

The Importance of Mining

Planning Minister Stokes is intending to amend the State's Mining Planning Policy by removing the provision that the significance of a mining resource should be the principle consideration when evaluating a mining project.

In considering such an amendment it begs the question . what is the significance of mining in New South Wales? Recently I attended a lunch in Sydney where Minister Stokes spoke passionately about Sydney becoming a Global City and he spoke in glowing terms about the amount of development that is currently happening in Sydney. This development includes the Barangaroo Project, the redevelopment of Darling Harbour, the light rail projects, the heavy rail projects and the new motorway projects. My apologies to Novocastrians for talking about the development in Sydney but the point I want to make is that . could Sydney be a Global City or a city at all if it wasn't for mining?

The buildings at Barangaroo and at Darling Harbour are being built using steel cranes, concrete columns and floors with steel reinforcing, and concrete walls with glass windows. The rail projects are going to use concrete sleepers and steel rail tracks. The motorway projects are going to consume a lot of road base gravel and their surfaces will be made of concrete or bitumen. Where do all of these building materials come from? Minister Stokes they come from mining. For any modern city to exist and in particular a Global City, that city relies totally on mining for its existence. Concrete is made from limestone, sand, gravel, iron, gypsum and bauxite all of which has to be mined. Steel can only be made because iron ore and coal is mined. To make road base material, gravel has to be mined. Glass is made by mining sand.

The people of New South Wales must realise that we are totally reliant on mining in order for us to enjoy the benefits of our modern economic and social world. If we were to stop mining in New South Wales the current way of life will not be able to be supported. If it wasn't for mining we wouldn't have houses, streets, cars, buses, planes, electricity, water pipes, ovens, computers, televisions and every other modern device.

In a recent opinion piece, Mr Amos a researcher from the Australia Institute claims that the NSW's mining industry employs less than 1% of the state's workforce and in doing so infers that it is not a significant industry. He also refutes the NSW Minerals Council's claim that mining should be recognised for its significant contribution to the economy.

If it wasn't for the mining industry the Australia Institute would not exist. The mining industry may only employ 1% of the state's workforce but to slightly alter a famous quotation:-

Never before in the field of human existence has so much been owed by so many to so few.

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