



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Mining worker shortages could slow mineral exports delay climate change agenda – National Skills Week**

#### ***WA mining and resource sector alone could need as many as 40,000 more workers by mid-2023***

**11 August 2022** . National Skills Week's Chairman Brian Wexham notes that Australia's mining industry was responsible for 10.4 percent of GDP between 2019 and 2020, making it the single largest contributor to the national economy.

Australia's minerals production remained robust in 2021, leading global production of iron ore and lithium, and ranking second in gold and cobalt. However, a near and medium-term labour shortage is looming that could slow mineral exports.

Mr Wexham said: "The mining sector has been highly productive over recent years despite the headwinds of COVID-19, variable commodity prices and the strained relationship with our number one trading partner, China. However, booming infrastructure spending in the eastern states has meant stiffer competition for skilled people who traditionally might have been lured to the more resource rich states for work. Two job categories that stand out especially in this space are motor mechanics and civil engineers.

"Motor mechanics are in short supply, due to smaller numbers from the training system, the closure until recently of international borders, and reduced geographic mobility. This imbalance is forecast to grow, especially in the mining states of Qld, WA and the NT. Civil engineers are central to government investment programs and will continue to be in demand given the long lead times on projects. A plateauing in higher education graduates has put more reliance on international migrants to perform this occupation." (Source: Ernst & Young, No silver bullet for skills shortages, 2021).

#### **Dr Gavin Lind, CEO of Australian Minerals & Energy Skills Alliance**

**(AUSMESA) says:** "There are hundreds of diverse career choices open across the mining and energy sector. Opportunities exist on remote sites, in city-based offices and high-tech control and management centres, in science as well as computer laboratories, in a mix of locations across Australia.

"You can make a career managing a team, rehabilitating mine sites, building robotics, piloting drones, engineering machinery, safeguarding native plants and

animals, social and community responsibility and philanthropy, or tackling climate change. Workers can build skills to work anywhere around the world. With so many jobs on offer there has never been a better time to consider a career in Australian mining.

The minerals and energy sector is at the forefront of technological advances that will reduce Australia's reliance on fuel, generate cleaner energy, minimise water use, and reduce carbon emissions, as well as social advances that will ensure that sustainable benefits and opportunities extend to First Nations people whose land they work on and to surrounding communities, and that women are strongly supported in the workforce.

Now moving into its twelfth year, National Skills Week 2022 is being held this year, August 22 to 28, inviting Australians to explore the Universe of Skills on offer through Vocational Education and Training.

A key objective of National Skills Week is to identify and highlight industries with the most in-demand jobs of the future as well as sectors forecast to see the biggest growth in coming years, to ensure Australians can gain the training and education they need to secure those jobs and maintain stable long-term employment.

Mr Wexham said it is critical that school leavers, job seekers, parents and career changers are informed of what the jobs of the future are, and what Australia's most critical skills shortages and jobs needs are.

This will ensure our young people, yet to start careers, can gain training and skills in education which is going to secure them a job at the end of that training.

Further, it will assist in funnelling Australia's labour market into the training opportunities which are most likely going to lead to their employment ie the most in-demand jobs of the future.

Held annually, the vision of **National Skills Week** is to raise awareness on the diversity of careers which can be realised through vocational education and training, the skills for an economically viable future, and the incredible range of new jobs and skills in demand for the future.

This year's Week will be centred around the theme of **'A Universe of Skills'** encouraging people to go beyond their imagination to discover careers, pathways and opportunities in skills and Vocational Education that they may not know about, thought about or even imagined.

National Skills Week plays a pivotal role in strengthening and communicating the key messages of industry and government in an environment shaped by the fluid nature of skills requirements and ever-evolving technologies, said Mr Wexham.

This initiative is designed to achieve real, transformative outcomes for Australian people . to inspire people to undertake active, participative education and training that VET provides resulting in skills that can realise immediate rewards in jobs, success and contribute to building our economy.

## **All you need to know about National Skills Week 2022:**

- When:** August 22-28 2022
- Purpose:** To raise awareness of the myriad of rewarding, lucrative and prestigious career pathways available via vocational education and training
- Key message:** A skilled workforce leads to an employed workforce.
- Theme:** 'A Universe of Skills: Go beyond your imagination. Discover careers, pathways and opportunities in skills and Vocational Education that you may not know about, thought about or even imagined.'

### **Interview options / talent:**

- **National Skills Week Chairman Brian Wexham**
- **Dr Gavin Lind, CEO of Australian Minerals & Energy Skills Alliance (AUSMESA)**
- **Capital also has access to a wide range of Government leaders, CEOs of industry bodies and organisations across industries facing the biggest skills shortages (healthcare, manufacturing, construction etc) as well as more than 15 VET Alumni from all parts of the country who have completed VET courses and won awards.**

National Skills Week is supported by the Australian Government & National Careers Institute.

For further information, visit [nationalskillsweek.com.au](http://nationalskillsweek.com.au)

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