

# Forging future leaders

BY PENELOPE THOMAS

Australia's global leadership and innovation in mining is increasingly recognised beyond its borders, with local expertise in high demand abroad, according to the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA).

Australia has built its history and economy on the strength of the resources industry over more than a century, and AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott told *National Mining Chronicle* an increasingly globalised mining climate meant the specialist skills of Australians were now highly sought to deliver results on resources projects around the world.

Mr Knott, who leads the association's extensive employment consulting services provided to its diverse national member network of mining, oil and gas and service-related companies, said Australian mining delivered ingrained traits desirable in the global resources environment.

"Our adaptability and strong focus on getting the job done safely and efficiently is why our people are in-demand globally," he said.

"In particular, we have an excellent track record for our skills around flexibility and innovation."

Mr Knott said Australia had fostered a thriving environment for innovation and technological improvements through its mining, equipment, technology and services (METS) sector, which had ensured the nation remained a global leader in the area and further harnessed its in-depth mining knowledge and expertise.

Coupled with Australia's reputation for world-class education and development, the nation's innovation drive leaves its employees well placed to meet industry needs around the world.

"Australia has some of the highest-quality educational facilities in the world, with a focus on the specialist skill needs of the resources and energy industry," Mr Knott said.

"Having access to world's best practice exploration,

construction and production equipment is important for Australia's resources industry to ensure extremely technical aspects can be undertaken safely and efficiently.

"Mining executives are also critical to the development of the global mining network. During their careers, resources and energy sector executives will work on different projects in different parts of the world and leave their mark in each place they work."

Mr Knott said he believed exchanging skills between countries and multinational employers created jobs, allowed for the exchange of ideas and drove efficiencies and productivity across the sector. As in many industries, this starts at the top.

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"Our sector's best leaders are always seeking out innovation through new technologies and different ways of working. They are relentlessly exploring new ideas and ways of work."

To foster the development of our future mining leaders, the Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI) at The University of Queensland launched its Mining Leaders Program earlier this year.

"The program provides an option for those in emerging leadership roles within the mining sector to develop a broad set of management and leadership, business and technical capabilities," SMI Program Leader Robin Evans said.



Steve Knott.

"It aims to empower functional heads and discipline managers or newly appointed general managers to be high-performing leaders operating at either a site or corporate level."

Focused on creating a business environment that facilitates productivity, the goal of the program is to blend traditional leadership education with the rapidly changing technological and human capital demands of the resources sector.

Delivered over five months, the program is supported by on-the-job learning, individual leadership coaching sessions and peer learning with fellow students.

Mr Knott said he believed the sector's best leaders were always developing their people and driving efficiencies within the business.

"Particularly in the resources and energy sector, the best leaders are outcome-driven with a focus on people, safety and efficiency," he said.

"This leadership is what makes a business successful, boosting productivity and creating more jobs and revenue to ensure a brighter future for all Australians.

"However, primarily they have a focus on their employees. They are dedicated to engaging with their people to develop their capacity and get the best out of the workforce.

"Many of them deal with a diverse workforce and operate in diverse communities, making it crucial for them to have strong communication skills at all levels." **NMC**