

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mining critics should address the hard facts

An Australia Institute report downplaying the importance of the mining sector to the national economy is riddled with errors and flies in the face of commonsense and known facts, according to resource industry employer group AMMA.

Detailing the results of his public opinion survey, the Australian Institute's Richard Denniss today attacked the mining industry for contributing to Australia's rising unemployment figure, despite government research showing every mining job creates three indirect employment opportunities.

AMMA Director Minna Knight said the Australia Institute's report is immediately discredited by legitimate economic research firms including the RBA and Deloitte.

"The Australia Institute is an avowed anti-mining organisation and this report is again prejudice dressed up as research," said Ms Knight.

"It claims that more than 80 per cent of the revenue generated by mining ends up in foreign hands yet the Reserve Bank said last month that 60 cents in every dollar earned from mining stays in Australia. The report also says the industry pays 13.9 per cent tax whereas Deloitte Access Economics figures show the industry pays 41.5 per cent tax."

Given the historic high investment in mining operations across Australia, Ms Knight said it is little surprise the public perceives the resource industry as a key driver of the nation's economic prosperity. In the last quarter the Western Australian and Queensland economies led the country with growth of 2.3 and 1.8 per cent respectively.

"In Queensland alone, capital investment this year has been 52.5 per cent higher than last year and State Treasurer Andrew Fraser has explicitly attributed this growth to the mining boom," said Ms Knight.

"Furthermore, Australia's unemployment rate has today risen to 5.3 per cent while the mining sector is experiencing a critical skills shortage. WA is calling out for 60,000 workers to meet current project requirements, while the Queensland Government today said the mining industry would provide 38,000 jobs across the state over the next few years.

"It's easy for a leftist organisation and the Green's to make statements based on a general survey of public perception, but it's far less convenient for those critics of the mining sector to face up to the statistics and hard facts that show Australia is prospering on the back of its resource industry.

"It's equally disturbing that such organisations are continuing their attempts to create an 'us versus them' attitude by portraying the mining sector as elitist or unproductive, when in reality the booming resource industry is working alongside all other industries to restore Australia's economy as one of the most diverse and prosperous in the world."

ABS statistics show 213,200 people are directly employed in mining, oil and gas operations in Australia, with an additional 639,600 indirect jobs created by the resource industry.

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