

Money Mining Intelligence *By special education contributor Lanita Idrus*

DESPITE the impending rubber-stamping of the mining tax by the Senate after approval by the Lower House, the mining industry in Australia is truly alive and well if not thriving. It will also continue to survive and traverse the mining tax and carbon tax issues for some time to come.

Australia, and the world's mining industry, can thank Australian individuals, organizations and institutions for the innovative investments they have made to the industry. Australian's innate inclination for 'global roaming' has facilitated this transfer of knowledge worldwide and is feeding improvements in the education of the workforce for the mining industry globally.

Such innovative investments and innovations generally arise out of experiences and experiences that shape the way we think. What we think enables us to design the future we want. Underpinning all this is our education – how we learn, whom or what we learn from and how we understand our experiences.

It is through education that we shape our future leaders and it is no different in our mining industry. Leaders in this industry must continue to forge the path ahead in order to resolve the skills shortage issue.

Education in mining has been under-estimated, under-valued and under-funded but not until it is more widely realized and understood that we are fast becoming 'resourceless' in providing manpower to the industry will it become a hot topic again.

The three prime reasons for people to look at education as a solution source are (i) improving ROIs, (ii) the need for manpower; and (iii) specific technical challenges within the industry.

For whatever reason that applies to you or your company - it is never too late to invest in education for the overall good of oneself but more importantly for the mining industry.

Take Money Mining for example. Now a course run by Whittle Consulting, it is the epitome of more than 30 years of research and dedication to the mining industry resulting in a rigorous plan of action to revise and revitalize the way we think about what we do, how we do it and how wisely we dissipate our company's funds. Though having a fundamental basis in mathematical algorithms, you need not be a mathematical genius to do the course. All you need is an open mind and your experiences. Whittle Consulting director Gerald Whittle, who is also mentor/leader of this course,

will do the rest with you. How can one course improve the ROI of a company by more than 5%? Well Money Mining can ... case studies upon case studies have proven this to be true.

Working hand-in-hand with Money Mining is Gemcom whose partnership helps Whittle deliver an outstanding software program so companies can review, monitor, evaluate and improve their performance. Gemcom is who mining companies turn to if they want to increase mine productivity. To ensure that their software yields the results that companies want, Gemcom offers ongoing training. As recent as October 2011, Gemcom announced its support of other education innovations such as the MEA (Mining Education Australia) Engineering Program. MEA is a national education joint venture between four mining education providers in Australia – Curtin University, University of Adelaide, The University of New South Wales and The University of Queensland.

Among the most talked about innovative investments the mining industry has made in recent years are the development of research centres, such as IMER (Institute for Mineral and Energy Resources), MCRF (the Mineral Characterization Research Facility), CRC Mining and the newly mooted International Mining for Development Centre. This centre, hailed by Prime Minister Gillard recently in Perth, can be best described as yet another opportunity for the transfer of knowledge from Australian expertise (from government, academia and industry) to the mining industry in more than 30 developing countries in Africa, the Asia Pacific region and Latin America.

During a visit to the University of Western Australia, where the centre will be based, the Prime Minister espoused: "We want to make sure resource-rich developing countries use opportunities generated by mining to create much needed education and job opportunities for some of the world's most vulnerable people." This new Centre is a partnership between the University of Western Australia's Energy and Mineral Institute and the University of Queensland's Sustainable Minerals Institute.

Some of the mining industry's giants are also supporting education. Take Metso, for example, who has partnered with the University of Queensland to research the effectiveness of grinding solutions for the industry; and OK Tedi Mining Co in Papua New Guinea which is spending money on education to

train 32 new apprentices. Barmenco which is committed to industry education, received two awards recently for its commitment to training and education while Joy Global-P&H Minepro has started programs to train staff on the financial measures and operations that the company undertakes which ensures the sales force has a clear understanding of how and why business decisions are made. This translates to delineating customer needs and enhancing financial success.

As for ensuring that the mining industry continues to have engaging and transformational leaders in the future, the Australian education system is not short of providing courses to groom them, including the Mt Eliza Business School, MGSM (Macquarie Graduate School of Management), and the AGSM (Australian Graduate School of Management in NSW. In fact, almost every state and territory of Australia has a Graduate School of Management where one can simply apply and attend with the aim of learning something that will transform them into a leader and provide their company (the employer) with a competitive advantage in the industry. For an overview of these institutions please review our Education Directory in this issue.

If you are located in the Asia Pacific region education opportunities in management and leadership may be found through Australia's Open University programs or through companies such as Caliden Global, which is based in Singapore and professes expertise from world renowned schools such as Wharton, Stanford and the like.

Whatever your view on learning, training or the recruitment crises in mining, you will agree that action needs to be taken. It is heartening to see the rise in industry supporting education initiatives both within industry and with specialist institutions. It is also good to see government recognition and acknowledgement of the need to invest in education.

If mining is to support nations then it is prudent to invest in education. After all, how can mines make money without money mining intelligently!

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