – Both live in Cue WA

**Chris Banasik**  Mine Director Exploration and Geology for Silver Lake Resources