



MEDIA RELEASE

MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

MINERALS INDUSTRY TRAINING CULTURE RE-AFFIRMED BY NATIONAL THINK TANK

The minerals industry's strong commitment to training its own employees was a key finding of a new report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

The report: *'Industry and Training 2007'*, indicates the extent to which the minerals industry privately funds and conducts training for its employees, due to systemic inadequacies in the Government training system, especially in remote and regional parts of Australia. Mining industry employers spent three times the all industry average on training, with a massive 96 percent of all employers actively engaging their employees in training every year.

The Minerals Council of Australia welcomed the report's findings as further evidence of the industry's strong commitment to training to ensure chronic skills shortages in the industry are addressed but called on State and Federal Governments to ensure the public sector does not relinquish its training responsibilities.

"The findings of this study re-affirm the strong training culture of the minerals industry. The study recognises that training is a key factor in the minerals industry's success in meeting the global demand for commodities and in the industry's role as the primary source of wealth for our nation. The study confirms the industry's pre-eminent place as an investor in vocational education and training", Chief Executive, Mitchell H. Hooke said.

"But at the same time, the industry needs the Federal and State Governments to step up to the plate and ensure that training systems are reformed to meet the needs of the fastest growing industry in Australia – the minerals industry.

"We need a vocational education system that is suitably resourced, flexible, market-driven and responsive to needs in regional and remote areas of Australia," Mr Hooke said.

The report draws on the findings of the 2007 NCVER *'Survey of Employer Use and Views of the VET System'* and other sources. Mr Hooke said "the report's findings also show:

- significantly higher than average proportion of the industry's employers (83%) are engaged with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, compared with a 54% average for all industries;
- substantial investment by the industry in training reflects the upskilling of its current workforce;
- a highly skilled mining workforce - 28% of employees have certificate III or IV qualifications, compared with 17% in the overall Australian workforce;
- mining industry employers spent 2.3% of gross wages or \$1,643 per employee on training per year.

"Compared with other industries, the report shows:

- mining industry employees are younger than the average workforce;
- female employment in the industry has grown to 15%;
- almost all of mining industry employment (98%) is full-time;
- the mining industry operates principally in regional and remote areas of Australia;
- mining industry employees are marginally more mobile than the national average, with 28% in their current job for less than a year.

"The report's findings are entirely consistent with the feedback we are receiving from our members and other agencies of Government. It reconfirms why the mining industry workforce is highly productive and why urgent reform of the VET system is required if we are to maintain our global competitive advantage.

In 2007 the mining industry employed just 1.3% of the national workforce although it generated more than 60% of Australia's merchandise exports", Mr Hooke said.

Media Contact:

Director Public Affairs
T: 02 6233 0600

M: 0418 160089

E: media@minerals.org.au

W: www.minerals.org.au

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